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A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

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THE MENACE OF THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY

RELIGION'S NEW ASSAILANT

WHEN Bunyan's Pilgrim was on his way to the Celestial City there met him a certain "foul fiend" named Apollyon: "Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, 'Prepare thyself to die . . . here will I spill thy soul.'"

The New Psychology, the twentieth century Apollyon, speaks with an equally confident assurance. Like all giants it has much that is freakish about it. It is as many-headed as the hydra. This partly accounts for it appearing in relation to the Christian religion now as a friend, now as a foe. Many writers, in attempting to show that psychology defends the faith, have made statements to the effect that "psychology does not make a genuine religious faith impossible",¹ that it has a "purifying effect upon religious experience",² and that "we must have a new theology based on psychology".³ In certain ways the advances in psychology *do* justify and confirm the faith, but attempts to base religion on modern psychology are both fruitless and pathetic. Our purpose is to show that psychology in some respects can be a dangerous "ally" to religion. Its contributions, however, in the fields of medical science, education and industry have been important and considerable.

The term *psychology* has come to include many things. The word indicates or involves a great deal more than its derivation implies—"the science of the soul". Actually and paradoxically, there is no such thing as "psychology", but only a multitude of *psychologies*; and the number continues to increase. R. S. Woodworth distinguishes five separate and distinct schools.⁴ William Brown says: "In psychology at the present time (1924) there exist no less than nine distinctive

¹ Elliott, H. S., *The Bearing of Psychology on Religion*, New York, 1927, p. 75.

² Jordan, G. J., *A Short Psychology of Religion*, New York, 1927, p. 19.

³ Barry, *Christianity and Psychology*, p. 159. Dr. Temple quoted.

⁴ Woodworth, R. S., *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*, 1931.

and antagonistic schools.”¹ William McDougall maintains, “There is still no one science of psychology, but rather the psychologies of many schools.”²

In dealing with the psychological challenge it is impossible to speak of the bearing of each and all of these ramifying “psychologies” upon Christian teaching. No expert in any one school of psychology could undertake the task, for every student of psychology has been compelled, by the rapid progress of the subject, and the multiplicity of psychological writings in recent years, to become a specialist; and a specialist who has to be pardoned if he has been unable to keep abreast with the various developments of the science.

In spite of the rapid growth of psychology it is still an undeveloped science when compared with astronomy, or physics, or chemistry, or even biology. Says J. S. Haldane: “Psychology is still on about the same level as chemistry was in the days of the alchemists.”³ McDougall says: “Psychology claims an enormous territory but is in effective occupation of very little of it. Its frontiers are ill-defined and nowhere delimited properly.”⁴ In particular, the frontiers between religion and psychology are notoriously ill-surveyed.

This science employs highly technical terms in expounding its theories. Apparently these more or less vague terms cannot be translated into everyday language. There is widespread disagreement as to the meaning of many of them. For instance: “libido” is variously used by Freud, Jung and Adler: “instinct” is another bone of contention. But the science suffers even more from the popular misapplication of its terms by those who are ill-informed on the subject. How this parade of weird terms has intrigued the popular mind! Psychological jargon turns up everywhere. Nurse-maids are familiar with its lispings, and Sunday-school teachers with its prattlings.

Like all new things, psychology is passing through a “swagger” stage. It has made some ridiculous and impossible claims for itself: e.g. that “no experience falls outside of the province of psychology”; and, “it would be at once foolish and useless to say to psychology, ‘thus far and no further’

¹ Brown, W., *Psychology and the Sciences*, 1924, p. 53.

² McDougall, W., *Philosophy*, IX., 1934, p. 16.

³ Haldane, J. S., *The Sciences and Philosophy*, p. 286.

⁴ McDougall, W., *The Frontiers of Psychology*, 1934.

when it approaches the moral and religious consciousness". We can have no objection to it turning its experimental attention to the study of the origin of religion, to the art of worship, and to the work of pastoral theology. Along these and other lines psychology has achieved results of very great value. But we draw the line when attempts are made to analyse some of the most sacred thoughts and feelings of the religious believer, and to apply its latest principles to the Communion Service of the Christian Church,—as Freud does,¹—and to the Person of our Lord,—as is attempted, for instance, by Berguer of Geneva,² and by G. Stanley Hall.³ Here there is no respect for sanctities. One claim, variously worded, is that Jesus was a forerunner of modern practical psychology!

Psychology is a house divided against itself. There is some harmony, but there are also radical differences, and indeed antagonisms, which have led to disastrous clashes between the belligerent "Schools". Behaviourism and Psycho-analysis are poles apart, and are quite incompatible: each speaks a dialect of its own. Even among the Psycho-analysts rival schools, exhibiting antithetical tendencies, have been set up by those who were once devoted followers. Fundamental differences have arisen between Freud, Jung, and Adler, with the result that the last two have deserted the Freudian standard. Each has a different title for his own "system": Jung's doctrine is called *Analytical Psychology*, and Adler's *Individual Psychology*. Well may J. C. Flügel speak of the "tangled mêlée of conflicting tendencies that make up present-day psychology".⁴ Almost everywhere one opinion stands opposed to another, one theory to another, one hypothesis to another. Revisions of these are constantly succeeding each other. It is perhaps one of the most creditable features of Freud's psychology, and an evidence of his greatness, that he does not hesitate to modify his views if he finds that they are inadequate or premature. Important and far-reaching additions to psycho-analytic doctrine are still being made. The body of generally accepted psychological fact is comparatively small, while the number of disputed theories remains large. Nor do psychologists agree

¹ Freud, S., *Totem and Taboo*, 1918.

² Berguer, G., *Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus from the Psychological and Psycho-analytic Standpoint*, 1923.

³ Hall, G. S., *Jesus The Christ in the Light of Psychology*, 1921.

⁴ Flügel, J. C., *A Hundred Years of Psychology*, 1933, p. 226.

in regard to method. Some maintain that introspection is not only serviceable, but indispensable: the psycho-analytic technique is based upon it, though not wholly dependent upon it, for such mental activity is beyond the reach of introspective efforts: while the primary method of the Spearman School is mathematical. In a subject as new as psychology is, perhaps we should look upon the existence of the different schools (a phenomenon probably peculiar to psychology among the sciences) at present as an asset, albeit a symptom of adolescence.

It is doubtful how much of psychology can claim to be a science, in view of its frequent confusion of description with explanation. Much of psychology is still in the pre-scientific anecdotal stage, because no crucial tests of the truth of its hypotheses have yet been devised. If it lays claim to the dignity of a science, it must give up the practice of philosophising, and confine itself to the proper function of a descriptive science. In this connection both Behaviourism and Psycho-analysis stand condemned. In psychological problems (in the psychology of religion more particularly) that which observes is at the same time the thing observed, viz. the mind. You cannot psychologize from without. And it will always be difficult, and often impossible, to apply measurements to the things that matter most, just because the richest and the highest human data are the most complex and elusive. Psychology, therefore, is bound to remain a science of extraordinary difficulty, and the most fallible, because its data are the least measurable.

Actually, the basis of a scientific psychology has not yet been laid. What William James said, in 1890, of the psychology of his time, is almost as true to-day: "It seems to me that psychology is like physics before Galileo's time—not a single elementary law yet caught a glimpse of";¹ "This is no science, it is only the hope of a science".² Woodworth, writing in 1931, echoes the same sentiment: "Existential psychology at the present time is rather an ideal or a programme for investigation, than anything like a rounded body of knowledge."³ But nothing could be more damaging than the following broadside from McDougall: "Psychology remains a chaos of dogmas and opinions diametrically opposed; a jangle of discordant

¹ James, W., In a Letter to James Sully (1890).

