Hell and Madness; Grace and Sanity:
The true biblical basis for mental health

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Introduction

The Biblical Basis for Mental Health

We have to go to the Bible for mental health because secular psychology does not have the answers. Humans are stuck with a crushing issue that has nothing to do with this world; it is about our eternal destiny, the reality of the Lake of Fire (or hell), and humans’ sense of being destined to go there.

God Who? For reasons that will become apparent in this book, God is the God of the Bible; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the Father of Jesus. We humans can only understand ourselves and have peace of mind—or mental health—if we accept the Bible as literally true and embrace it.

Heaven or hell: Accepting the Bible from Genesis onwards is likely to be a road block for many who consider themselves “enlightened.” This is a huge problem for anyone trained in the secular Bible-rejecting realm. It means throwing away a lifetime of accepting that the Bible is just metaphor and myth.

The Leap: The choice lies between staying in one’s semi-comfort zone, still wearing blinders, or plunging into a what seems like a risky new field of vision. This leap for the truth can have some painful short-term worldly repercussions, but in the long term it is the only solution. There can be the problem of keeping one’s job in an anti-Bible university or counseling center—and many so-called Christian counseling centers and universities willfully reject the idea of hell, too. But the author found that once one knows the truth, it is intolerable to be in such an environment.

The terrible predicament: To really understand mental illness means recognizing the terrible predicament humans are in: that anyone who is not one hundred percent holy, pure and undefiled is separated from God, will not only die physically, but will burn in the Lake of Fire. Further, knowledge of this is born into the
human psyche. We call it the sin=death/hell equation; another way of expressing it is “existential guilt,” the sense of deserving eternal damnation. This guilt is at the bottom of all human psychopathology.

The good news: The good news (or gospel) is the rescue spelled out in the Law God gave Moses, a provision fulfilled in Christ. This is the cure for mental illness. This means it is not enough to know a bit of the New Testament. Jesus himself made it clear that we have to be familiar with the Law (or Torah, or Pentateuch) and prophecies (Matthew 5:17-18; 7:12; Luke 24:44).

Secular humanistic psychology: The main enemy of the Bible in the mental health world is secularism. Secular humanistic psychology has no trouble observing the symptoms of existential guilt, but interprets them in a limited worldly context. It notes the universal craving for unconditional love, the universal fear of abandonment, the low-self-esteem, and the searing anxiety in humans, but understands these things only in non-spiritual terms. The real problem is our sense of being eternally separated from God, facing something horrible on the other side of death.

Only the God of the Bible accepts humans just as they are, loves them unconditionally and will never abandon them. We cannot make ourselves flawless, nor does he demand it for entrance to his fold or for the freedom to remain there. This book will show that the covering He has given us, His payment of the entrance fee, is the basis for mental health and much, much more…

Notes

1 By the way, this is not to say that we have to reject all secular scientific research and theory. Some of it can illuminate our understanding of the Bible, as we will see in this book.

2 In keeping with the practice of the King James Bible, which is the source of quotations in this book, the third person pronoun for God is not capitalized.
Chapter One

Genesis and Guilt

The book of Genesis gets to the bottom of who we humans are and what makes us tick. Nothing else goes to the universal root of human guilt and anxiety. Humans are trapped in a dire situation: separated from God, sentenced to physical death, and stuck with a one-way ticket to the Lake of Fire.¹ This predicament is at the root of every type of mental disorder; humans are born with knowledge of it deep inside them, information mostly hidden but oozing up to the surface in feelings of worthlessness and deserving of punishment.

Why the predicament? What happened in the Garden?

How did we get into this situation? In Genesis, we learn that God gave a single command to the first humans he created: they were not to eat the fruit of a specific tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God said: "In the day that thou eat the fruit of that tree, thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). This death was separation from God which led to physical death and the Lake of Fire.

However, Adam and Eve naively listened to a competing source of authority: Satan, a fallen angel out to destroy the creation he could not have dominion over. Satan wanted God to lose the humans he made and loved; he knew disobedience would rupture their connection with their heavenly Father. So he told them the promised consequence of death would not apply if they ate the forbidden fruit. He knew firsthand about power hunger and pride, so he used it in some convincing lies. He said: "Ye shall not surely die:
For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

Lies, Truth and Law
Satan's persuasion got Adam and Eve separated from God. Once they disobeyed him, they immediately found the truth: they were doomed. God did not have to tell them this; they had ingested the Knowledge of Good and Evil, God's law. The Law had become part of them and it told them the price for sin—the slightest flaw of any kind—is death. In other words, the consequence of falling short of total perfection from conception to death, i.e., the slightest departure from the Law, is eternal alienation from God, involving separation from the Tree of Life and eventual destruction in the Lake of Fire. Now they could put two and two together and make foreboding. They not only knew they were lawbreakers, they also knew they faced a terrible penalty.

All of us face this penalty because we humans fall short of perfection. Even if we were not willfully disobedient, which we are, the perfectionist law would still doom us for all the flaws we have no control over. And Satan's lies—the promises of godhood, omniscience, and immortality—continue to appeal. Wanting to be gods, we rebel against God's authority. Implicitly, we do what Satan did before God kicked him out of heaven: try to build a "throne above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:13).

False religions
Satan's lies are the basis of every false religion. They all have doctrines that appeal to human rebelliousness. We think knowledge, or enlightenment, will empower us. Instead, it shows us how utterly vulnerable we are. In fact, "knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Ecclesiastes 1:18). Satan,
envious of God and knowing he is destined for hell, actually tried to steal the human race, thinking he would drag us all down with him.

Genesis reveals our universal predicament. Paul, the apostle, puts it in a very simple way: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Disobedience lost our forefathers the protection afforded by their union with God. They were now wide open to Satan's onslaught, condemned for eternity. Their dilemma is our dilemma.

Indeed, what Adam and Eve learned in the Garden of Eden has been passed on to their descendants, the human race; God's Law is deep in our psyche. But as the name of the tree implies, this knowledge is not only of evil but also of good. Humans sense they are doomed, but they may also sense the God-given rescue freely available to them.

**Guilt**

After disobeying God, Adam and Eve noticed their nakedness; they felt a need to hide. What they were experiencing was guilt, the awareness of deserving punishment. Our ancestors' feeling was not shame over nakedness as an aspect of sexual guilt, but existential guilt, a general sense of deserving punishment for missing the mark of perfection. The guilt was accompanied by a sense of their need for a place to hide, a "cover."

Since then all humans have been in hiding...physically, emotionally and spiritually. God’s Law is born into our psyche, but, thanks to all our defense mechanisms, we may not be conscious of it. We feel bad about ourselves but have no idea why. Somewhere inside us there is tremendous guilt plus shame, terror, rage and despair because of these two ominous facts that are printed on our hearts: one, we fall short of God's standard and always will (i.e., we are sinners); and two, unless we are fortunate enough to have "ears to hear" (Deuteronomy 29:4) of God's free gift of a rescue, we are stuck with the horrible penalty.
In psychodynamic terms

Existential guilt, or the awareness of deserving eternal punishment, puts the human psyche under enormous stress. Guilt sends us into whatever hiding our psychological defenses afford us until either the punishment occurs or there is a total reprieve. The defenses try to 1. keep the conflict out of consciousness, and 2. to lift the sentence off our heads.

Defenses come with a price: an emotional straight jacket and pathological patterns of behavior and thinking. These include self-punishment, self-purification, compulsive work, and delusions of grandeur.

Theologians and psychologists have made futile stabs at explaining our guilt outside of the biblical context. Adlerian psychology says guilt stems from a refusal to accept one's inferiority. Jungian psychology says guilt stems from a refusal to accept the "shadow," the darker aspect of being human. Martin Buber says guilt arises from our refusal to accept others. But all of these things are outgrowths of the pre-existing guilt. The situation is that I cannot accept others until I accept myself; I cannot accept myself until I know my flaws no longer doom me; I only know my flaws no longer doom me when I have proof that God has forgiven me and I appropriate that forgiveness. Until that point I dare not look at myself because deep down I know I am damned.

Hell and madness

Humans have inherited a sense of being headed for the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20), or "gehenna" in Hebrew. They sense their complete vulnerability to the abyss, unable to avoid falling in, bent out of shape trying to be blind to the elephant in the room.

One cannot be at peace in such a predicament. It produces an unending sense of affliction. God says that until we turn to him: "I will set my face against you, and ye shall
be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you, and ye shall flee when none pursueth you" (Leviticus 26:17). Also: "The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart" (Deuteronomy 28:28). And: "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22). "Wicked," really applies to all humans who fall short of perfection and reject God’s gift of salvation—in other words, every one of us who does not claim Christ’s blood to pay our way out of the Lake of Fire. Those who do claim that coverage are still highly flawed, yet forgiven and at peace.

Burying our heads in the sand, rejecting the idea of Satan and eternal torment may enable us to survive in this world, but it is a bare, miserable existence. Superficial ignorance means forfeiture of psychological integrity; it will not save us, nor still the storm. This false respite offers existence but not life.

The Lake of Fire a cocktail party?

Many make the mistake of thinking the Lake of Fire will be like a cocktail party in an overheated room accompanied by joke-cracking sinners, perhaps all one’s best chums. Nothing could be further from the truth. In all probability most people burn up quickly in the fire before disappearing forever—let us hope so—but this is accompanied by weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, as Jesus and the prophets said, presumably because they knew they blew it. They knew they could have had eternal life if only they had not refused to look at God’s gift of salvation.

