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W. G. POLACK

Mental Hygiene and the Bible

Mental hygiene has been variously defined, depending upon the school represented or the scope intended. It is sometimes broadly conceived as including the cure of the abnormal and diseased mind (psychiatry), as also the development and preservation of a healthy mind, an integrated personality. The stress, however, is always upon the prophylaxis, upon the prevention of maladjustment. "All mental hygiene is directed toward a happy and successful life in conformity with the dictates of personal and higher laws." (E. W. Lazell, *The Anatomy of Emotion*.) "Mental hygiene is to develop an integrated personality at higher and higher levels, to preserve right mental attitudes, to train in healthful mental activity, to prevent mental disorder." (W. H. Burnham, *Great Teachers and Mental Health*.) "Mental hygiene as a method is educative rather than therapeutic. It is essentially preventive rather than ameliorative." (W. D. Blatz, University of Toronto.) The wider conception is represented by Professor Furfey of the Catholic University, Washington: "Mental hygiene is a method of forestalling and treating mental abnormalities."

If, however, we define psychiatry as the science that deals with every form of mind disorders and with all kinds of mental reaction in response to disturbing physical or psychic influences, then we may call mental hygiene that branch of psychiatry which deals with prophylactic and preventive measures; it is psychology applied as a preventive for mental disorders, and its purpose is to develop and preserve a healthy, happy personality, or, as Joseph Jastrow puts it: "Mental hygiene projects the program of right living with the psychologist at the helm."

If mental hygiene, then, is a preventive measure, and since personality development and growth has its inception at birth or, as some say, before birth (which is correct in so far as heredity is taken into consideration), then it stands to reason that child psychology must be the foundation of an effective mental hygiene.

That is the reason why at present there is such a concentration upon child psychology, which is engaging the minds of more psychologists than any other phase, and psychiatrists will almost invariably trace any later adjustment difficulty back to some childhood maladjustment. Thus mental hygiene must begin with, and always hark back to, the child; for there is the greatest opportunity for prevention, and the healing of a later traumatic condition often depends upon the discovery of the real cause in early childhood. "There is today a growing realization that, if sound principles of mental hygiene are followed in the early life of the child and continued by wise education and clearer thinking, much serious mental breakdown might be avoided, and we men and women would come some way nearer to that state of balance and mental efficiency to which we all aspire." (J. R. Rees, *The Health of the Mind*.) The principle involved is, however, not a modern discovery; for the Bible has always taught it, and the Church has always recognized it. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it," Prov. 22: 6.

Mental hygiene, as we know it today, has come into its own only during the last twenty-five to thirty years. Not as though it belonged exclusively to this our modern era, for it is as ancient as man. When our Lord gave our first parents the Gospel promise, He applied the finest mental healing to cure them of the anxiety neurosis due to their guilty conscience, a fear in which they tried to hide from the omniscient God. Only the Gospel could lift that fear and anxiety and thus bring them back to a happy attitude toward God and toward life in general. The writings of the ancients abound with many sound mental health rules. Socrates propounded many useful principles of mental hygiene, especially by stressing the knowledge of self, of self-control, and of the right mental attitudes, and the Socratic method was essentially the method of modern psychoanalysis, and "*mens sana in corpore sano*" is still valid today. The Psalms and the Proverbs are full of the most effective mental hygiene, and Christ and the apostles were expert psychologists and knew how to apply it for the health of body and soul; they knew how properly to integrate the personality. Pastors as curates, *Seelsorger*, have always practised mental hygiene of the highest order, and the Fifth Chief Part of Luther's Small Catechism, with its private confession, is one of the most wonderful and effective mental-health measures even in the light of the most modern research and practise.

But nevertheless it is a fact that mental hygiene as such has discovered its ego only during the last decades, when it began to claim a place among the so-called sciences and psychologists began the endeavor to systematize it and to apply it in a scientific

method. We might place the beginning of this movement in 1908, when Clifford W. Beers founded the Connecticut Society for Mental Hygiene, which a year later led to the founding of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Then, in 1921, the National Committee of Visiting Teachers was established, whose special purpose is the adjustment of problem children in schools. At the present time mental hygiene has permeated all of our modern life and is applied as a health measure in all human relationships. In education, in religion, in social service, and in industry it has assumed a definite and essential place. Many schools and colleges have placed mental hygiene into their curricula, and some have established clinics for the mental treatment and adjustment of students. Especially important is mental hygiene considered for the normal school, so as to produce teachers that are satisfactorily integrated and are then prepared to guide children to better mental health.