² James, W., *Text-Book of Psychology*, 1892, p. 468.

³ Woodworth, R. S., *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*, p. 42.

schools and sects; a field exploited by quacks and charlatans of every sort, preying upon the ignorance of a deeply interested public, which knows not which way to turn for authoritative guidance.”¹

The present challenge to religious faith and to Christian conduct,—whether direct or by implication,—really comes from two main systems, or movements, *Behaviourism*, and *Psycho-Analysis*.

BEHAVIOURISM

Watson and his school contemptuously reject the names *psychology* and *psychologist*, and prefer to call themselves *behaviourists*, and their science *behaviourism*. They complain that psychology is “too metaphysical”.

Watson’s theory of behaviour is the universal application of, and deduction from, Pavlov’s conditioned reflex. He believes all activity, including human, to be the product of physiological changes.

But Pavlov himself is more cautious than many of his followers. “It would be the height of presumption,” he says, “to regard these first steps in elucidating the physiology of the cortex as solving the intricate problems of the higher psychic activities in man when, in fact, at the present stage of our work, no detailed application of its results to man is yet permissible.” He speaks “with the utmost reserve”.² How different from Watson, and other appliers of his doctrine! Hogben, for instance, claims that the battle has been won: “Conscious behaviour should simply be called ‘conditioned’ behaviour.”³ So that functions previously ascribed to consciousness, are now to be ascribed to reflex action, and reflex action is automatic. Man is conceived as a physiological organism to be studied by the methods of the crucible and the balance. There is no *soul* for this “Science of the Soul” to study. The soul is a superstition, an illusion. But surely “something” must possess the superstition, and create the illusion? Yet soul, or mind, is ruled out as being a fiction, and merely a convenient term to express the body’s activities. Says Holt: “What we call ‘mind’ is merely the integration of the

¹ McDougall, W., *World Chaos*, p. 67.

² Pavlov, I. P., *The Conditioned Reflex*, 1927, pp. 330, 395.

³ Hogben, L. T., *The Nature of Living Matter*, p. 48.

organism's motor responses to stimuli."¹ But without his mind the behaviourist could not even deny the existence of it.

The existence of *thought* is likewise denied. Watson says of thought that "it is highly integrated bodily activity and nothing more".² This author, who also describes thought more precisely, as "the action of language mechanisms", and thinking, as "sub-vocal speech", adds in a footnote that there is as yet very little experimental evidence for this theory. But description is not explanation. How can the jerk of the vocal cords involve the miracle of thought? Here, again, there is confusion of the "thing" (thought) with its "instrument" or "mechanism" (language). The latter presupposes the former, although indeed thinking cannot go far without language. If thinking is not really thought, then how can Watson account for our consciousness, or awareness, of thought, and our ability to distinguish truth from falsehood?

Consciousness, we are told, is also an illusion. It likewise is a misdescription of conditioned reflexes. It is a needless assumption leading only to complication, because it cannot be observed, and all conclusions based upon it are unreliable. But if the mind does not know when it knows, then all knowledge, including that which the Behaviourist calls psychology, is an illusion. We are something more than automata whose reactions are mechanically determined. Consciousness is not just an irrelevance. Part of human behaviour is certainly conscious behaviour.

Behaviourists reject everything that differentiates man from beast. *Emotion* is "bodily resonance"; *conscience* is another name for the inheritance, or acquisition, of certain types of social behaviour; *personality* is "a centre of activity"; *morality* is no more than a "mode of behaviour", so accountability does not exist. *Religion*, too, is said to originate in the "conditioned reflex". Malan³ identifies it,—or at least mystical religion,—with the gazing of monkeys, and the barking of baboons. Watson himself says that with the advent of Behaviourism religion is "being replaced among

¹ Holt, E. B., *The Concept of Consciousness*.

² Watson, J. B., *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviourist*, 1919, p. 325 f.

³ Malan, J., *American Mercury*, 1932, 25, pp. 314-317.

the educated by experimental ethics".¹ From what we see and know of experimental ethics it is no improvement upon the old authoritative and speculative ethics based on religion! Finally, faith in *immortality* is rendered impossible if Watson's conception of the self is accepted, for in his view there is nothing in the self which cannot be expressed in the plain facts of heredity and acquired reactions, and their integrations.

Behaviourism, in its more extreme form, is mechanism gone mad. Blind, unintelligible tendencies, "describable in the concepts of mechanics and chemistry", may work well enough as an explanation of higher animal behaviour, and even of rudimentary human conduct, but not of all human behaviour. There is certainly a dividing line separating man from brute. Man is undoubtedly a wonderful piece of mechanism, but he transcends his machinery. Behaviour is one of his characteristics, but so also is experience. His mind has a passive, receptive quality, as well as an active, directive quality: and such a mind is not merely, or solely, moved by antecedents and concomitants.

The behaviouristic theory is too one-sided. It stops in the middle of the psychological process. It does not speak of ends, or aims, but merely of causal relations, and it tells us nothing about what transpires between stimulus and response. So the theory fails to account for all the facts. "We cannot trust them (behaviourists) to philosophize," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "for they attend to a very small part of the universe,—a merely material part,—and we cannot philosophize on a part only."

Behaviourism is a valuable supplementary method of studying mind, but as an exclusive method it falls short. Its developed technique of objective examination is scientific enough, and excellent as far as it goes, but the older, if less scientific, method of introspection must find a place in any adequate account of mental processes. Behaviourists should listen, in particular, to what saintly men have to say on religious matters, remembering that language is a method of self-expression.

Some of the sternest criticism of this "psychology without a soul" comes from the psychologists themselves. Wood-

¹ Watson, J. B., *Behaviourism*, 1924, p. 18.

worth says of it: "Behaviourism is a programme rather than a system, and a hope rather than a programme."¹ And McDougall writes of it: "It is a most mistaken and beggarly dwarf."² He names his own psychology "hormic" (purposive theory), because he is in rebellion against the mechanistic explanations of behaviour. The science of psychology itself may be relied upon to give the *coup de grâce*, sooner or later, to extreme behaviourism.

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

The main psychological challenge in the realm of religion emerges in the writings of the psycho-analysts. They supply a battery of arguments against religion, and add new weapons for the sceptic to handle. Much of their teaching is subversive of religion, as giving a purely natural explanation of every experience of the religious consciousness. "Religion," says Reik, "is the source of repression and should be abolished. It is a symptom of human silliness and the etiology of psychic ills."³ D. Forsyth maintains that psycho-analysis has given the *coup de grâce* to religion: "Psycho-analysis has severed its (religion's) very roots by showing that it belongs to the unreal and the phantasmal, and that it carries all the marks of a child mentality."⁴ Freud himself sits in judgment on religion and outspokenly and violently attacks it as man-made, as an illusion which has too long intrigued mankind: "Psycho-analysis has traced the origin of religion to the helplessness of childhood, and its content to the persistence of the wishes and needs of childhood into maturity." Again: "The truth of religion may be altogether disregarded." And again: "Religion is illusion and derives its strength from the fact that it falls in with our instinctual desires."⁵ "The whole attack," says McDougall, "amounts to saying that man's nature is such as naturally leads to the development of religions, therefore religion is purely illusory."⁶ The same argument can be applied to psycho-analysis itself.