Living in this world without God is like being a trapeze artist performing without a safety net, no support to fall into. There is an indefinable sense of something missing, of insecurity, emptiness, and ungroundedness. Somehow, we always feel "wrong." Traditional psychotherapy tries to assure us of our potency and goodness, or help us blame parents and others for the guilt. But these affirmations
bounce off like water from a duck's back and make us even angrier.

Only a dilemma of this magnitude can explain the depth, pervasiveness, and content of all our human neurosis and psychosis. Even transient mental disorders stem from the same thing, a sense of disconnection from God with only the prospect of eternal darkness ahead. Hence, religions and therapies. In some fashion, all of them attempt to heal this terrifying sense of being shut out in the cold, isolated and unprotected. The terms change but the intent is the same.

**What is sin?**

How we hate the "sinner" label, that finger pointing in accusation! Sin is accompanied by the resented burden of guilt. The Freud-based mental health profession helps us to blame "them" for the guilt...our parents, society, or that first grade teacher. “They" did it to us with "their" rigid standards and unfair judgments.

To combat this, we establish our own standards and redefine "sin" to mean only the more serious transgressions which we consider avoidable. Psychological justification makes everything permissible. We are not sinners, we say. The erasure of the "s" word from our language has been noted even by the psychiatric profession.6

What is sin? To sin is to break God's law in thought, word, or deed. The Hebrew and Greek words for sin, "hattath" and "hamartia," respectively, are archery terms meaning "missing the mark," or "falling short." The "mark" is God, essentially the perfect mind of God. For its consequence of death to apply, sin does not have to be willful disobedience, and it does not have to be major. The minutest transgression, the tiniest impure thought bubbling up from one’s unconscious mind, is all it takes to make one a sinner. Sin is not only what we do, it is also what we say and think. Since 1. a single false step is all it takes, and 2.,
humans cannot control every thought or action, all of us, from axe murderer to dedicated do-gooder, are in the same bind. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10).

Humans are, as David said, "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14), but we cannot obey the law perfectly and, what is more, we are rebellious. Despite what all the non-biblical religions tell us, we just do not have sufficient self-control to completely eliminate sin, particularly in our thinking process. Some believe they can hit the mark if there are many incarnations, a thing flatly denied in the Bible. Even if one could reach the mark one time—which is actually impossible—there would be past imperfection to worry about. Actions and tongue are controllable to some degree, but the stream of our consciousness is fed by dark springs. Sin is inevitable. Over and over again, the Bible states that man's heart is desperately wicked (Genesis 6:5; Romans 7:18, 7:25, 8:20).

Belief in human godliness is the ultimate psychological defense mechanism, a common feature of both false religions and the delusional thinking of psychotics. Only as gods could we resolve the terrible dilemma through our own power, stepping outside of human nature to become pure. Only as gods could we escape the Lake of Fire by changing ourselves into creatures that did not miss the mark. However, to think this way is a sin so the very idea kills the purpose.

The directives, "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18) and "love your enemies" (Luke 6:27) go against our unforgiving, selfish nature. An honest comparison between one's own thoughts and these standards ought to be highly chastening.

Evolutionists try to minimize our sinful nature by attributing it to the outmoded "reptilian" portion of the brain which will disappear further down the great chain of being, millions of years hence. But there is no evidence that ontogenesis, or the development of the individual,
recapitulates phylogenesis, the supposed evolutionary development of the phylum. Nor is there evidence for evolution; the facts contradict it (see Chapter Two). Our nature is no better now than it ever has been.

Our nature is the problem: its egocentricity, its killer instinct, its selfish desire to avoid pain at all costs, its tendency to get lost in sensual pleasure, its laziness, its pride, its greed, its envy, and its covetousness. We are inherently self-centred and worldly.

However, there is one ultimate rebellion: to claim there is no higher authority than oneself. It leads to the "sin unto death" (I John 5:16), the rejection of the Holy Spirit’s affirmation of Jesus, implying refusal of God. This is what Samuel, the prophet, meant when he said: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I Samuel 15:23). But just like Adam and Eve, humans fall headlong into this trap, trying to conduct their lives as if there is no higher power, as if they hold the reins that control their destiny. This keeps the human race on track for the Lake of Fire.

The conscience

Our insides acknowledge the true predicament. Guilt, fear and rage seep up from an innate sense of the sentence our humanness puts us under. The conscience, God’s inborn law in our hearts, does not rest when our nature transgresses. In spite of what secular psychologists say, our basic sense of morality is not acquired through learning, it is born in us. However, it may not seem so because the veneer of popular morality can distort our sense of God’s law deep inside.

Even so-called "Christian" morality often departs significantly from God’s law. For example, God reveals in the story of Noah and Ham (Genesis 9:20-27) that he is far more upset about gossiping than drunkenness. He also shows us he considers pride (Psalm 10:4) and stubbornness
(I Samuel 15:23) to be worse than either of these. Yet we humans are often willing to tolerate gossiping and stubbornness, we value pride, and we make temperance a condition for church membership. The tongues of many smug "Christians" wag over someone with a weakness for alcohol, blind to their own transgression.

Secular humanists deny that moral sensitivity stems from God. They claim that doing what is right comes from innate human goodness. But that does not explain the existence of moral absolutes like "good" and "bad," nor why doing good feels good. Humanists are unaware that this speaks of an unconscious sense of accountability to God. And they invariably display huge, unacknowledged moral lapses as they deny sin to attain the illusion of their own goodness.

**The Torah and Jesus**

God's Law both dooms and frees. After looking at why humans are doomed, now we come to the freeing part, the God-given rescue. It is laid out in detail in the Pentateuch, or Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament written by God through Moses. The death and resurrection of Christ completes it.

We have looked at the bad news, that Satan made humans disobey God's one prohibition, bringing down on themselves an impossible straightjacket law that spelled doom. The good news is that God put a special provision in that Law. He gave humans a key to the straightjacket.

For many reasons, it is hard for humans to grasp that the key is a gift. Yet grace is God's unmerited forgiveness, the gift of a total pardon to humans who claim it. This gift, for which God paid dearly, stems from his love for us, not from any deed or greatness on our part. God has given us tangible proof of this pardon. It is our ransom, the entrance fee to eternal connection with Him, the ticket out of the Lake of Fire. To make this tangible to us, He builds us a composite
image of that gift throughout the Torah and Old Testament prophecies, then shows us the real thing in the Gospels.

God tells us what he wants of us in the Law He gave to Moses, but acknowledges that we will be unable to do it perfectly—that sin is inevitable. His mercy is in giving us an easy "out" that still fulfills the requirement that the consequence of sin is death. This is the fundamental difference between the Bible and all other religions. God does not say we must be without sin before we can come to him. Rather, he gives us a provision for access to him as sinners. Since sin is inevitable, if we do not take the provision, we are permanent outlaws, lost and without hope.

Some think that the condensation of the Law expressed by Jesus is softer than the version God gave to Moses. But this is not so. Jesus tells us "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27). He is not making it any easier for us to keep the Law than it would be to keep the six hundred and thirty odd commandments listed in the Pentateuch, or Torah. Much of the Pentateuch addresses relatively "do-able" actions, rather than uncontrollable emotions. Humans cannot love on command.

However, the point of the Law, particularly Jesus' version of it, is to show us that we cannot save ourselves. As Paul states, the Law is given to us to show us that "by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Comparing our behavior with God's standard certainly makes boasting impossible. The act of claiming his rescue is the only thing that counts for righteousness as far as God is concerned. Perfect performance is neither expected nor is it an option. We have to go to God with a bent neck, not waving our credentials, which are as "filthy rags" (Isaiah
64:6). Our basic sense of unworthiness is no delusion, for it applies to our inability to pay the entrance fee to God and escape destruction in the Lake of Fire. If the price for sin is death and the fire, we cannot pay it and live. The only fee of any worth is the one God gave to us: Christ’s atoning death, the payment he made on our behalf.

The Day of Atonement

The "gift" aspect of salvation is especially clear in the directives for the annual Day of Atonement. The people were asked to take a day of rest (i.e., a sabbath) while the priest made a sacrifice of burnt offerings to pay for the sins of the people (Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16). This was to fulfill the contract whereby God would forgive all their sins—the ones they knew about and the ones they were ignorant of.

Despite popular misconceptions about the God of the Old Testament, we certainly see no mean and vengeful old Yahweh here. Instead we see a loving lawmaker who provides a means of escape in the Law, a doorway that lawbreakers can take to avoid execution. This provision, or cover, is available at no cost to the sinner. No strings are attached; this is a total gift from God.

It is critical to note that the required actions or rather, inaction, in no way earn forgiveness. The definition of the Day of Atonement as a sabbath highlights the fact that no human effort can pay for sin. The human observance of this day of rest merely performed the function of signing a contract with God.

Why was an animal slaughtered? Bloodshed is absolutely essential. The Law says that the price, or redemption value, for sin is death. The forgiveness contract must be signed with blood (found from Genesis on, but explicit in Leviticus 17:11, Matthew 26:28, and Hebrews 9:22). Blood ransoms us out of the hands of Satan, but not the human kind. The shed blood of any human, i.e., a sinner, cannot save anyone. That is why the pagan practice of human sacrifice is
abhorrent to God. God lets us off the hook only through the blood of an unblemished substitute.