In the face of this stressed importance it is well to bear in mind that mental hygiene is not a science based upon established facts but rather an effort to bring some order into the chaos of conflicting opinions and to systematize the very doubtful results of comparative psychology, for obviously the conclusions drawn from a comparison of the behavior as it is observed among man and beast cannot be very reliable. "Mental hygiene is in the early stages of becoming a science." (Edwin A. Kirkpatrick, *Mental Hygiene for Effective Living*. 1934.)

What makes the recent development of this embryonic science interesting especially to theologians is the fact that religion is so intimately connected with mental hygiene and that to a great extent it is a practical application of religion to the mental life of the individual. Dr. Oskar Pfister of Switzerland, a delegate to the First International Hygienic Congress, recently held in Washington, D. C., made this statement: "Since the pathogenic conflicts are mostly of a moral nature, religion assumes an important task in mental hygiene. It must prevent spiritual conflicts from taking a morbid turn." And Alexander B. MacLeod has this to say: "The unanimity with which these men" (the many authorities he has quoted), "representing such widely separated parts of the world, agree upon the value of religion for mental health is exceedingly impressive. It shows how universal is the feeling of the importance belonging to religion as a hygienic measure." (*Mental Hygiene as Taught by Jesus*, p. 129.)

That this position is basically correct must appear to any one who reads the Bible and studies it with an active interest in the human soul as it is reflected in the mental life of every personality. But here the danger becomes apparent when it is remembered

that psychology as taught today is thoroughly evolutionistic, mechanistic, and materialistic and that most of the practising psychiatrists are either agnostics, and therefore antichristian and anti-biblical, or indifferentists, who care nothing for Christianity and the Bible. It is but natural that in their teaching and practise they are actuated by their indifferent or hostile attitude over against Christianity or that they have a conception of religion and Christianity which is a distortion and a caricature.

Mental hygiene stresses the importance of right mental attitudes, and in that it agrees with the Bible. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," Prov. 23:7. Christian ethics always stresses right attitudes, both toward God and man, on the so-called cosmic and social plane, as they are summarized by the Lord, Matt. 22: 37-40, or expounded in the Sermon on the Mount and many other didactic portions of the Old and the New Testament. The heart, the thought life, the attitude, is what counts.

If, therefore, we wish to evaluate the modern mental-hygiene movement so that we may prove all things and hold fast that which is good, 1 Thess. 5:21, it will be well for us to begin on the common ground of "attitudes" and ask the fundamental question, What is the attitude of mental hygiene, as it is taught in schools and colleges and applied in all phases of our modern life, toward the Bible and Christianity? Let us hear the answer from leading and acknowledged authorities in the field of mental hygiene. Dr. G. Stanley Hall is a good example. He was an outstanding leader in research and psychology, a scholar, teacher, educator, and writer. After studying in Germany for years, he was professor of psychology at Harvard, at Johns Hopkins, and then president of Clark University. Of him Wm. H. Burnham in his *Great Teachers and Mental Health* writes as follows: "He believed that the Christian attitude of mind is of the utmost value for the mental health. Nothing is so illuminating in regard to Dr. Hall's personal development, his emotional character, and his most essential regimen, in a word, his personal supreme hygiene, as he liked to call it, as his psychology of religion and his own religious development." Burnham then quotes Dr. Hall thus: "To realize that every article of faith, not excluding the belief in God and immortality, was an ejection, or projection, of the folk-soul in the struggle to make its own deeper and really subjective processes seem clearer and more certain by objectifying them; to realize that everything in all this field comes from within, as Berkeley thought the *esse* of the external world was its *percipi*, is the goal of religious enfranchisement and is the very opposite of the crass skepticism, atheism, and vulgar rationalism that reject all these psychic products. The literalists, dogmatists, and fundamentalists are the real materialists

in this field, and there is an exultation and a new realization of Hegel's dictum that man-soul cannot think too highly of itself. To have made this long 'pilgrim's progress' from the crude faith of childhood, in the various stages of which the vast majority of believers are arrested and go through life as victims of religious dementia praecox, seems to me to be perhaps the very most essential of all forms of education."