¹ Woodworth, R. S., *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*, p. 97.

² McDougall, W., *Outline of Psychology*, P. IX., 1924.

³ Reik, T., *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, 1929, pp. 292-302.

⁴ Forsyth, D., *The Times*, Nov. 12th, 1934.

⁵ Freud, S., see *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, 1933, Lecture 35: also, *The Future of an Illusion*.

⁶ McDougall, W., *Psycho-analysis and Social Psychology*, 1936, p. 54.

I. FACTORS SAID TO EXPLAIN RELIGION

(1) *Suggestion: Fear.*

While the psychologists agree in regarding religion as man-made, they differ in their account of its origin. Durkheim¹ considers religion the product of the social consciousness, and the idea of God as a personification of social ideals. Trotter² also stresses the connection between religion and the herd instinct. But if religion is nothing but the product of mass suggestion, may we not say the same of irreligion? Suggestion is certainly operative, but it is a partial explanation only. It is nonsense to say that because a belief makes its entrance into the mind through suggestion it must be false, being nothing but suggestion. Jung³ finds the explanation of Christianity in racial dreams, thus reducing it to an illusion, the creation of the experiencing mind, a product of earth. Fear has also been made to play a central part by many writers. Long before the rise of modern psychology religion had been traced to fear. But to say that if religion grew out of fear it is all over with religion, is ridiculous. Fear, while entering to some extent into most religions, is a superficial and partial explanation only. Fear is real enough as a religious phenomenon, but it is always fear of something, or of someone. The fear-drive itself has to be explained. Freud's⁴ explanation of it as the recurrence of the experience of being born, is based on an assumption which makes the hypothesis unverifiable and almost meaningless. It is no final explanation to say that fear—including the fear of God—is born of the child's attitude towards his father. If religion can be traced to fear, then it cannot be religion that creates fear in man. Religion can remove fear, and often is the only thing that will do so. Where there is least religion there is often most fear present. Religion is not simply fear because fear happens to be one of its roots. Moreover, worth is not affected by historical origins. A thing is what it is, and not what it springs from; nor yet is it the sum total of the elements that compose it. Gregariousness and fear will not, individually or collectively, account for religion.

¹ Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life.*

² Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War.*

³ Jung, C. G., *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, 1922.

⁴ Freud, S., *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, 1922.

Religion is rooted in the whole of man's being and lays every instinct under tribute. Pratt and other psychologists are no doubt right in denying that religion is itself a special and distinct instinct. According to Thouless, "It is improbable that there should be a specific innate drive towards behaviour which man shares with no animal. A more reasonable explanation of religion in terms of human instincts would be that the energy of primitive drives with various biological ends may be deflected into the religious channel. Not one but many different drives may contribute energy to religious life and behaviour."¹ Shand and McDougall speak of religion as a sentiment rather than an instinct. And F. C. Bartlett writes: "As to whether there are sufficient reasons for assuming a distinct religious instinct or not, we need not now enquire. But that there is a 'religious interest or bent', original so far as the individual is concerned, stimulated by early training, but not wholly derived from this, and taking specific forms of development in different instances, seems to me indisputable."²

(2) *The Rôle of Sex in Religion*

Many psychological writers—the orthodox camp of Freud, and others—see in religion nothing except sex. The religious attitude is said to be the product of unconscious sexuality, a "sublimation" of the sex drive. It is thought to be reducible to that propensity because it is believed sex is the fundamental instinct. Jung says: ". . . in essence our life's fate is identical with the fate of our sexuality."³ Again, he contends that "mystic scenes of union with the Saviour generally are intermingled with an enormous amount of sexual libido".⁴ Schroeder says: "Religion is ungratified sex desire: it is a perverted way of getting the thrills properly available in love-making. When the morbid self-accusation has been outgrown no Redeemer is needed or desired."⁵ C. Moxon is convinced that anyone with a normal sex-life "has no time or energy to spare for communion with a personal God".⁶ E. D. Martin draws attention to the erotic element in many hymns,—e.g.

¹ Thouless, R. H., *General and Social Psychology*, 1937, p. 491.

² Bartlett, F. C., *Psychology and Primitive Culture*, p. 175.

³ Jung, C. G., *Collected Papers on Analytic Psychology*, 2nd. Ed., 1917, p. 172.

⁴ Jung, C. G., *Psychology of the Unconscious*, p. 323.

⁵ Schroeder, T., *Psycho-analytic Review*, 1929, 16, pp. 46-54; and pp. 361-376.

⁶ Moxon, C., *Psycho-analytic Review*, 1921, p. 98.

“Let me to Thy bosom fly”, “Safe in the arms of Jesus”, etc.¹ And E. Jones says: “The evidence for the connection cannot be ignored, and is indeed more extensive than is generally known.”²

It is true that some of the phenomena of mysticism appear to be sexually conditioned, and to be necessarily preceded by sexual deprivation. There is, too, as Starbuck has shown, a connection in time between puberty and conversion. But while it is true religious behaviour makes use of tendencies belonging to the sexual system, there is all the difference in the world between the sex responses of the religiously minded, and those of the libertine and the sexual pervert. Pfister³ has reported cases in which atheism and apostasy likewise have had sexual roots. And while James positively denies than any connection exists between religion and sexuality, and severely condemns certain wild theories of their interdependence, Leuba⁴ makes no reference to the connection. “Sex,” says A. E. Baker, “may be as important in life and religion as Freud holds it to be, but he will hardly find proof of it in the recorded words and acts of Jesus. Nobody would have taken the trouble to assert the close connection between religion and the sex instinct, except with the desire to discredit religion.”⁵

Much that the Freudian psychology has taught about the association of religion with sex (libido) is unconvincing, and most of the remainder distorted. Recently, however, there has been a considerable modification of earlier views in this connection. Religion is now regarded as having as one of its greatest functions that of freeing the individual from the tyranny of the aggressive and destructive instincts, thus giving greater power to the libidinal impulses.

The sex drive has had a share in the development of religion, but the latter cannot be reduced to the former. It cannot be claimed that religion is solely sexual in origin, and that religion and sex are identical the one with the other, when the two are in almost constant conflict. “Points of identity there undoubtedly are,” says Cronbach, “but points held in common do not exclude points of difference. The most crucial

¹ Martin, E. D., *The Mystery of Religion*, 1924, p. 73.

² Jones, E., *Journal of Medical Psychology*, 1926, p. 264 f.

³ Pfister, O., *The Psycho-analytic Method*, 1917, p. 411.

⁴ Leuba, J. H., *The Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*, 1921.