In the Old Testament, this substitute came from a specified group of animals. On the Day of Atonement, the shedding of the blood of the ram substituted for the blood of humans. It was to be observed once every year as an "everlasting statute," so God shows us here that humans need constant cleansing. We never stop sinning in this lifetime; our nature is inherently flawed. Contrary to what many hear today in the Christian church, the cleansing does not remove sin from our nature, but removes the penalty for sin from our heads. Without this pardon, we cannot approach God. Blood is the entrance fee; otherwise sin is the barrier.

Right from the start, God made it clear that he would provide the substitute. Adam and Eve found fig leaves to cover themselves, but that did not suffice because no shedding of blood was involved. God replaced them with animal skins. Wearing the cover God gave them, Adam and Eve no longer had to hide from him.

Humans cannot approach God without protective covering. Nor can we face life or ourselves without it. Our own flimsy psychological defense covering is just a bunch of fig leaves; the cover has to come from God. When Moses went up to talk to God in Mount Sinai, God provided a cloud cover, yet Moses returned glowing from the intensity of the brilliant light emanating from God, the Shekinah glory (Exodus 33:10-11). A cover is essential or we will be burnt to a crisp.

One stipulation

One of the many parallels between Adam and Eve's original situation and our present one lies in the fact that God only makes one reasonable stipulation on our relationship with him. Adam and Eve were given all the freedom in the world except for one thing they were forbidden to do: eat
the fruit of a specific tree. That was the only way they could rebel. Nevertheless, albeit under Satan's influence, they committed that one sin.

On the other hand, we, who are strapped under a Law that makes it impossible for us to avoid sin, balk at the one thing God asks us to do if we want to escape its terrible consequence. All we have to do is claim the shed blood of Jesus. Despite God's clear warnings, we got into a mess by doing the one thing he asked us not to do in the Garden. Now we refuse to do the one thing that gets us out of our quandary. Satan has a strong role in that, blinding us to our predicament and the means of escape God has given us.

Partly because the air is filled with false teaching about the Bible, and partly because pride makes us want to control our own destiny, we fail to see how easy God made it for us to avoid the Lake of Fire. Even if such a place or state were only a slight possibility, a person would be utterly foolish to reject God’s provision, to refuse to even consider it. As Pascal pointed out, one has nothing to lose by accepting it, and everything to gain; on the other hand, one has nothing to gain by rejecting it, and everything to lose. And yet, many spit at the idea.

Jesus is the definitive covering for sin, our hell insurance. He fulfils all the metaphors and prophesies in the Old Testament with stunning accuracy. All we have to do is claim his death as the payment that buys us out of the separation from God that leads to the Lake of Fire (John 3:16; Romans 5:12-21). When we go to God holding up the perfection of Jesus in front of our tainted selves, there is no barrier between us and God. Jesus took all the punishment that we deserve. We are under "no condemnation" (Romans 8:1), because God accepts his death in place of ours. He is the free pardon, the lamb of the Atonement whose blood was shed for us.

Moreover, Jesus fulfills the requirement of the Law that the sacrificed animal be "without blemish" (Exodus 12:5), or
perfect in the sense of being completely without sin. To fit that criterion Jesus must be God, because all humans are flawed.

Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). In other words, without Christ as our cover or payment for sin, we are naked in our uncleanness and cannot come to God. Our sense of our own corruption tells us this. To state that we can reach God outside of Christ is to lie to ourselves.

**To be sound of mind**

From an intrapsychic perspective, reaching out for the free pardon is the one way to alleviate not only the guilt, but also the fear, rage and despair that otherwise torment humans. The guilt is dispelled when we have proof God forgives us; the fear dissipates when we know God is a permanent rock beneath us; the rage is calmed when we know we have escaped from between a rock and a hard place; and the despair is replaced by hope. Now we have open access to God's loving ear and he sends the Holy Spirit to guide us. From this time on, our psychological defense equipment is redundant and psychological integrity is attainable. In fact, this is the only way one can be sound of mind.

**Asleep on the tracks**

However, the utter importance of salvation from the Lake of Fire has disappeared in today's Christian church. In one study, members of different Judaeo-Christian denominations were asked to rank order the importance of salvation as compared to other values such as honesty, love, family security, a world at peace, forgiveness, and pleasure. Protestants ranked salvation fourth, Catholics ranked it thirteenth, and Jews and nonbelievers ranked it eighteenth. The Protestant ranking would have been lower if it had not
been for the fact that the high proportion of Baptists in the sample ranked salvation first.\(^8\)

Moreover, "salvation" for many who consider themselves Christians means being rescued from some sin, often an addiction, rather than from eternal darkness. In response to my question regarding whether or not her cocaine-addicted husband had been saved, one of my clients answered: "No, he's dead." She thought I was asking about him being saved from his cocaine addiction.

We are asleep on the railway tracks and the train is coming up behind us.

**Why die? Why the Lake of Fire?**

A just God keeps his promises, so we all inherit the same fate as Adam: "Thou shalt return unto the ground; for out of it thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19). From the day of the first humans’ rebellion, God cut off the Tree of Life and barred it with a flaming sword so our forefathers had to leave the Garden (Genesis 3:22). The world and every living thing in it had now been corrupted and must die.

Losing the connection with God not only meant physical death, it also meant losing God's protection. From that point on, humans have suffered physical decline, hardship, death, and the Lake of Fire beyond that. Claiming God's provision for sin does not restore us to our pre-Fall freedom while in this world. Although forgiven by God, we still suffer physical death in this relatively brief pre-test for eternity.

**The Lake of Fire**

The blood of Christ connects us with our Father during our days on earth and saves us from the second death in the Lake of Fire. On Judgment Day all the dead wake up and the wheat is separated from the chaff, the sheep from the goats. The wheat/sheep are gathered into God’s heavenly
barn for eternal life; the chaff/goats are thrown into the Lake of Fire for the second death (Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17; Rev 2:11; 20:6, 20:14). The wheat and the sheep represent those who claimed Christ’s death as their payment for sin; the goats and the chaff represents those who did not.

Probably the worst aspect of being a metaphorical goat, one who rejects the gift of salvation, is refusal to acknowledge the majesty of God, and perhaps that is why goats are to be destroyed. A goat is incapable of handling the freedom of eternal life in heaven, just as Satan was, because sooner or later a goat will give in to pride and rebel against any power higher than himself.

**God uses the work of Satan because he loves us**

Some humans are born in hostile environments with the decks apparently stacked against them. They think: "A loving God would not have let me suffer like that." But, as the book of Job shows, God uses the work of Satan for his own purpose. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” (Rev 3:19). Satan has been free to inflict upon us trials, tribulations, disease and confusion in this world. His intention is to keep us lost by bolstering our egos or making us so angry with God that we reject the only door to salvation. But God only lets it go so far, so it does not always work the way Satan intends it to.

God wants us saved and he uses Satan’s work because we do not come to him readily. He has to break down our pride to get us saved and once in the fold he forges us into stronger metal; he does pruning to increase our fruit. Research shows that eighty percent of spiritually-committed people report that some crisis occurred prior to their turning to God.⁹

God could have made faithful robots, but he gave us free will. He lets us suffer because he loves us and wants us to choose him; he is testing us. The choice to take his provision
would be too easy if humans saw that those who did so never died nor suffered. We need to look at the larger picture. Instead of focusing on present ills or past hurts, our eyes need to be on the future, on the dire predicament our loving Father rescued us from and the prospect of eternal life in heaven. The fact that God uses suffering to achieve his ends is proven by Christ’s passion.

To sum up…

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). In freeing us from the dread prospect of the dark abyss, the Gospel gives us a basis for hope and peace of mind about our eternal destiny. Nothing in this world can compare with that. The bi-product of knowing one has escaped the Lake of Fire is a core of sanity inside us, mental health. The foundation of sanity is peace of mind about our eternal destiny through reconciliation with God. Only the appreciation of the enormity of God's mercy initiates genuine transformation inside us. Mental health is only one of the results.

God has shown that he loves us unconditionally, so we cannot help loving him in return. We want to please him by doing what he asks; after all, his commandments are for our benefit, yet at times our rebellious nature will still strain at the leash. But as our hearts of stone begin to change into hearts of flesh, helping others becomes natural, even playing Good Samaritan to an enemy. More than anything else, we want others to hear the gospel, friend or foe. The more we recognize our own depravity, the more we feel undeserving of salvation, and the more pushed we feel to tell others how easy God has made it for us to stay out of the Lake of Fire.

Transformation of the heart does not eliminate the sin nature, at least in this lifetime. At times we still find ourselves blindly giving in to "secret faults" (Psalm 19:12). However, the blanket pardon from God enables us to stop
hiding this and want to turn away from it, to grow. Perceiving God's mercy through his rescue enables us to see the cracked vessels we really are and internalize his compassion. It relieves the constant sense of guilt nowadays called "low self-esteem."

The overall process means removal of the constriction of internal defenses and open engagement with God in confession and repentance. It means freedom from the burden of layer upon layer of guilt, self-hatred, bitter rage, and fear. It means having the ability to give and receive love; and the ability to make decisions, to create, to take risks and to act in faith with the assurance of God's continuous support. Once safe on the salvation ship our priority becomes the salvation of others.
Notes

1 We use the terms “Lake of Fire” and “hell” interchangeably to refer to the fate of all who do not claim God’s provision of the payment for sin, i.e., the atoning death of Jesus Christ. The overall picture of the Lake given in Scripture, with references to burning chaff (Isaiah 5:24; Luke 3:17) or burning stubble (Isaiah 47:15; Joel 2:5), suggests a temporary place of burning before extinguishment, with the possible exception of Satan and his minions (Isaiah 66:24). The fire is described as burning eternally (Jude 7), but that does not mean everyone thrown in it will also do so. Perhaps the length of time burning depends on the amount of sin in a person’s life, so the punishment fits the crime—as in “..eye for eye, tooth for tooth…” (Exodus 21:24). However, this is only speculation on the part of the author.