Lest any one say that is a voice from the dead and out of date, let me quote Professor Haydon of Chicago University. He delivered himself before the First International Congress for Mental Hygiene, held at Washington, D. C., as follows: "Our modern age is witnessing the greatest transformation of the world religions that they have ever experienced in all their long history. Man has regained confidence in his own powers. The ancient distrust of human nature is now vanishing. The quest of the good life that sought fulfilment in the supernatural other world or in the beyond life now turns again earthward. Responsibility for the creation of a good world in which the good life may be realized, which the frustrated ages of the past loaded upon the gods, is now being assumed by man. Modern science has undermined all the ancient theologies and religious philosophies built on the foundation of the naive thinking of primitive man. Applied science has put into the hand of modern man the tools for the mastery of nature lacking in all the eras of antiquity. The social and psychological sciences offer at last the long-needed understanding of human nature and make it possible to hope for a technique of guidance and control. The ideal of this modern drift of the religions is still the ancient goal with a richer content—the complete fulfilment of personality, the realization of full joy of living." (*Report*, p. 534.) "In our age religions are reviving the ancient hope of achieving a society in which spiritual values may be mediated to the individual through harmonious adjustment to the social environment. Yet evil remains. It is true that the menacing metaphysical bases of evil no longer trouble thinking men. Cosmic devils and malignant demons have vanished before the brilliance of the sun of science. . . . It is a great gain, however, that evil is now reduced to comprehensible terms under the categories of natural and social. The first consists of those phases of the natural environment not yet subjected to human control; the second, much more important and the source of most of the unhappiness of men, may be described simply as personal and social maladjustment." (P. 538.) "The interest of the religious scientist lies in indicating that the achievement of the social order in which harmonized personalities will embody spiritual values is not to be sought in any mysterious, extrascientific source but only by the discovery of

a method of eliminating these thwarting maladjustments. The successful solution of the problem will demand a synthesis of the wisdom of social sciences, a collaboration of specialists in the use of scientific method in every area of social facts." (P. 539.)

Quotations like the above could easily be multiplied many times, but these are sufficient to establish the fact that psychology and mental hygiene put themselves in an a-priori opposition to the Bible and conservative Christianity and that this opposition is often superciliously arrogant. It is therefore putting it mildly to say that the attitude of modern mental hygiene as it is generally taught and practised is hostile and subversive to Bible-truth and destructive to Christian faith. Even Burnham, who lauds Christ as a great teacher and mental hygienist, finds his principal merit in the fact that He has made man free, . . . free to think as he pleases, while John J. B. Morgan in his *Keeping a Sound Mind*, a book that contains a wealth of good material and is widely used in schools and colleges, states his attitude toward beliefs, including Christian beliefs, as follows: "All great thinkers have had to admit over and over again that they were wrong. It is this willingness to change beliefs which marks off the versatile man from the old fogey. Look back, and if you cannot see where you have changed, you can rest assured that you have already stagnated, no matter what your chronological age may be." (P. 207.)

It is therefore well to remember this attitude of open hostility and sarcastic innuendo toward everything that is Biblical and Christian when parents send their children to schools where they are trained in such mental hygiene and when young people enroll in normal schools where they are taught to apply the principles of mental hygiene not only to themselves but also to the children they are to teach.

But to revert to attitudes, attitudes that are essential for a happy integration of a personality. All agree that, in order to be happily integrated, one must have security, a conviction of being safe and secure over against the trials and calamities of life and death. And we heartily agree with that postulate. A human being without such conviction of security is hopelessly adrift, like a ship without rudder in the storm or like an aeroplane flying blind, with the supply of gasoline exhausted. Fear, anxiety, and nervous breakdown will soon do their disintegrating work. But what is the remedy? How may such unshakable security be secured? The answer of both mental hygienists and Christians is the right attitude toward "God." Paul Dubois, professor of neuropathology at the University at Berne, writes: "In this state of mind (implicit trust in God), which is, alas, so rare in the thinking world, man becomes invulnerable. Feeling himself upheld by his