⁵ Baker, A. E., *Psycho-analysis Explained and Criticised*, pp. 164, and 176.

difference in the world is that of purpose or function (not origin).”¹

(3) *Religion and Psycho-neurosis*

The psycho-analysts make the abolition of a personal God part of their attack on religion. The mental mechanism of “*projection*” is applied to the explanation of religion. Belief in God rests on an illusion: God is a “*projection-phantasy*”, an idea in the mind without any corresponding reality. According to Leuba (a psychologist, but not a psycho-analyst), “In religious lives accessible to psychological investigation nothing requiring the admission of superhuman influences has been found.”² “Mystical experiences reveal not the Christian God, but the lawful workings of our psycho-physiological organisms.”³ And according to Jung: “God is . . . but a function of the Unconscious . . . God is to be considered as the representative of a certain sum of energy (libido). . . . The Divine effect springs from our own inner self.”⁴

If these statements are true the Christian doctrine of God is no longer tenable. Psycho-analysis, however, cannot answer the question whether or not there is a God. The discovery of psychological mechanism is no argument against Divine origination or co-operation. Projection is only a name given to a psycho-pathological phenomenon that is real and frequent enough, and not an explanation. This concept cannot explain quite normal activities of the mind. If men believed that God was only a projection on to the universe of their fears and desires, and if indeed He were nothing more, how long would they continue to worship Him? Even if the idea of God be described as a “*projection*”, that is no reason why we should resolve it into mere illusion: and in any case the illusion has still to be explained. And even if God be an illusion, we may well be thankful for our so-called illusions when we recall what belief in God has achieved in the way of human progress. Our projections are not mere phantasies woven out of baseless dreams, but frequently correspond to the real thing—or something like the real thing—in the objective world. Why not

¹ Cronbach, A., *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vol. 5, 1928, p. 605.

² Leuba, J. H., *A Psychological Study of Religion*, p. 272.

³ Leuba, J. H., *Psychology and Religious Mysticism*, 1925, p. 316.

⁴ Jung, C. G., *Psychological Types*, 1923, pp. 300, 301; also, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, pp. 75, 76.

this one? Projecting, or exteriorizing, may be our God-initiated response to His approach and appeal. Our contact and communion with God is no illusion. Religion is the result of genuine intercourse with an objective personal Being.

Another psycho-pathological factor said to co-operate in explaining religion is "*regression*", which is an unwitting reversion, or stepping-back, to an earlier attitude to life,—to the attitude which the child had to his parents in infancy. Freud derives religion from the "*Oedipus-complex*", which is a sexual interpretation of the relationship of a child to its parents: "God is the exalted father, and the longing for the father is the root of the need for religion"; "Religion is comparable to a childhood neurosis";¹ "Religion . . . seems not so much to be a lasting acquisition as a parallel to the neurosis which the civilized individual must pass through on his way from childhood to maturity."² Jones says: "The religious life represents a dramatization on a cosmic plane of the emotions, fears, and longings which arose in the child's relations to his parents."³ And Jung says: "The father is a powerful archetype that lives in the mind of the child. . . . Finally, instead of the father, the image of God appears."⁴

Thus, religion is explained away as the result of disillusioned man unconsciously seeking from an imaginary God the restoration and perpetuation of the infantile-situation of support and security. It is a nervous illness, a confession of helplessness and inadequacy. Religious images are substituted for "*wish-fulfillments*". Our hymns are quoted in support of the "Father-god" view, as though the "father-image" were the sole specimen in the repertoire of religion. Religion has a rich repertoire, and other images no less effectively than that of the "father" stir the emotions of the healthy-minded. In speaking of God man must use language that is anthropomorphic, and he is justified in so doing. The word "projection" itself is as much a mere symbol as the word "father".

¹ Freud, S., *The Future of an Illusion*, pp. 39, 92; see also, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 1929; and also, *Totem and Taboo*.

² Freud, S., *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, 1933.

³ Jones, E., *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 1926, Vol. 6, p. 264 i.

⁴ Jung, C. G., *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, p. 124.

People may, and do, make God in their own image, and consequently their conception of Him is perverted, limited and inadequate: He is a super-man. It is true that the God some Christians talk about bears little resemblance to the Father of our Lord. But religion should not be judged by the extravagances, or aberrations, of its devotees. The normal Christian's definition of God is not just a reflection of himself, fashioned in the image of men. Many people disclaim any mental image of God, and many others do not conceive Him under any human symbol. For many God is impersonal.¹ There is great diversity in the description of God given by those who have had a genuine, and normal, experience of Him. Freud's explanation based on the "father-image" is insufficient and inadequate as the sole explanation of belief in God. The memory of father-protection cannot persist where it never existed, as for instance where the tie of child and father is weak, or non-existent. God is believed in by those who never knew their own father. Freud over-emphasizes the importance in later life of the initial experiences in childhood. There are more than "infantile" roots in Christianity. It is not just "a very present help in time of trouble". Why should infantile experiences in the family-situation be more potent than those arising at a later date? There are other childish needs as great as that for the father's guardianship, which Freud fails to take sufficient account of. The mother is also an object of the child's desires, and the first object. Why was this stage of childhood rather than the second not chosen by mankind, and a protecting and comforting God after the pattern of the mother unconsciously invented? A "Mother-god" would get rid of the less pleasurable side of religion. Actually, in many pagan religions there are mother-gods. J. F. Mozley points out that "on the wish-illusion theory the sterner elements (in religion) are utterly unaccountable: they are an adding of new terrors to the old ones from which we are supposed to be desiring to escape".² The element of desire cannot be the whole explanation of religion. Many who call God "Father" are conscious of far more in their relationship than a "sense of dependence". As depicted by Freud, the "father-image" is too limited and narrow. When men speak of God as "Father" they may mean

¹ Leuba, J. H., see, *Belief in God and Immortality*.

² Mozley, J. F., *The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol. III, 1930-31, p. 50.

very different things by it at different times and under different circumstances. There are wide differences in the family-situation. The typical family described by Freud,—himself a Jew,—in which the mother is the tender protector, and the father the stern incarnation of discipline, is only one of many forms of the family situation, and the one most characteristic of Judaism. The effects of different family environments must influence greatly one's conception of God. The term "father" has many connotations. It will mean one thing to a child reared in a happy home, and quite another to a child whose father is a drunkard, and immoral, and a wife-beater. God, nevertheless, is worshipped in one form or another by people who have been reared in all types of home. Selbie¹ points out that Fatherhood means one thing in a matriarchal regime, another in ancient Rome, another in later Judaism, and quite another in Victorian society.

The conclusion that infantile relationship with the parents determines later emotional development, and is the framework on which is modelled one's attitude towards God, may be true,—and if so is an important fact in development psychology,—but so far no statistical information has been brought forward in support of it,—only anecdotal evidence obtained in the course of psycho-analysis of psycho-neurotic patients. Whether or not there is a correlation between childhood attitude to the parent, and adult attitude to God, could be demonstrated by a careful statistical enquiry. Freud admits that his own explanations leave the origin of religion "wrapped in obscurity".²

Christianity is not a form of "infantilism", a "neurosis-defensive or compulsive", a "flight from reality", or a "compensation for inferiority". If religion were either the cause or the effect of a neurosis, then belief in God would be proportionate to the degree of the abnormality, and should be rare in mentally normal people: indeed, the latter should all be atheists. As this is not the case, the necessary verification of the hypothesis that the idea of God is only a "projection" is wanting. On this hypothesis, remarks Streeter, "a person who is recovering from a state of disease ought, in exact proportion to the extent of his cure, to begin to disbelieve in God. . . . Belief in God was central in the mentality of Jesus. . . . On

¹ Selbie, W. B., *The Fatherhood of God*, 1936, p. 25.