2 Capitalization of “Law” refers to the code God gave to Moses which forms the Pentateuch or Torah. It contains both damnation and mercy from God.


Chapter Two

Why do humans reject the Bible despite its scientific basis?

This chapter looks at scientific reasons to believe the Bible is the actual word of God. Our claim that mental illness arises from a sense of deserving eternal damnation is based on the literal truth of the entire book, with each chapter a building block for its most important feature: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who paid our penalty in full. What hope is there for any of us if we reject this cornerstone? This is the only important issue affecting the human race, so we ought to look at the Bible very carefully instead of dismissing it out of hand as many do.

The requirement to accept the Bible as literally true can be a huge barrier, especially for anyone who has grown up with the idea that it is a bunch of made up stories, outright lies, or has value only in a metaphorical sense. It is tough for a person who was once thoroughly indoctrinated in some other belief system to change sides. The very idea triggers a person’s biases against those “silly Bible believers.” What, you mean I have to switch from an “enlightened,” intellectual metaphorical view of Genesis to a literal one like those people I have always considered idiots? But that is exactly what one has to do.

How many believe the Bible is God’s Word?

Thirty one percent of all U.S. adults endorse the statement that "the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word." The rest express some degree of skepticism. Even many "Christians" ridicule the idea of complete, literal acceptance of it.
The problem is that when humans begin to question the authenticity of the Bible, they have no idea where to stop.

**Human characteristics that blind us**

Several personal and cultural factors lead many to reject the Bible before giving it a fair appraisal. These include fear, pride, pluralism, rebelliousness, scorn, cynicism, complacency, and ignorance.

**Fear**

Adam's response to God after disobeying him was: "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid..." (Genesis 3:10). Our death sentence fills us with blinding fear.

There is a chicken/egg aspect to dealing with the fear. We have to see the bad news (our doom) before we can appreciate the good news (our free rescue). But we are afraid to see the bad news until we know the good news. Somehow, a sense of God's total forgiveness must accompany a realization of the terrible danger we are in. Otherwise, fearing destruction, we block all thoughts of it from consciousness. We sense that a single transgression puts a gulf between us and God and this keeps us shut. False teaching makes us blame the Bible for the fear before giving ourselves a chance to learn that God's Word is the only refuge from it.

But once we are tucked under the safety of God's blanket pardon, we can loosen up and admit to that "one little sin." Our psychological defense apparatus begins to dissolve, gradually revealing all the other sins, big and small.

The more we see our depravity, the more we appreciate what God has done for us, and the more we love him. Although we will always be tainted, when we put on the cover of Christ we are connected with God. We are free to ask God to take charge of our pathological tendencies and meet all our needs.
The approach-avoid conflict

Warren Benar, a Catholic priest, aptly describes what can be termed an “approach-avoid conflict” that humans have regarding confession. One part of us wants to do it because it relieves guilt and anxiety. It reestablishes a sense of connection with God. Yet another part of us runs from it. The most important reason for this is not, as Benar states, out of our embarrassment in front of another human. Non-Catholics, who are not required to speak to a human confessor, avoid confession too.

The avoidance is a psychological defense due both to pride and to two falsehoods: 1) we think God's forgiveness is not total; and 2) we do not believe it is a gift. The truth is 1) the forgiveness is total; absolutely everything is covered; and 2) we do not have to earn or beg for it. By claiming Christ as the sacrificial lamb, the one who took the punishment of death and hell in our place, humans are freed from all condemnation (clear from the Torah, spoken of in Romans 8:1). This claim is the foundation of true mental health.

"Confess" comes from the Latin "con-" meaning "together," and "fatere" meaning "to acknowledge." It means "to acknowledge together." In this case, it is to acknowledge together with God, to admit to ourselves what God already knows. In confessing we are agreeing with God instead of arguing with him.

Avoiding confession is an attempt to hide from ourselves and God. It is a farce, because deep down we know when we have erred and we sense that He knows. But we dare not admit our wrongdoing if we think—unconsciously—that it damns us. So we conceal ourselves behind the self-deception of psychological defenses. Sticking our heads in the sand, we leave our tails exposed.
A done deal

This only changes when we see that God's forgiveness is a done deal. Theologians and preachers make the mistake of saying that repentance from sin must precede salvation. They have it backwards. Grace, the unmerited pardon, precedes repentance from sin, not vice versa.³ If repentance were a prerequisite, grace would not be grace. It would not be unmerited. Grace comes first...the uniqueness of Christianity realized by relatively few.

It works this way: we cannot repent (reject sin) until we confess, we cannot confess until we see our sin, and we defend against seeing our sin until we are sure of being forgiven. But when we see the enormity of God's mercy towards us, repentance is natural. There is nothing forced about it; we are no longer under the gun so the truth can gush up to the surface. This is why salvation produces love for God and the desire to please Him, not vice versa. Any genuine moral improvement in us flows from freedom and gratitude towards God for His mercy. He loved us first; then we began to love Him. This is the basis of real transformation.

Yet fear is the doorway to this freedom. The same fear that can keep us away from God is the entrance to salvation. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). God gives us fear for a reason. Once we realize the bind we are in and see the open door of grace, it is clear that there is nowhere else to go. We are driven towards His gift of salvation and that is what He wants.

Pride

Pride is another reason we reject or ignore the Bible. At a rational level, nobody thinks it possible for humans to shed all their flaws, to never miss the mark one iota. Nevertheless, pride makes us delude ourselves about our purity and power to attain it. Pride makes us fail to see the
awesomeness of God, how far we are from righteousness, and our utter dependency on Him. We cannot stand the idea of being dependent on anyone or being in anyone's power.

Pride causes our downfall. Satan appealed to Adam and Eve's pride to get them to disobey God. He told them they could have godly power and immortality if they ate from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. But they went from freedom under God to enslavement under Satan.

Claiming God's forgiveness means admitting we need it and dropping at least some of our pride. It is tough to acknowledge we are neither gods nor even "nice people" but flawed human beings who have no power over our destiny.

**Why do the wicked prosper?**

That is not to say that humans cannot achieve much through their own efforts but that is because they are made in the image of God. Plenty of unbelievers (the "wicked") seem to be able to succeed, but only temporarily. The fact is, the blessing of God's rain falls on the just and the unjust, and a God-fearing nation receives a good portion of that rain.

Many of us who became believers later in life can look back on our atheistic days and recall times we felt that a supernatural force was helping us. The invisible hand of God extends to all his children. Better to assume He is the source of all human success, because none of us has a clear view of his involvement in "our" attainments. Certainly, the only important feat is beyond our capability: payment of the penalty for human sin.

**The false self**

Fear and pride may both underlie the grandiose "false self," a defense mechanism that creates a false identity to cover the depravity humans either dare not face or stubbornly refuse to admit. Carl Jung called the false self the
"persona," considering it universal and inborn (see Chapter Four).

The Bible shows the false self to be an aspect of human egocentricity. Safe in heaven, Satan needed no defense, yet pride is what influenced the fool to try to build a throne higher than God, stated in a series of “I will” statements (Isaiah 14:13).

To be sure, the grandiose false self hinders one’s sense of the need for a sin-bearer, and false religion is filled with it, as is liberal "Christianity." Said one prominent Methodist pastor in San Francisco: "I don't need anybody's blood to wash me clean.” Pride will keep us away from the truth that saves us.

**Pluralism**

Ignorance of the Bible does not stop human beings from having strong opinions about it. These days a kind of pluralistic "openness" is valued as a "good." It is accompanied by a "holier-than-thou" condemnation of the "narrow-mindedness" of Bible-believers. Oddly enough, the supposedly open-minded people who would never dream of reading the Bible declare they accept all "truths," all creeds, and all philosophical systems, including the Bible. They fail to realize that being open to the Bible means being closed to everything else. The God of the Bible tells us to reject every other source of spiritual knowledge, for Satan's influence is in all of them. The Bible has something all the others lack: the God-given payment for sin freeing humans from hell.

Pluralizers do not examine anything in depth, particularly their own assumptions. To examine any non-biblical belief system only exposes the holes (see Chapters Nine to Thirteen). The fact is, only the Bible can withstand scrutiny.
**Spiritual seeking**

In the last few years the practice of “spiritual seeking” has been trendy. It is guided by the Post-Modernist idea that mature people recognize there is no ultimate reality; some consider closure on a religious belief system to be a sign of immaturity.\(^5\)\(^6\)

If that were applied to politics, "mature" people would find themselves unable to vote. The reality is humans do operate with some concept of reality, at least an unconscious spiritual belief system, and if it is not belief in God it is, by default, unbelief.

On the other hand, absolute faith in God may not be essential, or even possible, in this world. Gordon Allport characterized mature religious sentiment as "fashioned in the workshop of doubt...theoretical skepticism is not incompatible with practical absolutism. While it knows all the grounds for skepticism, it serenely affirms its wager." Allport goes on to state that in acting on the commitment to God, the doubts gradually disappear.\(^7\)

**Rebelliousness**

Rebelliousness grows out of pride. It opposes rules, which ultimately means God's law. *Question authority,* it says, unconsciously assuming: *I can survive the Lake of Fire, I will be OK in hell, I'm tough, nobody can break me.*

When a person rejects moral absolutes, the blinding, self-justifying influence of selfish needs and desires will dominate. It gives license to do anything a person feels like, because everything has equal validity and there is no higher authority than the personal ego.