God, he fears neither sickness nor death. He may succumb under the attacks of physical disease, but morally he remains unshaken in the midst of his sufferings and is inaccessible to the cowardly emotions of nervous people." (*The Treatment of Nervous Disorders*, p. 210.) The physicist R. A. Millikan expresses himself this way: "Man's belief in regard to himself and his relations to the world (cosmic and social, God and man) are the fundamental moving forces in determining his own activities. Thoughtful men are everywhere apparently more and more coming to recognize the value of human ideals and beliefs in relation to human behavior." ("Science and Modern Life," *Atlantic Monthly*. Vol. 141, 1928.) But what do the exponents of mental hygiene advocate as the right relation and attitude toward God? John J. B. Morgan advocates the maintenance of a questioning attitude toward all beliefs, which is sound advice when it applies to scientific theories but absolutely destructive of "security" when it applies to God and His Word. And what is the advice of Professor Haydon? He is very much concerned about the youthful intellectuals, and for their benefit especially he advises: "A peculiar form of emotional maladjustment is evident among those who have been recently and suddenly disillusioned in regard to the traditional guarantees of the old theology. It is a rude shock to be robbed of the infantile attitude of dependence, of wish fulfilment in times of frustration, of flight to supernatural consolation in the face of harsh reality. To be tumbled from the eternal security of the everlasting arms into the actualities of the pluralistic world of fact has caused emotional distress to thousands of youthful intellectuals unprepared by their religious education to feel at home in a naturalistic universe. It is surely superfluous to warn experts in mental hygiene regarding the danger of emotional crises in the use of the technique of other-worldly guarantees and compensations in dealing with young people in this age of science. For adults indoctrinated in tradition there may be special cases where the use of compensatory mechanism may be indicated. Even then the problem is merely met by a palliative; the cure lies deeper. For children to continue the infantile status into later age by the transfer of parental protection and security to a supernatural guarantor is to run the risk of checking free moral development, to make possible an escape from social responsibility, to open the door to flight from realities of the actual world." (*Report of First International Congress for Mental Hygiene*, pp. 540-542.) That, in other words, is a warning not to teach children to trust in God; for in doing so, you run the risk of laying the foundation for insanity. No wonder that with such an attitude toward God "youthful intellectuals" meet disaster and emotional shipwreck, while in

the Biblical attitude toward God there is peace of mind and, under all circumstances, real security.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5:19. "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. 8:38, 39. "I will be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of good courage," Josh. 1:5. "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Ps. 27:1. That indeed is security and the faith that overcometh the world. That is the divine comfort in which the timid, fearful soul may find renewed hope and strength, in which the defeated and frustrated Christian may gird himself anew for the battles of life, in the sublime knowledge that as his day is, so shall be his strength, and with St. Paul he can say, "When I am weak, then am I strong," 2 Cor. 12:10. That is the faith of which stout hearts and minds are made; it is the best preventive of a nervous breakdown and the ne-plus-ultra antidote for emotional upset and disintegration, a real specific in mental hygiene. A child reared in that faith is prepared for the future whatever it may be, and a Christian fortified in that faith need not be afraid of tumbling from the eternal security of the everlasting arms, for he is ready to meet victoriously even the so-called horrific experiences of life.

But let us examine another attitude that is generally considered fundamental for a happily integrated personality—the attitude toward evil, sin, and conscience. It is generally admitted by all psychiatrists and mental hygienists that, wherever there is a wrong attitude toward sin and a consequent feeling of guilt and a violated conscience, there mental distress, inner conflict, and often complete disintegration is bound to follow. Mackenzie: "In anxiety cases a moral conflict will be found as a causative factor." Steckel: "An anxiety neurosis is the disease of a bad conscience." With that proposition we may, in the light of the Bible, readily agree; for the whole Bible, from the Fall to Redemption, reveals to man sin, guilt, and the agony of an outraged conscience, and many are the examples of a guilty conscience wreaking dire vengeance upon the mind and soul of man, for instance, Cain, Gen. 4:13; Saul, 1 Sam. 28:20; 31:4; David, Ps. 32:3, 4; Judas, Matt. 27:3-5; and, be it said in deepest reverence, Christ in Gethsemane as our Substitute under the load of our guilt.