² Freud, S., *Civilization and its Discontents*, 1929, pp. 20-21.

this theory Jesus must have been psycho-neurotic to an exceptional degree".¹

(4) *Prayer and Auto-suggestion*

Prayer, according to some psychologists, is a monologue: it is but the echo of a man's own thoughts and desires. Even though the man may not know it, his prayer is only a form of auto-suggestion, a purely subjective process whose supposed objective results are illusory. Prayer is the mind in action, taking an advanced course in Couéism. It is admitted that praying issues in important and desirable subjective effects on mind and body, and it is claimed that these are the outcome of the successful application of the laws of suggestion. Leuba writes: "Science does not know that in prayer there is contact with a Divine person, that is the traditional understanding of the matter, but science knows only that in prayer we *think* and *feel* ourselves in the presence of, or in communion with, God."² Psychology, it is said, does not justify us in regarding prayer as anything but a "projection" of our needs and aims on something outside of, and above, ourselves. To quote Flügel: "Unwilling to give up the primitive sense of power and importance which a growing insight into reality shows to be unfounded, Man displaces on to his God the desired qualities which he can no longer attribute to himself and deludes himself into believing that he can still attain his wishes, through prayer and similar rites, by merely wishing them aloud to God."³

The challenge is easily met. It is quite wrong to imagine that all people who pray treat God as a being whose chief function it is to approve and carry to fulfilment their own wishes. Some who pray may be so deluded, but not all. And again: the neurotic is exhausted by his illusions, and depressed by "regression", but prayer does not result in unhappiness and inactivity. Fully developed and satisfactorily adjusted adults pray, and they are men of power, not pithless weaklings. Says Prof. Gwatkin: "This illusion has been the great nation-making, nation-binding, nation-breaking force in history."⁴ Those who pray do not believe that only the mind is changed

¹ Streeter, B. H., *Seventh International Congress of Psychology*, Oxford, 1923.

² Leuba, J. H., *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 23, 1926, p. 719.

³ Flügel, J. C., *The Psycho-analytic Study of the Family*, 1926, p. 153.

⁴ Gwatkin, Quoted in, *Psychology and the Church*, 1925, p. 77.

by praying. They pray because they know themselves to be dependent beings: they seek God and His aid. Prayer is addressed to a real and personal God. And it is no more a monologue than is a psycho-analytic interview. We agree with Thouless when he says: "Prayer is not an activity undertaken merely for the sake of its effects on the mind or character of the subject, but primarily for the purpose of coming into communion with, or otherwise affecting, the Being to whom prayer is addressed. Its subjective effects, although they may be important, are generally only incidental from the point of view of the person praying."¹

To explain prayer and its benefits fully, factors in addition to suggestion must be admitted. Auto-suggestion can never explain why Christians continue to pray. Psychology only describes the subjective effects of prayer, and cannot give an explanation for any outside influence on the human mind.

(5) *Instinct and Sin*

The idea has gained wide acceptance that the Christian conception of Sin, and the traditional religious methods of dealing with it, are invalidated by recent psychological teaching. Bertrand Russell says "no modern psychologist can accept the traditional religious psychology of sin. Psycho-analysis has rejected the old doctrine of sin".² What religion calls sin, psycho-analysis regards as symptoms of a neurosis. The sexual perversions are said to be psycho-pathological phenomena. Sin is the name given to the forces which produce conflict within the mind. There is no such thing as sense of sin in the Christian sense, but only *complexes*. The new names for sin are *mental disorder*, *moral disease*, and *maladjustment*. Sin is psychic evil, that has a psychical explanation, and may be cured by psycho-therapy. There is confusion of diagnosis here.³

To sin, according to Freud, is to be influenced by unconscious impulses. No doubt there is a connection between sin and the Unconscious. Much evil is not wilful, but is due to the influence of the Unconscious. But psychology conflicts with the Christian doctrine of sin when it lays the great stress it does on the unconscious emotional and instinctive side of

¹ Thouless, R. H., *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, 1923, p. 171.

² Russell, B., *The Conquest of Happiness*.

³ Grensted, L. W., *Psychology and God*, 1936 Ed., Lecture 5.

man's nature. While not perhaps denying man the power of reason, or deliberate, free, conscious choice—a power affirmed in the Christian doctrine,—the psycho-analyst's finding is that this power is lamentably limited by unconscious compulsions. Psychological enquiry does not affect the reality of the sense of sin, which still remains after the psychologist has had his say, and called it by whatever name he chooses. Sin is essentially conflict with God, and not just conflict with self, or maladjustment of the "innate motive forces behind behaviour" (instincts), to a complex and highly artificial environment. It remains, what St. Paul called it, "separation from God", from which men, even mentally normal men, require to be saved. Pfister may say that "psycho-analysis aids in producing that state of mind known as purification and the conquest of sin";¹ and Hadfield, that the treatment for sin is "the persistent presentation of a higher ideal";² but the Christian knows that "the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin", and that in this experience we obtain release from the frequent cause of repression and mental conflicts, and from nervous symptoms. We shall always require the aid of Christ, to cure sin. "Without Me ye can do nothing."

(6) *Guilt and Conscience*

The sense, or feeling, of guilt is said by Freud to be subjective emotional tension produced by the *ego* forces and the *super-ego* forces in the mind. In recent research he has penetrated great and interesting depths in his analysis of the working of these psychological groups of forces. He has shown that "the normal man is not only far more immoral than he believes, but is also far more moral than he has any idea of".³ Libidinal and aggressive phantasies give rise to the sense of guilt. This may be true as regards the excessive sense of guilt displayed by the neurotic. For Freud the moral sense of guilt has no objective significance. Of an objective moral order, and of objective moral standards,—such as Christian writers postulate,—Freudians know nothing. Some psycho-analysts claim that most children show no conscious sense of guilt for several years after birth.⁴ A large part of the feeling of guilt must

¹ Pfister, O., *Zeit. f. Religionspsychol.*, 1928, 3, pp. 5-27.

² Hadfield, J. A., *Psychology and Morals*, p. 48.

³ Freud, S., *The Ego and the Id*.

⁴ Forsyth, D., *Psychology and Religion: a Study by a Medical Psychologist*, 1935, p. 126.

necessarily remain unconscious. Freud holds that feelings of guilt arise originally out of the Oedipus-situation (complex).

As for conscience: Freud writes as if the "*super-ego*" ("ego-ideal") is the cause and origin of the conscience as such. It is merely the sub-conscious mechanism by which the prestige of the father latent within from earliest years, or of the social group and social convention, assert themselves. It is the "*super-ego*" which, retaining the character of the father, maintains the moral censorship. It is composed exclusively of parental injunctions and inhibitions. "The observance of taboo," says Freud, "is the beginning of conscience";¹ and again: "Dread of society is the essence of what is called conscience."² Jones says that conscience begins its development through some of the hurting tendency of the aggressive impulses, which previously had been directed against other people, being taken over and directed against one's self. He distinguishes two consciences: "The primitive unconscious conscience (*super-ego*) gradually develops into the conscious one, which is the most important part of our character".³

True conscience, in the Christian sense, is not just an irrational feeling. Here again, the psycho-analysts need to be reminded that the worth of a thing is not conferred by its birth-certificate. "Conscience," says Selbie, "is an activity of the whole personality, and involves reason, emotion and will."⁴ McDougall maintains that it is "identical with the whole moral personality, with moral character".⁵ "One realises," writes William Brown, "that conscience is a good thing. It is one of the fundamental values of human life. Like Truth it is not to be questioned, so far as it is *real* conscience."⁶

2. PSYCHO-ANALYSIS AND MORALITY

Some modern psychological theories are a source of peril to the moral life. Many people are studying conduct in the light of psycho-analytical teaching, some of the least desirable aspects of which are having a baneful effect on their morals, especially in matters of sex. There is a demand for a lower

¹ Freud, S., *Totem and Taboo*, 1918.