Taking this to its logical extreme, rape, murder, and theft can become part of the terrain. Everything is beautiful in its own way. One common falsehood is that guilt feelings are an artifact of a judgmental society which takes its standards from that tool of manipulation, the Bible.\(^8\)
Scorn and cynicism
"Blessed is the man that...sitteth not in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). To sit on that seat is to stay on the fence as a disdainful observer who cannot be a participator. It is paralysis in the guise of personal freedom. Nothing has meaning or value; nothing is fully embraced or trusted except nihilism, a rejection of all belief systems. Scornful fence-sitting leads only to despair, isolation and powerlessness. There is nothing to lean on and no basis for the faith which has to precede action. The cynic cannot believe there is no catch in God's grace, that he does not have to pay for it.

To believe the Bible requires the openness of a child, the very opposite of scorn and cynicism. Perceiving God's gift of ransom will give us the true sense of personal freedom, the freedom to move instead of sitting on the fence.

Complacency
Complacency is a kind of tunnel vision...a narrowed focus that avoids existential reality, sitting in the living room watching a sitcom when the house is on fire.

Ignorance
It is remarkable that ignorance of the Bible goes largely unnoticed by unbelievers. In fact, this "Scripture-deafness" is consistent with prophesy (Matthew 4:12). Humans feel compelled to possess a Bible but do not bother to read it. At the "Great Books"-oriented small liberal arts college the writer attended as an undergraduate, the greatest book of all, the world's most widely-owned book, was not on the syllabus.

Science and the Bible
Not only are most people ignorant about the Bible, they are also ignorant of the increasing evidence for its factual
validity. Many suppose that history and science contradict the inerrancy of the Bible. Not so. In all fields of study, even the occult, if there is apparent lack of support for the Bible, it is only superficial. Close inspection reveals the chinks in the armor through which biblical truth shows. Consequently, science can be a tool to help us deepen our belief in the biblical truth that will save us. To prove this, let us dip into a variety of areas of empirical investigation.

The Bible is no myth

There is growing trend among anthropologists and other students of folklore to treat the Bible as metaphor. They reject the factual and historical in it, while seeking the parallels it has with "other" mythology. Joseph Campbell, for example, was a portrayer of the Bible as myth. Although there is truth in Campbell's view that the Bible has the same underlying message as folklore, this is because all myths point to the true facts in the Bible.

Campbell's misconceived notion of the message told by both the Bible and mythology is that humans can transcend the limitations of their earthly existence and achieve immortality. According to Campbell, Jesus follows the line of the universal “hero archetype,” an innate blueprint for the godhood which all humans can manifest, according to the Jungian psychology Campbell espouses (see Chapter Four).

For theorists such as Campbell, the possibility of a factual basis to the Bible is ignored. The flood, the Exodus and the resurrection are merely symbols, unconscious templates available in the process of an upward journey towards God that in no way depends on the Creator's work of atonement.

History, not fantasy

The fact that the common flood "myth" is found in many cultures points to its historical basis, not its power as a fantasy or archetype. This is the "no smoke without fire"
approach that can, and should, take us to believe the detailed account of a great flood in Genesis (7:10-24).

The underlying themes of the world's myths support the Bible as historically correct. The smoke of the myths agrees with the fire of the Bible. We miss the biblically-validating aspect of myths if we fail to conceptualize the Bible as fact.

The woman in the river

Folk stories often contain the theme of the Bible. For example, in one mythical illustration described by Campbell, we find a woman who seems to be helplessly caught in a river. Her torso is half in the water and half out. Standing on one bank of the river is a shaman (priest) who is pulling her out of the water; on the opposite bank are several snakes in pursuit of her.

Campbell interprets this as signifying the journey each of us can make from the darkness of the unconscious submarine world into the light. However, a more fitting interpretation is that the river is our existential dilemma, a breech between us and God that must be crossed. There is no way without a rescuer (the shaman in the present case) who in some way bridges the gap between God and man. The devil, frequently symbolized in snake form, waits to get us on the opposite side.

Campbell fails to mention the sharp contrast of the two banks of the river, one of which appears to represent safety, the other, doom. Also he makes no comment on the pivotal role of the shaman rescuer, a type of Jesus Christ. When we dismiss Campbell's interpretation, what really comes out in the myth is our dependence on a God who comes to our rescue in human form.

The Bible is filled with metaphors for Christ, but that does not mean Christ is a metaphor and the resurrection not factual. Throughout the Bible, the book God wrote for humans, He uses what humans have found to be a basic
principle of human learning, such as we see in the research of Piaget, Bruner, and Heidbreder, and find systematized in Montessori education. This principle is that humans derive abstract concepts from concrete experiences. So God uses vivid accounts of humans plus word pictures to get the message of salvation into our minds. Without such tangibles, the concept of God's grace would be incomprehensible.

Campbell, Jung (see Chapter Four) and others correctly identify universal themes in the mythology of widely spread cultures but they do not recognize the Bible as their source. Instead, they interpret the themes in a manner pleasing to Satan: humans are gods able to transcend mortality as they seek the enlightenment within themselves.

The fact is, we walk around with the most amazing information programmed into us, dating back to the very first humans and the promises God made to them. As Jung pointed out, we do possess a "hero" archetype in our collective unconscious. This is based on Christ, who laid down his life for us, a truth far more exciting than any of the myths and legends derived from it.

The Bible: basis for astrology?

Few realize that the Gospel message underlies astrology. Although stars have been identified with the same zodiac signs for thousands of years, less well-known is that the zodiac signs actually foretell Christ, both in the images viewed in the constellations and in the names of the brightest stars.

The Bible says that God named the stars (Psalm 147:4; Isaiah 40:26). Our planet is peopled with the descendants of Adam and Eve, who fanned out after Great Flood (Genesis 10), carrying all the ancestral knowledge God put into them. Thus it is hardly surprising that the Hebrews, the Aztecs, the Babylonians, the Norsemen, the Egyptians, and the Chinese
all recognize essentially the same meanings of constellations and have identical names for the stars.\(^\text{14}\)

The stars tell a story of doom and redemption. Each constellation makes a different statement about Christ. The heroic Orion, for example, has one foot raised to crush the head of a serpent, consistent with the first biblical prophesy on Christ. God told the serpent, Satan: "...it (Christ, the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head (plan), and thou shalt bruise his heel (body)" (Genesis 3:15).

In Job, reportedly the earliest-written book of the Bible, several stars are mentioned by name, including Arcturus, meaning "he comes," a reference to the Messiah (Job 38:31-32). It is clear that the prophetic meaning of the stars was widely known at the time Christ came into the world. The wise men of the east used the heavenly timetable and map to learn of the birth and location of the Messiah that the stars foretold (Numbers 24:17).

This is a far cry from modern astrology, the worldly practice of attempting to read the course of individual human lives from the stars. The biblical theme on which astrology was founded has been contaminated by an overlay of the occult, an outcome of Satanic influence. Astrology has become the fatalistic worship of stars as the guiding forces in our lives. This is a form of idolatry, the reason why the practice of an "observer of times" was forbidden by God in the Law (Deuteronomy 18:10).

**The evolution hoax**

Says Julian Ripley: "It hardly seems wise to base a philosophic outlook on the meaning of life upon the generalities of contemporary science, no matter how well founded these may appear to be at the moment."\(^\text{15}\) Yet even though Darwin's theory of evolution completely lacks a scientific foundation, the civilized world has adopted it as if it were fact. Even the popular theory of reincarnation feeds
off it, with its notion of the evolution of the soul. In fact, the scientific community is producing more and more evidence supporting creationism.  

**Laws of thermodynamics:** The first two laws of thermodynamics call for the very reverse of evolution, which is called “devolution.” The first law states that nothing can come out of nothing, and the second one predicts entropy in a closed system. With energy evidently running down in our universe, we expect decreasing differentiation and specialization, and yet evolution defines the "ascent" of man.

**Survival of the fittest and genetic mutation:** Evolutionists have no viable mechanism to explain the incredible complexity of life forms so they resort to the concept of accident. Since they reject God, they dare not specify a purpose to life—teleology assumes a master planner. So they have to use the notion of accidental survival of the fittest and genetic mutation, even though there is no evidence that mutation produces anything other than offspring that are impaired.

**Fossil evidence:** As far as the fossil evidence goes, a series of creations is a better fit to the data than any of the evolutionary theories, particularly with regard to the concept of "punctuated equilibrium.” Due to lack of any evidence of intermediate forms, punctuated equilibrium describes sudden "evolutions" of new life forms in local geographical areas. The new life forms are radically different from anything else in existence, and their appearance cannot be resolved with a slow and gradual evolutionary process which requires fossil evidence of links in the great chain.

Evolutionists can give no explanation for the apparently sudden, dramatic appearance of a totally new creature. For them, it just sort of happens as an exciting facet of the "evolutionary" process. Yet punctuated equilibrium, which has no adequate causal explanation outside of a supernatural
one, is now widely accepted by eminent anti-creationist scientists. In a most unscientific manner, these theorists try to bend evolutionary theory to fit something that looks exactly like creation. It seems that only blindness could stop scientists from seeing how much closer is the phenomenon of punctuated equilibrium to Genesis than any hypothetical evolutionary process.