But here appears the great gulf between the Bible and mental hygiene. While the Bible declares that sin is something definite,

the transgression of God's immutable Law, 1 John 3:4, and conscience the voice that sits in judgment according to that norm of God's Law, mental hygiene as it is usually taught today declares that sin is something that is relative, a concept that is evolved and developed by social experience, folk-ways, and the like; and conscience therefore also must to them be variable, relative, and altogether subjective. To Kant, a century and a half ago, conscience, his "categorical imperative," was merely a subjective voice when he said: "Two things fill me with ever-renewed awe and admiration, the starry heavens above and the Moral Law within." Burnham declares: "The voice of conscience, however varying, in its concrete expression, is a factor of prime importance in every normal individual." (*Wholesome Personality*.) John B. Morgan writes: "How can the victim of a tender conscience train himself to rational behavior in place of his silly fears? By remembering that fear of sin is in the last analysis the fear of displeasing others and losing their esteem as a result. If he makes a rational study of the likes and dislikes of others, he will have a rational basis for his behavior. He refrains from certain acts because he learns that these acts injure other persons either physically or emotionally. He cultivates those forms of activity which he learns will bring happiness to others. He can thus substitute a social basis for morality for the irrational feeling of right and wrong which he learned in infancy and to which he clings when he lets his conscience be his guide." (*Keeping a Sound Mind*, p. 82.)

A guilty conscience, so all are agreed, must be healed, the conflict must be resolved, if a healthy, happy personality is to be achieved. But considering the relativity with which they regard sin and conscience, it is only natural that, when they come to the question of cure, their answers are legion, colored according to the variable tints of their subjective belief or unbelief and alike only in respect to their futility, their helplessness and hopelessness. Lower the threshold of your conscience; cultivate a scientific attitude; socialize your conscience; let your best attitude win; assert nothing, deny nothing, wait — these are examples of the remedies proposed. Wm. H. Burnham in *Wholesome Personality* confesses to the hopelessness of the situation and seems to sense the true remedy but fails to discover it. He writes: "On what do we depend today for law and order and the safety of society? Everybody knows the answer — knowledge, instruction, conventional education. In crises like the Great War, in confusion of purpose and method after the war, on every public occasion in times of peace, whenever we recount the means of public safety, we refer with complacency and confident pride to the public school as the bul-

wark of the republic. When the realists call attention to the stern fact that many conditions today seriously menace the welfare of society, that we seem unable to cope adequately with selfishness and even with that pseudoeducation that paralyzes the intellect and makes learning difficult, and to the further fact that the dangerous elements in society, the slackers, the selfish, the incompetent, the criminal as well as the delinquent, were a few years ago for the most part in the public schools and that public education has not saved us from the menace of the worthless and combustible material in society, the answer is always better education, better methods, better selection of raw material for the higher schools, better education of the superior children. When we reflect also on the fact that ever since we can remember we have had the public schools, one naturally asks whether our problems after all are not too difficult for present human knowledge and intelligence or else whether we have attacked a wrong aspect of the subject and used a wrong method. Before the moral problems of society we seem helpless. The self-development and moral character of the individual somehow is as definitely and as fatally arrested as the intellectual development."

What a confession by a psychologist and acknowledged leader in the field of education, and what an indictment of our modern education and its glorified methods! It would be well for all educators, psychologists, mental hygienists, penologists, and moral uplifters to begin their lesson right here and ponder these words. It might then be realized that the sneering, supercilious attitude toward God and the Bible as it is being so insidiously instilled into the receptive minds of our youth is at the bottom of our failure and a prime factor in crowding our penitentiaries and our psychopathic hospitals with the youth of our country.

Burnham then proceeds to grope for a solution of the problem as follows: "Hence eugenics, some say, is the only remedy, together with adjustment to the conditions of present society, while the slow process of breeding is developing a new and better stock. Others say that in the emotional and moral field better men and women are produced through conditioning the individual by endocrine balance, optimum diet, and other general conditions of hygiene, somatic and mental, together with right training in the broad sense. This training, it is said, is the supreme method for social development if begun from the cradle. The behaviorists in psychology have stated eloquently and emphatically the potency of this method in the early years of life, and modern educators, from Comenius down, have made clear the value of it in school education. Religious teachers also have not ignored its value. Practise from the cradle right patterns of behavior, practise them

long enough, and the salvation of society is insured. Still others maintain that the individual carries within his own personality the means of radical moral change and improvement. Thus the hope lies in conversion by the gospel of some philosophical, psychological, hygienic, or religious cult that makes a violent emotional appeal, radically transforming the individual.