² Freud, S., *Group Psychology*, quoted by McDougall in, *Psycho-analysis and Social Psychology*, 1936, p. 127.

³ Jones, E., *Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1935, p. 251.

⁴ Selbie, W. B., *Psychology of Religion*, 1924, p. 233.

⁵ McDougall, W., *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 294.

⁶ Brown, W., *Science and Personality*, 1929, p. 114.

and laxer code than the traditional standards of morality advocated by the Church. We are supposed to have advanced to a stage when the religious sanction of morality must be abandoned.

In the Freudian theory the most important principle and explanation of human behaviour is *infantile sexuality*. This doctrine explains a child's passionate love for his mother, attitude towards authority, avarice, cruelty, pity, sympathy, grief, indecency, and modesty. Erotic desire—expressed or repressed—explains them all. There is no virtue in the virtues. The word "sex" will not stand the stretching Freud gives it when he explains sucking and caressing. J. T. MacCurdy says: "It cannot be too often repeated that 'sexual' is too strong a word to use, because a child . . . does not and cannot know what the term means in the way an adult does."¹ Freud's view is that both infantile sexuality and adult sexuality are manifestations of the libido, and the chief characteristic of the former is its aggressive and sadistic character. This central core of the psycho-analytic theory is Freud's gravest absurdity. We cannot agree with the implications of the phrase "infantile sexuality". It cannot be regarded as a final statement of the emotional development of the child in the family. The conception requires restatement and exact scientific verification. Freud's evidence is drawn from psycho-neurotic patients. He is more successful in accounting for men's vices than in accounting for their virtues. His mechanisms will not explain quite normal reactions of the mind like pity, modesty, sympathy and grief, which, however, can be abnormally intensified by psychological causes.

The other fundamental of Freud's psychology is "*repression*". The dangers of this inevitable mental process are exaggerated by him. There are varying degrees of repression. Only excessive repression can be claimed to be the root cause of many mental disorders. William Brown says: "We must not look upon extrusion (repression) itself as essentially pathological."² For Rivers³ repression was not pathological but a necessary element in progress. Flügel,—a fairly orthodox Freudian,—however, holds there are grave disadvantages attendant upon the successful repression even of undoubtedly

¹ MacCurdy, J. T., *Problems in Dynamic Psychology*, 1923, p. 294.

² Brown, W., *Science and Personality*, 1929, p. 38.

³ Rivers, W. H. R., *Instinct and the Unconscious*, 1920, p. 185.

harmful and anti-social tendencies. We are warned that the man who has his repressed tendencies thoroughly under control will suffer from serious limitations of character. "Through psycho-analysis," he says, "the idea is gradually gaining ground that suppression and dogmatic adherence to ancient codes is not necessarily the only—or indeed the best—method of dealing with the sexual difficulties of our time."¹ Hence the cult of *self-expression*. Pent up instincts and emotions must be gratified,—it is said by many lay-readers, and some popularizers of Freud,—lest their repression produce maladjustments and complexes. Such a doctrine is unadulterated hedonism. Everything depends upon the quality of the self that is expressed. Self-expression can be creative, or destructive. Instincts are morally neutral. They often conflict. Living in obedience to their dictates would be both confusing and degrading and more likely to take a man hell-wards than heaven-wards. Indiscriminate and immediate satisfaction of the instincts would make social life impossible. Freud is saying the same thing, in other words when he concludes "that every culture must be built up on coercion and instinctual renunciation".² Unrestrained sexual licence can never be regarded as natural. McDougall disdains the gospel of free morals. He is a firm upholder of accepted codes. He spurns the creed of self-expression: "Freud's teaching, filtered and distorted, works upon the multitude as a precept against all restraint in sex matters. He seems to the man in the street to say,—You are all sex . . ., be frankly sexual and you will be both happy and healthy. Restrain your sex impulse at your peril: that way lies neurotic disorder and insanity. This incitement to self-expression is re-enforced (however doubtfully legitimate) from the Freudian psychology: all restraint, inhibition, self-control, involves repression, and all repression is bad: therefore, never restrain your impulses. . . . This is the way the *waster-mind* is cultivated"³ . . . "Where people break loose from the restraining influences of established practice, corruption and crime set in."⁴ No experimental enquiry has yet been undertaken to prove under what conditions Freudian repression takes place. "Almost certainly," says Thouless, "it

¹ Flügel, J. C., *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 8, pp. 480, 481.

² Freud, S., *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 11.

³ McDougall, W., *Psycho-analysis and Social Psychology*, p. 198.

⁴ McDougall, W., *Character and the Conduct of Life*.

occurs most readily in hysterical personalities. . . . Probably also . . . in those in which the emotional disposition in question has already been strengthened by free indulgence in its behaviour before this has been suppressed.”¹

The Christian life is not self-expression, but *self-control* and self-sacrifice. The cure for repression is not self-indulgence, but self-control. It is neither impossible nor dangerous to control our instincts. Only after a certain point does wise inhibition become dangerous repression. The Christian life is the very opposite of giving every wish free indulgence. It entails conflict, tension, suffering, struggle, which may take place without repression and its disadvantageous consequences. Rivers surely was right when he said, speaking of the energy derived from spiritual conflict, that “we do not know how high the goal that it may reach”.² Christ was made perfect through suffering. In our struggle to regulate our impulses we need His help and with it we are promised victory. “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,” was the discovery of St. Paul. Self-conquest is an essential element in soul-making, and the key to all moral progress.

Self-control may take the form of redirection of the “*libido*” into socially desirable channels, so as to form a unified and normally developed moral personality. This is achieved through the process of “*sublimation*”, which is part of the psycho-analytic cure for psycho-neurosis. For instance, superfluous sex-energy may be “turned aside from its sexual goal” and expressed in aesthetic, and in many other interests. But, however much of a safety valve sublimation may be for repressed emotion of desire, (“exactly how, when, and to what extent it can be achieved remains a question”),³ it cannot do away with the need of self-control, which is a deliberate and conscious activity. The psycho-analyst regards the capacity for conscious self-control, without resort to repression, as constituting his criterion of emotional maturity and successful adaptation to life. Morality, like religion, is more than the redirection of energies. The sentiment of love is not merely a deflection of older sex promptings, it is something new. The moral can never be derived from the purely sensual. Religion

¹ Thouless, R. H., *General and Social Psychology*, 1937, p. 100.

² Rivers, W. H. R., *Instinct and the Unconscious*, p. 185.

³ Woodworth, R. S., *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*, 1931, p. 164.

provides the most effective means of practical sublimation by transforming our unbridled passions into a love of God and man.

The nature of morality

There is little agreement among psychologists on moral issues: they furnish no consistent moral doctrine. Freud holds that the morality of society "demands more victims than it is worth", and that "behaviour is neither dictated by honesty nor instituted with wisdom. The present psycho-analytical view may be epitomised in Jones' statement: "Social institutions (religion, government, marriage laws, etc.) "subserve a double purpose,—arrange for some measure of expression for the primary impulses—and also they act in the service of the super-ego by checking and restraining free expression of the primary impulses. Restraint is a process that proceeds from within the mind as well as being imposed on it from without. Impulses conflict with restraining forces present in every mind from early childhood."¹ Man's obedience is often an honest attempt to live up to a self-chosen standard of goodness. We see in Christ the man we should like to be. Morality, for the Christian, is self-expression, but the expression of a self re-created by the Spirit of Christ. Christ has been born within him. He is no longer "under law"; he is no bond-servant to sin; but a son of God, by adoption.