**Genetics:** Recent research in genetics similarly supports the Genesis story of the creation. Since there is such detailed similarity in the genetic structure of all humans, and since this structure is radically different from that of even the "closest" great ape, it points to our having descended from one original "Eve." What is even more remarkable is that this Eve presumably had a genetically identical mate. So either there was a magical accident of two genetically identical mutants popping into existence in the same place at the same time, or God created them. The same genetic research postulates that this appearance was relatively recent, perhaps one hundred thousand years ago. This is much closer to Bible historians' dating of Adam and Eve to six thousand years ago than any previous "scientific" date for the advent of humans.\(^{19,20}\)

**Hebrew:** Furthermore, recent research on the history of language points to Hebrew as the basis for all existing tongues. Linguists have concluded that the ancient root language they call "Indo-European" originated in Anatolia, resting place of Noah's ark. This lends further support to the Bible account of the first humans and their descendants in Genesis.\(^{23}\)

**Gallup poll:** If we were not innately aware that God created the universe, the findings of a 1991 Gallup poll would make no sense. In spite of the ban on teaching creationism in our public educational system for most of the present century, 47 percent of all Americans report that they believe God created man in his present form within the last
10,000 years; another 40 percent favor the idea of a God-guided evolution over millions of years.\textsuperscript{23}

**The Big Bang:** Scientists claim to have reconstructed the events that took place during the first few seconds after the hypothetical Big Bang. However, they are still unable to explain how this theoretical explosion happened. They have devised a theory for turning a little into a lot, so they think they can also explain how nothing turns into something. But this contradicts the first two laws of thermodynamics. Nothing can come from nothing, and entropy occurs in a closed system.\textsuperscript{24}

**The Genesis account:** To detractors, the Genesis account of the creation seems implausibly geocentric, proof of the immaturity of its writer. It does not follow the steps scientists hypothesize, but describes the creation of the sun, moon and stars following the creation of the earth. However, the facts show that the earth is special. No other heavenly body appears to support life as we know it. Moreover, the scientific community knows nothing with any surety. We are finding that other planets do not behave in the manner predicted by current scientific theories. Neptune, for example, has two moons that go in a direction opposite to all the other moons. It is clear that we do not know enough to refute the biblical view of the creation. There is now a growing body of research in the area of creation science that supports the Bible's account.\textsuperscript{25}

**Scientific validity and God’s Word**

How well does the Bible stand up to scientific scrutiny? Can we say the Bible is an accurate measuring instrument of God's word according to scientific standards? There are several accepted criteria for determining the scientific validity of a psychological testing instrument that shed light on the Bible: concurrent, predictive, face and construct validities. This may appear an unorthodox way to attempt to
establish the authenticity of the Bible as God's word, but the truth is that we can, and must, use our minds as well as our hearts in this matter.

**Concurrent validity**

Concurrent validity requires that there be agreement between the instrument in question and other measuring instruments sensitive to the same phenomenon during the same time period. If the Bible has concurrent validity, we should be able to find independent witnesses who report the same facts that are recorded in Scripture.

Archaeology reveals increasing evidence that biblical historical accounts coincide with accounts found in other ancient documents. In the last century, some of our knowledge was unlocked by the discovery of the Rosetta stone, the key to the hieroglyphic writings of early historians.

Consider the flood. Inscribed on twelve tablets written by king Gilgamesh in a form of Akkadian dated to 1700 B.C., an epic story of a flood was found in the ancient library at Ur at the turn of this century. The events described bear much similarity to the Genesis account; only the names are changed.

Consider also the Exodus. Other historical documents coincide with the Biblical account of the sudden departure of thousands of Israelites from Egypt. Aside from the Bible, we have not found a historical account stating that God was responsible for this. Yet without supernatural intervention, it is very hard to explain why a Pharaoh with an ambitious building program would suddenly let go of thousands of useful slaves, complete with flocks of animals, gold and jewelry.

Detractors have claimed the very person of Jesus Christ to be a myth, but several early historians made reference to him. Among the non-Christian ones were the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, and the Roman historian,
Cornelius Tacitus, both of whom described the false charges leading to the crucifixion.

So far, nothing suggests the Bible to be historically inaccurate. It has concurrent validity because other historical accounts agree with it.

**Predictive validity**

If the Bible has predictive validity, then the prophecies in it cannot err. The reader is invited to discover, through personal biblical inquiry, that they do not. Bible prophets accurately described both events that would take place soon after their words were uttered, and events that would take place many hundreds of years later.

The first type of prediction established the authenticity of the prophets during their lives. The second type was the truly important one, concerning Christ and salvation, plus end times. With the exception of events connected with end times that still await us, every other prophecy has taken place as predicted.

Anyone who pays serious attention to the Bible prophets and studies history has to regard the Bible as a supernatural source of information. The only other possible explanation for the degree of accuracy displayed by Bible prophecies is that they were written after the fact, but there is considerable evidence against that. The Gospel according to Matthew conveniently refers us back to the Psalms, Micah, Isaiah, Zechariah and other prophets for a host of uncannily accurate predictions concerning events in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The prophesies about Christ date from as far back as God's previously mentioned promise to Satan in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15): "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The Bible gives us the genealogy between Eve and Jesus (Luke 3:23-38) so that we make no mistake
that Jesus was the seed of the woman who bruised the head of the seed of Satan. In other words, Jesus thwarted the entire plan of Satan, whereas Satan only managed to maim the body of Jesus, symbolized by his heel.

Such consistency in the fulfillment of prophesies means that, according to the criterion of predictive validity, the Bible is an accurate measuring instrument. It measures, or describes, something of a supernatural order operating over thousands of years: the word of God.

Now, even if one has doubts about reportage, such as whether or not Moses wrote the books attributed to him, this prophetic aspect of the Bible cannot be dismissed. It should warrant attention from anyone even slightly curious about the world. Yet we humans are largely blind to Bible prophesy and often take our information from the devil's minions. These are the world's "scientific" forecasters who present extrapolation as if it were revelation, not to mention the more obviously occult stargazers and spirit channelers.

And yet even our blindness has been foretold. Isaiah (6:10) related God's intent to "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

**Face validity**

Face validity refers to whether or not a measuring instrument bears an immediately discernible resemblance to the underlying construct it is supposed to tap. If the Bible is the word of God, we expect to see miracles in it, and, of course, we do. With few exceptions, the credibility of all writers of the Bible is established by miracles God performed through them.

Scorners try to explain these away as natural phenomena, but they are unsuccessful, especially concerning the one miracle that counts most. The cornerstone on which all the
importance of the Bible rests is the resurrection of Christ, which has not been refuted as a historical event. In fact, the few serious attempts to do so have led to the very opposite; hard-headed detractors have become firm believers. Much as anyone may try to argue against the resurrection, we cannot get away from the fact that none of Christ's foes ever came up with a contradictory account that stuck. The chief priests paid the Roman guards to spread a story (Matthew 28:11-15), but that was as far as it went. They could easily have produced a mutilated body that they claimed to be his. We have no report of their trying this. The reason they did not seriously try to contest the resurrection was because the return of Jesus was seen by so many of his followers. These followers were completely transformed by the experience. Mice turned into lions. For example, Peter, who once hid his connection with Christ, became an eloquent spokesman for him (Acts 2:14-38).

Construct validity
Lastly we have construct validity, a complex concept bearing on many facets of the fit between instrument and data, including soundings from other types of validity and reliability. We focus here on two aspects of construct validity: internal consistency and parsimony.

Internal consistency refers to the degree to which an instrument taps a single idea or concept. Many people see the Old and New Testaments as conveying two entirely different messages. This is not so. The Bible is internally consistent in the sense that a series of witnesses all report the same theme throughout the Old and New Testaments. The theme is that although we are doomed by God's law, there is potential redemption through claiming his provision for sin.

The second aspect of construct validity of interest to us is parsimony, which appears to be an inherent facet of the human mind. Parsimony has been the subject of
considerable research by the Gestalt school of psychology. In the 1930s, researchers in Gestalt theory determined some principles by which the human mind perceives and organizes information,\textsuperscript{33} one of them being parsimony which is defined as closure, good figure and Pragnanz (a combination of meaning, simplicity and completeness).

Parsimony is a major standard for the applicability of a construct or theory to a set of facts. The most parsimonious theory is generally the one that gets the most votes. That is, the one that is most inclusive, explains data in the simplest and most elegant way, and gives a sense of closure. God has given us a parsimonious eye for a reason: so that we will find him when we look around us. His handiwork is everywhere. "God did it" is the most parsimonious explanation for the origins of the universe, the coming of life to this planet, the history of mankind and the structure of the human psyche. What is simpler yet more inclusive than the Bible's account of a Creator? So far, we have been unable to refute it. As we will see in the following chapters, the sin/death equation is the most parsimonious explanation for psychopathology.

Over and over, the Bible fulfils the major criteria for the scientific basis of a measuring instrument. It measures, or taps, God's word.

\textbf{To sum up...}

We claim that the core mental health problem is a universal, innate human sense of deserving eternal damnation; the cure is knowing God sent Jesus to take that punishment on our behalf. This can only be as true as the Bible but it is commonly assumed, even among many who consider themselves Christian, that the Bible is largely myth. This dangerous assumption keeps humans on track for the Lake of Fire.
In this chapter we looked at some human characteristics that Satan uses to make us refuse to take the Bible seriously. These are fear, pride, pluralism, rebelliousness, scorn, cynicism, complacency, and ignorance.