"Especially the success of religious conversion has been cited as showing cases of transformation from narrow and selfish egotists to models of religious fervor and human service, a method illustrated from the days of Gautama to Tagore, from Abraham to St. Paul, with examples of revolutionary transformation, down to the acme of altruistic service and cosmopolitan regard taught and exemplified by Jesus and imitated, however feebly, by a multitude of Christian devotees to human service the world over. . . . Thus to this bewildering complex problem, whose relative solution even must linger, mental hygiene also makes its contribution." (Pp. 485, 486.) And we add, In so far as mental hygiene inculcates the Biblical attitude toward God, teaches the redemption through Christ Jesus and the peace that in the Gospel is offered to every heart, and only in so far, can mental hygiene make its contribution to the "complex problem," restore to the wounded soul, the guilty conscience, the upset personality, that peace of mind which is so essential to a happily integrated personality.

In the light of God's Word we see God as holy and just and righteous, who has not left us in doubt as to the question of right and wrong, so that we have an unerring norm for our conscience, but we also see Him as the loving, gracious, and forgiving God; and in that knowledge alone is there balm for a wounded conscience. And the Bible knows, too, that it is all-important "to practise from the cradle right patterns of behavior"; that is why it commands parents to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. 6:4, and why Jesus commands also children to be baptized, Matt. 28:19. Children who have been brought to Christ by Holy Baptism and have then been brought up in that Christian faith, who have learned to know right and wrong, not from the changing opinions of men but from the Law of God, and who have learned to find comfort, forgiveness, and peace of mind from God's covenant in Baptism, from the promises of the Gospel and the Sacrament of the Altar, are prepared to adjust themselves satisfactorily both on the cosmic and social plane, to God and man; they will know how to maintain and to regain, as necessity requires, their proper, wholesome attitude toward everything that concerns God and toward their social environment.

Mental hygienists often concede that, in order to cure a warped personality, "a radical moral change and improvement" must in many instances be effected. A psychiatrist at a large psychopathic State hospital, who is a professed Christian, recently declared that all that many of the patients at the institution need is a radical readjustment of their attitudes in conformity with sound religious principles. Winifred V. Richmond of Washington, D. C., writes: "Reeducation, as the name implies, attempts to establish new attitudes and habits, to take the place of old and undesirable ones. It is an old method, employed more or less successfully for generations by physicians, religious teachers, and the school. The present century has given it a new emphasis and a wide extension of applicability." (*Personality, Its Development and Hygiene*, p. 252.) And we all know that Christ said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John 3:3, and at the same time He gave the method: "born of water and of the Spirit." That often a radical change is necessary all are agreed, but as to method there is disagreement, which is very natural. To the Bible the human personality is the creation of God in His own image, endowed with an immortal soul. But Doctor Richmond defines thus: "Personality is, then, an integration, the welding together into a functioning unit, of natural forces—probably in the last analysis electrical and chemical—expressing themselves now in physical and now in mental terms." (*Personality, Its Development and Hygiene*, p. 10.) If that were correct, the task of remaking a personality should be easy, provided the chemico-electrical laboratory discovers the proper formula. We might have to wait. No wonder Walter B. Pitkin complains: "The older Americans and millions of the younger have been drilled in the ways and thoughts of the ancient cults, creeds, intellectualisms, and morals. False ideals and errors about man himself are deeply embedded in habits that cannot be lightly sloughed. It is vain to reform these unfortunates. The labor is far too great. And most of them are self-satisfied, which is lucky. The best we can do is to wait for them to die off and to protect the younger generation against contamination." (*The Psychology of Happiness*, p. 2.) Then, however, he rejoices in a new hope, as follows: "We are beginning to realize as a nation that the life of the spirit is also the life of matter; that world-control and self-control must go together for human happiness; that the intellectuals are precisely as wrong as the barbarians in their belief that the culture of personality through ideas and disciplines and religions and metaphysics can lead to a full and well rounded life. It never has. It never can. To rebuild ourselves, we must also rebuild rivers, hills, continents, and some day even climates. The art of happiness will be founded on all the sciences

of things outside our skins and things inside our skins. This technique will be enormously complex. But in time clever men will simplify it so that enlightened men and women everywhere can apply it to their own problems. Then will dawn the Golden Age." (*Op. cit.*, p. 6.)