Freud advocates the abandonment of parts of the moral law in order to lessen the hardship of controlling brute instinct. Sexual prohibitions, for instance, are to go. And as only those laws are to be binding which are easy to keep and personally acceptable, each man's moral code will be a sliding-scale selected according to environment, temperament, and the whim of any moment. God, we are told, will not be required if men wish to be moral! "To be moral it will be enough to be intelligent."² Non-supernatural motives will be sufficient to restrain the educated from wrong-doing. Jung³ contends that supernaturalism is merely a symbol adapted to a primitive stage of thought. He too suggests that the religious adjustment is obsolete, but that a mode of adjustment must still be found which shall be as serviceable practically as the old one. To

¹ Jones, E., *Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, 1935, p. 255.

² Freud, S., *The Future of an Illusion*.

³ Jung, C. G., *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, 1917.

this we reply: Education never has, and never will by itself, make bad men good. The worship of Reason as a substitute for Religion during the French Revolution was a failure. Human nature can only be changed by being transformed by some power higher than itself being called into play, and that power is God.

Freud's theory of morals explains away too much, and therefore explains very little.

3. THE UNCONSCIOUS

Freud, in particular, has demonstrated the enormous importance of the *Unconscious* in mental life. To this "pet child" he attributes very great influence over all that we do, and think, and desire. He regards the Unconscious as more important than the Conscious: the latter constituting only a carefully selected, more or less insignificant, portion of the whole. Jones says: "It is this deeper region of the mind that constitutes the core of the personality from which all we know of ourselves is only a series of superficial radiations."¹ Religious manifestations are held to proceed from "the abysmal depths of personality", and it is confidently anticipated that this master-key will throw light on all the mysteries of religion. Sanday² suggested that this region of psychic life is the seat and dwelling-place of Deity. But we cannot believe that this "field of fighting forces", this "devil's cauldron exhaling evil vapours" is a receptacle suited and adapted for the presence of God in man. It is impossible to attribute any moral character, in the Christian sense, to this Freudian Frankenstein, this "fraudulent entity",³ as McDougall calls it. We say with Evelyn Underhill: "We shall never capitulate to the attacks of a psychology that assures us that what we mistake for the Eternal world is really our own unconscious mind."⁴ It is an exaggeration to conceive consciousness to be the slave of the Unconscious. It is on the supreme importance of consciousness, acknowledged as master in its own house, that the faith of Jesus Christ lays all its emphasis. There, in consciousness, the battle for "man-soul" is lost or won.

¹ Jones, E., *Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, 1935, p. 250.

² Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, pp. 165, 166.

³ McDougall, W., *Psycho-analysis and Social Psychology*, 1936, p. 19.

⁴ Underhill, Evelyn, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of To-day*, 1923.

The dangers of the hypothesis of the Unconscious are many. It is a convenient symbol of an invented region of the mind only, and not an explanation. As a working theory it has justified itself by its results. But we are not dominated by repressed tendencies that belong to the system of the Unconscious,—as Freud maintains,—though our conduct and character may be influenced by, and partly dependent upon, them. To speak of the impotence of consciousness, and of the iron necessity of unconscious urges, in particular of Freud's two great groups of human instincts,—the “*death instincts*”—and the “*life instincts*”—results in thorough-going psychological determinism. Freud maintains that whatever is in the mind can be explained in terms of previous experience. The Christian knows that he can take a moral stand against instinctive and unconscious opposition, and moreover, he knows when he is taking one. He is conscious of the distinction between yielding and resisting.

This theory, while not denying the value of reason as an essential attribute of consciousness, compels it to take a back seat. It is made subservient to the Unconscious, the slave of instinct and emotion, and not the guiding force in life, as Christians hold it to be. Freud writes: “Logical argumentation is powerless against affective interests.”¹ Intellect merely disguises the instinctive emotions and impulses which move us to action. This is also McDougall's view: “The intellect . . . is their servant.”² If reason is only a “*rationalization*”, how can Freud and McDougall be sure of the truth of their own theory? And how can we say that any particular line of action is the right one if the theory is taken literally? Reason distinguishes between excuses for conduct and the real motives.

In his earlier writings, which are largely devoted to pointing out the part played by irrational motives in human conduct, Freud hardly ever refers to the intellectual side of life, but more recently, when writing on religion as an illusion, he upholds the primacy of the intellect: “The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing. Ultimately, after endlessly repeated rebuffs, it succeeds.”³

¹ Freud, S., *The Future of an Illusion*.

² McDougall, W., *Character and the Conduct of Life*, p. 12; also, *Social Psychology*, p. 44.

³ Freud, S., *The Future of an Illusion*.

Freud's glorification of the reason is now undoing his earlier work. He contemplates a golden age when the reason shall dethrone the feelings. In that day the religious neurosis shall be outgrown, and intellect, whose strength Freud has so long and so often decried, shall attain the ends for which religion is now working. The conflicting views of Freud cannot affect Christian teaching which, while upholding the sovereignty of reason, avoids his two extremes by steering a middle course.

4. GENERAL CRITICISMS

Although Freudian psychology contains much that is both true and valuable, psycho-analysis as a whole is unacceptable to Christianity. Some of the teaching is grotesque, absurd, indelicate, repellent, and a menace to faith and morals. Many of the theories appear worthless, irrelevant, impertinent and irreverent. Accused in his own camp of narrowness and dogmatism, Freud is in even greater risk of error when he enters the wider field of religion. Only a meagre and inadequate account of religion is given: it is more complex than Freud conceives it to be. The religious views expressed are alike ill-informed and intolerable. Psycho-analysis alone is unable to account for all the facts of religion. While some forms of religion may be illusionist, false, invalid, it is an erroneous assumption that all religion is. As William Brown remarks: "The religious attitude does not show itself in course of analysis as merely due to infantile experiences, or to regression, etc. The religious attitude may be purified by analysis, but it is not removed."¹

Much of psycho-analysis is pseudo-philosophy or pseudo-theology. When it decks itself up in the panoply of metaphysics and masquerades as an authoritative guide to life, it is at once an insidious foe to Christianity; and a traitor to science. Drever writes: "Judged by the writings and utterances of some psycho-analysts, psycho-analytical theory seems to have an ambition to become a "psychosophy"; it undoubtedly has many of the marks. If guessing, or shall we say, intuition and phantasy, are to be substituted for patient observation, careful analysis, and rigorous logical procedure, in developing the various theories or myths, then that is certainly what it is

¹ Brown, W., *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 1929, p. 46.

going to become.”¹ This is not just invective, but is supported by a similar statement from Flügel, himself a psycho-analyst in the strict sense: “The trouble with psycho-analysis at present is that there is too much of the art about it, and too little of the scientific method that can be applied in experimentally controlled and repeated observations.”² From a strictly scientific point of view most of the theories cannot rank as scientific at all: they are unproved speculation. Drever writes again: “Psycho-analytical theory (like behaviourism) is guilty of ignoring the principles of science by going far beyond the observed facts, and ignoring the limitations under which the facts have been observed.”³

Freud’s analysis of human nature is over-simplified: fundamental elements are denied or neglected. Personality, like religion, is more complex than Freud imagines. It is more than the summation of its elements—instinct, phantasies, projections, etc. It, too, can be destroyed by dissection.