The ignorance and bias in our society is vast. Not only does it apply to the Bible, but also to science. The physical and social sciences are generally considered irrelevant or antithetical to the Bible. In fact, not only the sciences but also some occult practices support the Bible as factual. This is true of myths and folklore; astrology; fossil data and genetic exploration; the laws of thermodynamics; history; and psychological research and theory.

Notes


3. "Repent" is translated in the Old and New Testaments from words with two different meanings. (1) The Hebrew "shub" and the Greek "metanoia" both imply turning or changing the mind; (2) the Hebrew "naham" and the Greek "metamelomai" imply regret, or sorrow. According to the first meaning, repentance does precede grace: we must turn our heads to look at God so as to perceive grace. Regret and sorrow come after we are freed by grace to see ourselves as we really are.

4. Personal communication from Cecil Williams at a Sunday service


8. Rollo May stated, in a speech during a workshop for pastoral counselors at Calvary Presbyterian church, Berkeley, May 11, 1987, that "guilt is a product of fundamentalist religion."


Cognition.” *The Psychological Review, 52*(Whole No. 1).


18. See *Newsweek*, March 29, 1982, p. 45, for a discussion of the debate following Stephen Jay Gould’s assertion that punctuated equilibrium is an evolutionary phenomenon.


21. For example, we know that certain Hebrew abstract formulations are common to Babylonian and Aramaic languages. The code of Hammurabi of Babylon, written around 2,000 B.C. displays Hebraic
linguistic influences.


24. The first law of thermodynamics refers to the conservation of energy in a closed system. According to this law, it is impossible for any form of energy to emerge from no form of energy.


27. Ibid, Chapter 4, p. 50.

28. Ibid, Chapter 10, p. 118. Ibid, Chapter 4, p. 50.


31. For example, the book of Daniel purports to be a first person account written during his lifetime, after the Babylonian captivity in 605 B.C. Evidence Daniel was written before the events prophesied therein can be found in the fact that Ezekiel, purportedly writing after 586 B.C., refers to Daniel by name, that Daniel uses the Babylonian calendar in his writing, and that his account provides details of Babylonian history that could only be known to an insider at the time the events occurred. One such detail is his use of the term "Chaldean" to designate a class of wise men and advisors, a fact only known from the later discovery of Babylonian records.


Chapter Three

Psychology bears witness to the Bible

Psychology. Liberal Christians love it;\textsuperscript{1} conservative Christians hate it,\textsuperscript{2} and yet it has its uses; this is not an all-or-nothing situation.

Psychology has an important role in helping us understand the Bible. It demonstrates how events in the Garden of Eden have shaped the human psyche. In particular, it shows how our unconscious sense of condemnation affects us. For example, the concept of an "unconscious defense mechanism" explains our universal existential blindness. Some highly relevant factual and conceptual babies are left behind when the secular, theoretical bathwater is drained out.

However, the utmost caution is needed when dealing with psychology. "Christian" psychologists often defend their exclusive use of psychological concepts with the statement that "all truth is God's truth." It is true that all truth is God's truth. But to avoid mentioning salvation through Christ in psychotherapy is to dismiss its importance. It is a lie by omission. Much of what we consider "truth" is just that.

 Plenty of Christians are afraid to stand up for Christ out of fear of social ostracism and economic downfall. "We have a business to run," was a defense I heard at one major "Christian" counseling enterprise in the San Francisco Bay area.

 There is also the problem that "at the present time there is no acceptable Christian psychology that is markedly different from non-Christian psychology."\textsuperscript{3} Up to now, Christian psychology has leaned on secular psychology for theory. If the Bible is used at all, it is to support such ungodly theory, rather than vice versa, and the fallacies in psychological theory are laughable until we realize how many people are deceived by the web Satan has woven. In this
chapter do the opposite; we show ways in which secular research supports the Bible.

A Bible-based model of mental illness and mental health

Our Bible-based model sees mental illness (or psychopathology) arising from inborn knowledge that the price, or penalty, for sin (i.e., the slightest imperfection) is physical death, followed by burning in the Lake of Fire. Since all humans are imperfect, there is no person who does not have a terrifying sense of being damned, even if it is deep in their unconscious mind. This being the case, it follows that the cure for mental illness must be a Gospel-based. A person must reach the understanding that Christ, the only sinless human, paid the penalty on behalf of humans.

Before a person claims the coverage of the shed blood of Christ, the dooming law inside his heart has him rolling downhill in darkness towards the Lake of Fire, full of guilt and fear. After a person claims coverage of the atoning death of Christ that pays the dread penalty on behalf of all humans who avail themselves of it, everything can change. The guilt and fear lose their stranglehold and peace of mind can happen.

Is it possible to prove this model?

It is ironic that most, if not all, psychological theory rests upon mere inferences and ideas that are purely speculative and hypothetical. The fact is, if I am not called upon to provide any more proof than any of the accepted theorists in the field of psychotherapy, all I need do is come up with a convincing theory. However, it is likely that if the mental health profession is to recognize its true biblical foundation, a lot more evidence will be required than in the case of any secular theory. As pointed out in the previous chapter, we humans have a stubborn resistance to the Bible. The parsimoniousness of what we call the \( \text{sin}=\text{death/hell equation} \) may not be enough to convince people.
The model certainly fits the data. Chapters Seven, Eight, and Fourteen cover the ways in which the sin/death equation is manifested in all major psychiatric disorders. Here we look at two examples of the explanatory potential of this theory outside of psychiatry. These are taken from research on 1. attribution and responsibility and 2. low self-esteem.

**Attribution theory and fear of the Lake of Fire**

Attribution theory deals with our perception of who or what makes things happen, what causes the events in our lives. It has provided a fertile ground for research.\(^4\)

**Who gets the blame?**

Humans are both blamers and credit thieves. We display a general tendency to view ourselves as responsible for positive outcomes and outside forces as the source of negative ones.\(^5\) In other words, we are more willing to take the credit than the blame. In fact, we go to great lengths to not look bad, either to others or to ourselves. Why? Pride is undoubtedly an element in this, but the tendency makes most sense as a defense. Refusal to acknowledge the flaws which make us deserve hell is an unconscious defense against our deadly sentence. Instead, we blame others. This is nothing new: Adam blamed Eve for the Fall.

Except those who know the Gospel (see below), the small percentage of people who do not display this overall tendency are equally off the mark. Severely depressed people over-attribute negative events to themselves, believing they are responsible for *all* the world's ills. As for positive events, they are blind to them.\(^6\) Another variation is that people with an internal locus of control tend to see themselves causing *all* good and bad, as super-controllers. Conversely, externally-oriented people tend not to see themselves responsible for *anything*,\(^7\) but they are more likely to attribute failure than success to external factors.\(^8\) In other words, they are less likely to admit to their own failures.
Overall, this research shows that defense mechanisms distort our view of causality so as to blind us to our own shortcomings. Why would we cling to such a trait unless it has a deep purpose? It surely has no survival value; it blocks us from learning if we deny our mistakes, because we are condemned to repeat them over and over.

**Blaming God**

This general blaming tendency is reflected in people's relationship with God. Many are angry with Him without being conscious of it; they blame God when things go wrong and do not thank him when things go right. As they see it, pain and misery in no way stem from the free-wheeling activities of Satan, nor from their own actions.\(^9,10,11\)

It is hard to comprehend that God uses hardship as a teaching tool for our benefit. Events go from bad to worse because we are too angry with God and too blind to turn towards him. However, as the Bible displays, God uses Satan to test us (see the entire book of Job). He puts us through the refining fire and helps us come out stronger. "All things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

The fact that people who have a highly developed sense of God do not display these blaming tendencies certainly supports the idea that they stem from existential defensiveness, the refusal to see oneself qualifying for the Lake of Fire. Research shows that the closer people report feeling to God and the higher they score on the (Biblical) Fundamentalism scale, the more they tend to attribute positive events to him rather than negative ones.\(^12,13\) Individuals with these same characteristics are also less likely to blame bad outcomes on factors outside themselves.\(^14\) This is because people who know the mercy of God have reality-based attributions. They are freed to face their human flaws and learn from mistakes.
Low self-esteem is a misnomer; it is really existential guilt

At the same time that humans avoid seeing themselves responsible for bad things that happen, they nevertheless seem unable to feel approval for themselves. We have recognized the "low self-esteem" plague, and there is a great deal of research and theorizing about it.\(^\text{15}\) It is such a problem that there is, at the time of this writing, even a state-funded task force trying to remedy low self-esteem in California.

The problem goes far deeper than most realize. What we call low self-esteem is really existential guilt, or guilt over missing the mark. The fact is, we cannot love ourselves when our very human nature puts us under a death sentence. With doom hanging over us, our beauty as creatures made in God's image escapes us. Existential guilt produces constant feelings of being condemned, "wrong," unworthy, trapped and unloveable. This is why so-called low self-esteem is a component of every mental disorder listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).\(^\text{16}\)

The apparent exceptions are those disorders involving grandiosity, narcissism, and delusions of omnipotence. But these exceptions prove the rule. The self-esteem manifested in these disorders is defensive: unrealistically inflated or delusional.