Because the old Platonian idea that man fails only because he errs and that therefore a better understanding will automatically improve the morals of man holds sway among mental hygienists today, they maintain that man, in order to assume proper attitudes and thus to achieve mental health and a happy integrated personality, must remake and rebuild himself through reeducation according to a materialistic, scientific world-view. That reeducation from a Biblical world-view to a materialistic, scientific world-view has for the last decades been very intense and comprehensive in the daily press, the magazines, books, schools, and colleges, and the result has been overcrowded penitentiaries and insane asylums, and many competent observers insist that it is a result, not merely a *post hoc* but a *propter hoc*.

Biblical ethics speak a different language and have a different spirit. "The creation of new life is brought about by the Holy Spirit, whose coming was made possible through the redemptive work of Christ and who is present for us in the Word and in the Sacraments. . . . The natural man is taken back, as it were, into the womb of divine creative power and comes forth from it a new creature. His past life of sin is wiped out by the forgiveness of sin, and by the Holy Spirit a new man, a new beginning, is brought forth, endowed with new powers and faculties which he did not possess before." (Reu-Buehring, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 125, 126.) That is God's method of remaking a warped and disintegrated personality, and it is the only method. (We are here of course not dealing with those mental weaknesses and psychoses which have a purely physical cause.)

A child regenerated through Holy Baptism and brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord will, as it grows up, meet the problems of life, assume the right and mentally wholesome attitudes toward God and man; and an adult regenerated through the means of grace will, as a new creature and as a child of God, readjust his attitudes so that they are in conformity with the revealed will of God, and those attitudes will then insure a wholesome, healthy mental life and a happily integrated personality. We could here catalog the hundred and thousand different attitudes that make up the mental life of a human personality and show how every attitude that conforms with Biblical principles makes for a happy, healthy personality, while every attitude that violates those principles is not only antichristian but anti-

social and destructive to a wholesome personality. As pertinent examples we may draw attention to the "Table of Duties" as we have it in Luther's Small Catechism, to which we could add: the proper attitude toward suffering, toward money and earthly goods, success, the modern community, and above all toward death, etc. Always right attitudes are essential for a well-integrated personality, for mental health.

What has been said concerning attitudes applies, *mutatis mutandis*, also to the emotions, which occupy such a prominent place in the make-up of the human personality and influence human behavior at every turn, so that in mental hygiene, in the development of a healthy personality, we must consider emotional attitudes as well as mental attitudes, which is especially important in the training of children and adolescents.

"Emotional maturity seems difficult to attain, and most adults retain some childish or adolescent features in their affective make-up. When an adult carries with him a preponderance of childish traits and attitudes, he cannot be other than a childish personality. The same is true of an inability to leave behind the emotions of early adolescence. Either type of personality is poorly fitted to cope with life in a society as complex as ours. One cannot but wonder if many of our social problems are not largely dependent upon the great numbers of emotionally undeveloped adults in our midst. Emotion seems peculiarly liable to what is known to the psychologist as 'fixation'; that is, an undue load of feeling attaches itself to a person or an idea and remains there in spite of the fact that it may exercise a crippling effect upon personality." (Winifred V. Richmond, *Personality, Its Development and Hygiene*, p. 111.)

The emotional life of the human personality opens up such a vast field and has such important ramifications that in our allotted space we can only point to a few salient features. Emotions are usually classified as destructive or constructive, such as fear, jealousy, hate, envy, etc., and love, trust, courage, hope, etc. We have all seen the emotionally unstable child. It displays freely all the typically destructive emotions, often in the most violent tantrums. Such emotional instability often persists into the adolescent years, when it is often complicated by sex emotions. The real calamity occurs when the destructive emotions become misdirected and then fixated, and even love can become selfish and cruel, so that its real nature is destroyed. We all know how fear, anger, hatred, can upset the mere physical self, how it can upset the stomach, digestion, etc. What a degenerating, disintegrating influence, we properly ask, must those emotions have upon the nervous system, the mind and soul? That is the real curse. The

destructive emotions destroy all happiness; they harm their object, to be sure, but infinitely more do they harm their subject. Like a powerful chemical, they destroy all the finer qualities of the human personality, destroy it body and soul, and finally leave the whole personality to the obsession of the Evil One. And when any of the destructive emotions becomes fixated, fixed upon one definite object or idea, we have insanity of the most dangerous and hopeless type. Saul's hatred of David was of this type.