The Freudian psychology is fatally one-sided. While it has opened our eyes to the importance of sex motivation, its insistence on sex is unduly magnified and lacking in proportion, and this in spite of Freud’s insistence on the importance of other impulses, such as the so-called ego-impulse. (Both Jung and Adler attribute less importance than Freud to sexual factors.) It is also animalistic, materialistic, deterministic, and pessimistic. The descriptions are too pictorial, too metaphorical. Descriptive and ambiguous terms like “unconscious”, “sublimation”, and “Oedipus conflict”, and the complex theories associated with them, add nothing by way of explanation or interpretation to our understanding of the phenomena. Many of the conclusions are dubious, far-fetched, unwarranted, extravagant, or false. Till psycho-analysis becomes more truly experimental and employs quantitative methods, speculation should cease.

Unnecessary emphasis is laid on unhealthy and abnormal conditions of mind. Freud’s material is drawn from sexual neurasthenics; his doctrines are based largely on the study of sick personalities. Hence the psycho-analyst tends to forget

¹ Drever, J., *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 27, Part 3, 1937, p. 247.

² Flügel, J. C., *A Hundred Years of Psychology*, 1933, p. 287.

³ Drever, J., *British Journal of Psychology*, *ibid*, p. 249.

what normality is like. Even when he analyses normals, he sees them in the light of his knowledge of abnormals. He is better at diagnosing and seeking to understand the neurotic than at interpreting the normal, though even here false diagnosis is not infrequent. He has no right to apply to normals, without modification, the conclusions derived from the study of psycho-pathological cases, nor to explain the normal in terms of the psycho-pathological, without distinguishing them: to do so is scientifically unsound.

Among scientific psychologists (and anthropologists) psycho-analysis is violently rejected by the majority. "Nowhere in the whole of Freud's writings," says Wohlgemuth, "is there a shred of a proof, only assertions, assertions of having proved something before, but which was never done. . . . For psychologists, in general, psycho-analysis was still-born, and has ever been as dead as a door-nail."¹

Woodworth says: "If my personal opinion of Freud's psychology were sought I should have to say that I cannot believe his system to be true in any absolute sense, or even to rank with the great scientific theories which co-ordinate existing knowledge, and serve as guides for further discovery . . . For the present the academic psychologist has a vision of these attractive theories and conceptions surrounded, each one, by a halo, which on closer observation takes the form of a question mark."² And Drever writes: "Psycho-analytic theory is in no way a final psychology: merely provisional: only a beginning has been made."³ Psycho-analysis requires radical modification, and the first step must be to take it out of the hands of the secularists.

Are the psycho-analytic critics of religion qualified to deal with religion? Have they shared the religious experiences they analyse and explain? Or are they passing judgment on data got at second-hand? Says C. E. Raven, "They possess not that which would enable them to appreciate the world in which their victims move. The ignorant should keep silent, and when vocal their opinions should be ignored. If religion be illusion, mankind will prefer to be deluded with the saints rather than sane with the psychologists"⁴

¹ Wohlgemuth, A., *A Critical Examination of Psycho-analysis*, 1923, p. 246.

² Woodworth, R. S., *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*, 1931, pp. 171, 192.

³ Drever, J., *Philosophy*, 1932, p. 319.

⁴ Raven, C. E., *Jesus and the Gospel of Love*, 1931.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION SUPREME

Religion is a condition of mental health. It is a safeguard against maladjustment, a force that makes for sanity. It offers the best solution of mental conflicts. It is capable of counteracting neuroses. Bastide says: "Religion is not so much a neurosis as a successful dealing with a neurosis."¹ Pfister describes religion as "not so much a neurotic-compulsion as a release from such."² "The religious experience," says Brown, "is normal, and not pathological. People who have it are the better for it. They do not become morbid and neurotic through it."³ "It begins to look," says Yellowlees, "as if religion might be after all . . . the very crown and completion of life. . . . And the question is whether a man can attain full psychological development at all apart from it."⁴

Such statements by practising psycho-analysts show that religion has allies in the "enemy" camp. Religion, and religion only, keeps many a person sane, and assists in making many another more normal. It gives a sense of tranquillity, stability, adequacy and power. It substitutes profitable and edifying thinking for destructive and degrading thinking, and fair and comforting memories for foul and painful ones. It achieves all that psychology attempts, and more, in helping people to face up to, and deal with, the difficulties of life. There is no evidence of large numbers of religious folk parading to the consulting-rooms of the psycho-analysts, complaining that they are burdened with their religion and want to get rid of it, and cannot: yet the neurotic attend in the hope of being relieved of their illusions, obsessions and phobias. Often it is only a hope, for the failures of modern psychotherapy are numerous enough.

The beneficial results of religion are admitted by Flügel who says: "In spite of its basis in primitive infantile fixations . . . religion has performed a work of very great value."⁵ He contends that it is for its service as a means of "*displacement*", [=transference of an affect from one idea to another],

¹ Bastide, R., *Les Problèmes de la Vie Mystique*, 1931.

² Pfister, O., *Imago*, 1932, pp. 149-184.

³ Brown, W., *Science and Personality*, 1929, p. 228.

⁴ Yellowlees, D., *Psychology's Defence of the Faith*, 1936, p. 128.

⁵ Flügel, J. C., *The Psycho-analytic Study of the Family*, 1926, p. 152.

above all others, that we are indebted to religion. And though considerable modification and purification of most existing religious forms will be demanded in the future, he thinks religion in some form may well continue to be a permanent necessity. And, by Jones: "In the history of the world, religion has proved perhaps the most powerful help to human weakness, to man's constant endeavour to cope with his own nature."¹ Even Freud, who in his dealings with his patients consistently avoids bringing in religion, admits that it has some value. He attributes the beneficial results to a false and evil cause,—to a neurosis. Was anyone ever bettered by a neurosis? Can goodness and poise of mind be produced by an illusion? Pierre Janet claims that religion is very crude and unsatisfactory as a means of cure, but we claim that religion, at its best, is superior to all other means of cure. Religion can "alter the will as a whole", which Janet² says is the complete and satisfactory cure, or preventative. Jung, too, allows some value and reality to religious experience, and makes great use of it. He gives religious attitudes a distinct place in his method of cure. He says that among all his patients in the second half of life, "there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that everyone of them feels ill because he has lost that which the living religions of every age give to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook".³

The evidence, alike of friend and foe among the psychologists themselves, thus goes to show that psychological bogies, like fears, complexes, regressions, and obsessions, can best be cast out of the mind by the religion of Jesus Christ. Why then should we abandon beliefs that have stood the test of centuries of experience? It would be foolish to dethrone our deities. Psychology is a poor substitute for God. Despite the scuttling tactics of Freud, despite adverse criticism and even contemptuous rejection by many psychologists, religion persists and will survive, for man is incurably religious. Any psychological attempt to abolish religion will fail, for only the religion of Jesus Christ can save men from madness, and the race from

¹ Jones, E., *Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, 1935, p. 255.

² Janet, P., *Principles of Psychotherapy*, p. 111.

³ Jung, C. G., *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 1933.

irreparable impoverishment. The "new Voltaire" will be no more successful than the old. Religion in the hands of Watson, Freud, and the rest, would be religion in the hands of the Philistines. We are not going to be driven from the good land if we are to receive in exchange nothing better than the barren wilderness of these psychologists. The challenge will pass, and religion will be left as real and stronger than ever.

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