Now, mental hygiene recognizes the danger of emotional upset and the havoc that is wrought by these destructive emotions; but when it comes to the prevention and the cure, it gropes in the dark and stands helpless and hopeless. Doctor Richmond writes concerning these emotions: "Education in any culture, including our own, strives to develop certain traits and suppress others. In the degree that it succeeds a 'homogeneous culture' is produced. But in order actually to 'change human nature,' traits would have to be bred out, and at the present stage in the world's progress it is hard to see how this could be accomplished." (*Op. cit.*, p. 117.) Many are the remedial measures proposed by mental hygiene, such as: Work off your emotion; train the child in the right emotional attitudes; learn to understand your environment; sublimate; etc., but to "change human nature" it finds impossible.

How fundamentally different the Bible! It also knows the destructive emotions, "the works of the flesh," and the constructive emotions, "the fruit of the Spirit," Gal. 5:16-24, and it does not leave us in the dark as to the remedy. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. 5:24. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration through the Holy Ghost, who renews and sanctifies the whole personality, can "change the human nature" and can direct, modify, and sublimate human emotions in such a way that a happy, well-integrated personality results, which reaches perfection in the life to come. A personality that has been reared and established in the principles of Holy Scripture might have "emotional upsets," but in the strength of the Lord it will again and again find its equilibrium and ever greater stability. God's Word, prayer, are God's means for the attainment of an ideal and happy personality, and the Sacraments, for "Baptism signifies that the Old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

To conclude, let us say: Mental hygiene as it is generally taught today is vicious and altogether destructive to Christian faith and helpless in the face of fundamental problems; yet many

of the principles it enunciates are sound, and in so far as it helps better to understand human thought-life and personality, and may thus lead to a better application of God's Word and Biblical principles in dealing with human personalities, it is not without value. And, finally, in so far as it is subversive of Christian faith, we ought to know it, so that we may counteract its destructive influence.

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H. D. MENSING

Sermon Study on 2 Thess. 3:6-14

Eisenach Epistle for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

The congregation at Thessalonica, the modern Saloniki, was founded by Paul about the year 51, or, as some hold, as early as 49 or 50, immediately after he had left Philippi, Acts 17:1-10. Though he had been permitted to spend only a short time at Thessalonica, Acts 10:2, 5, 10, he had laid the foundation so well that this congregation became a center from which the Gospel spread far and wide within a few months and was an "ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia," 1 Thess. 1:2-10. Paul had sought to return to Thessalonica in order to confirm the brethren in the truth; yet circumstances beyond his control had made this impossible, 2:17, 18. Instead he sent Timothy, who brought a very favorable report, 3:1-13. There were, however, many who were disturbed by questions concerning the time and manner of the advent of Christ, chaps. 4, 5. In his first letter Paul had instructed, warned, comforted them. Reports, however, coming to him while he was preaching at Corinth informed him that the congregation was still being disturbed by men, some of them even purporting to represent Paul, who taught that the day of the Lord was close at hand and that therefore it was no longer necessary to go about one's daily occupation, 2 Thess. 2:1, 2; 3:11. The apostle found it necessary to write another letter, in which he again commends the brethren for their patience and faith in tribulation, 1:3-10, prays that God would "fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness," 11, 12, gives them a detailed instruction regarding the signs preceding the coming of the Lord, thanks God because He has chosen them to salvation, and commends them to His grace, 2:11-17.

Two more matters must be brought to the attention of the Thessalonians as he is about to close his letter. The word finally, τὸ λοιπὸν, 3:1, "serves properly to introduce the concluding remarks of an epistle; cp. 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:8; Eph. 6:10; 2 Thess. 3:1." (Meyer on 1 Thess. 4:1.) One is a request, the other a command.