Low self-esteem is also common to the nonpsychiatric population. We know there must be something wrong with the constant feeling of dislike or downright loathing we feel towards ourselves, and we want to get rid of it. Yet if the available therapies were able to cure it, we would expect the inhabitants of California, that therapy-conscious state, to be better off than they are. Despite its extremely high proportion of psychotherapists, Marin county, for example, has one of the highest suicide rates in the United States.\(^\text{17}\)
God is the only benevolent looking glass

Social science has shown that one’s concept of oneself is influenced by the way one thinks others see one: the "looking glass self." But we make a big mistake if we assume that human attitudes are the foundation for self-esteem. Research shows self-esteem to be linked to a person's concept of God. The Bible has been telling us this for thousands of years. It shows us our relationship with God is the foundation for all other relationships. Only the assurance of God's grace, his gift of a pardon enabling us to escape the consequence of missing the mark, will allow us to feel acceptance and compassion towards ourselves and others.

The way we think other humans see us is contaminated by our perspective on our self as we think God sees us. Until we have proof of God's love in the form of Christ, we assume he hates us. We make that projection into the darkness that separates us from him. Our mistake is in believing that God damned us instead of Satan.

Lacking God's love, we cannot believe other people could possibly love us. We block out love and let in hurt. Support and praise from others go unnoticed. Criticality or abusiveness sink in as they resonate with our existential guilt.

Compounding the problem is the fact that when we perceive only the malevolence which comes from others and none of the benevolence, our defensiveness makes us abusive. We cannot receive any love nor give any, but we can wound. Needing a relationship of some kind, we settle for a mutually abusive one unless it becomes too painful. If it ends, we blame the other for hurting us; we do not see our own role.

God and family relations

All our relationships are diseased when we do not know Christ. The widely-lamented breakdown of marriage and the family in this nation is a result of a retreat from the Bible, the only source of knowledge of God's love. As each new generation slips further
away from the Bible, it also moves further away from self-compassion, compassion for others, and the moral compass. Husbands and wives reflect their self-rejection in their marital relations, and parents with their children.

Child abuse is on the rise. Abused children who do not know God are doubly wounded. Ignorant of God and innately filled with existential guilt, they are wide open to the hurts coming from their parents and impervious to whatever affection may come their way. They feel under constant attack, both from the outside and from the inside. It is no wonder that increasing numbers of children display conscienceless, sociopathic tendencies. We are raising a generation of killers.

However, even the most loving, God-filled parents cannot cure their child's searing, gut-wrenching existential guilt. For one thing, even a loving parent, acting out of his dark side, will sometimes treat a child unfairly or abusively. However, the inconsistency of human love is not the real problem; the killer is that human love cannot keep anyone out of hell. Nor can it provide a sense of being forgiven at the deepest level. Only God has power to stay execution. For each human being, only the love of the one "other" of genuine significance, i.e., God, can plumb the depths. God's love can over-ride hurt from all the rejections and abuses suffered at the unpredictable hands of even the most loving human significant other.

The Gospel and therapy

Therapy that does not convey the Gospel cannot produce fundamental change. Failure to go to the source of human self-loathing--guilt over missing the mark—leads to failure to reach its permanent solution. Self-rejection continues until humans look at themselves through God's compassionate eyes. It is essential to know that one is forgiven, safe for eternity.

Research on coping shows that our sense of God's attitude towards us is related to many aspects of our functioning. People
who report a high degree of faith in a God they see as loving and providential involve that faith in the way they deal with life and score higher on a number of measures of positive coping. They cope much better than those view God as punishing and desirous of passive dependency.\textsuperscript{21}

Such findings show that the focus on low self-esteem is a red herring. Yet even the Christian mental health community has blindly taken up its the banner.\textsuperscript{22} The ambiguous term ought to be dropped from our psychological vocabulary. "Esteem" can mean "regard highly," and only God is worthy of high regard. In fact, some Christians show up with low scores on tests of self-esteem because their realistic view of themselves as sinners does not permit them to agree with positive statements.\textsuperscript{23} A "sense of God's compassion,” or “a sense of being a forgiven sinner” would be better terms for the ideal perspective on the self. This places the emphasis on God and his gift to a flawed but forgiven sinner, the very starting point for sanity. Only after humans perceive the gift of salvation, and know that God not only tolerates but loves them, can they fully appreciate the beauty and uniqueness of being human.

To sum up…

Psychology shows us the gospel is essential to mental health. It may describe problematic human tendencies but only the Bible explains and remedies them. We looked at two examples of how the $\text{sin=death/hell equation}$ affects human behavior: 1) blaming patterns; and 2) the low self-esteem plague that has shown itself to be basically incurable through secular psychotherapy.

Psychological examples show us that our Bible-based model of the human dilemma explains what makes humans tick as nothing else does. The Bible model enables us to fully understand human functioning.
Notes


Personality and Social Psychology, 27, pp. 372-381.


California: Department of Public Health.


Chapter Four

Jung and Biblical archetypes
Carl Jung (1875-1962) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) were system builders who imposed order on the workings of the human mind. These theorists dived below the surface, attempted to navigate in the murky depths of the psyche, and organized what they brought back.

Wheat and tares
The theories they came up with are unacceptable in the overall sense. However, their exploration has produced much that helps us understand the psychological importance of Scripture. Among the tares, or weeds, there is good wheat that enables us to understand the psychological impact of our terrible predicament. The rest can be thrown away. Fact can be separated from fiction by using the Bible as the standard of comparison.

This chapter concentrates on Jung, who has gained popularity especially since the 1980s with a type of spirituality that conflicts with the Bible. Nevertheless, from liberal Christians to Buddhists to New Age, in pastoral or "transpersonal" counseling centers and training programs across the country, Jung's work has gained acceptance. He is the longest established psychological theorist to openly espouse a spiritual perspective.  

Tares in Jung’s work
Jung explored his own psyche, the minds of his patients, and the collective minds of whole societies. His studied dreams, myths, fantasies, symbolism in art, introspective accounts of experiences during meditation, and psychotic and neurotic phenomena. This unconscious material is of interest to us because it reveals innate themes from the Bible.
However, the tares lie in his interpretation of this material. Jung sought the help of a spirit guide named Philemon.\textsuperscript{4} His failure to heed God's prohibition to "consult with familiar spirits" (Deuteronomy 18:11) may have been unwitting. But since he was familiar with the Bible, it may have been defiant. Whatever the reason, it led him into the lie that humans are partakers of a divine nature which can conquer death. This implicitly denies the breech due to sin. It is the very twofold Satanic lie that lured Adam and Eve: "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4) and "ye shall be as gods" (Genesis 3:5).

The purpose of God's prohibition towards seeking spirit guides is not only to protect us from actual demonic possession, but also to prevent exposure to the Satanic lies. So-called "spirit guides" are perfectly capable of posing as dead Auntie Jane, who stole the family fortune, cursed God up to her last breath, and was not even nice to cats and dogs. Through a medium such as the Ouija board a spirit can say something uncannily accurate about Auntie, then report that she is in a beautiful, peaceful place. Spirit channeling exposes us to demons posing as "angels of light" (II Corinthians 11:14); they provide the false reassurance of a fool's paradise.

Even worse, Jung fell into a blasphemy that derives from his assertion that humans are God: if we are both good and bad, and we are God, then God is bad as well as good. Obviously no peace of mind can come from this. There is no basis for believing anything good lies ahead nor any security if the "numinous" force, as he called it, of the universe may capriciously subject us to evil. It is actually a terrifying thought that God could be no less evil than we are—that is, if we are honest about ourselves. However, God's Word shows the lie in this (Mark 10:18).

The famous passage from Psalm 82 is often quoted out of context by Jungians and others attempting to make a case for the deity of man: "I have said, Ye are gods: and all of you are children of the most High" (Psalm 82:6). We should note that the writer, King David, did not actually direct this towards all humans; it is aimed at those in authority. More importantly, we should pay attention to the following verse: "But ye shall die like men, and fall
like one of the princes" (Psalm 82:7). We have some godly qualities but lack the most important one: power over our own eternal destiny.

**The wheat in Jung’s work**

Besides the tares, there is some good wheat in Jung's work. Essential to Jung's psychology, and to our Bible-based model, is the notion of the unconscious mind.

What is the unconscious mind? It is a part of the thinking process that humans are, by definition, not consciously aware of, although it governs most physiological and psychological functions. Psychodynamic theory sees the unconscious as the source of the basic human drives. It is also a place for concealment or containment of facets of the human personality that cause insoluble conflict and the threat of potentially overwhelming guilt and fear.

Jung divided the unconscious into two main areas: the "individual unconscious," specific to the individual, and the species-wide "collective unconscious." His collective unconscious contained information universal to humans in the form of innate themes or "archetypes," Jung's most useful concept from a biblical point of view.

He took off with Freud's observation that there appeared to be "archaic remnants" in the dreams of his patients. These archetypical remnants were mental forms whose presence could not be explained by anything in the person's own life. He went on to focus on these apparently innate, unconscious elements, believing them to be of divine origin.

**Nativism, or innate ideas**

The archetype is a nativist concept: you are born with it, you do not get it through learning. Nativism, or the concept of innate ideas, conflicts with the learning theories that dominated psychological theory and research in the early part of this century. Nevertheless science is producing increasing evidence for a genetic, inborn origin for many of the human characteristics that
were once considered to be learned. Studies of identical twins separated at birth and raised separately are coming up with astounding similarities in their adult tastes, habits, timetables, career choices, illnesses and other human facets we formerly attributed to environmental influences.  

Nativism is not popular in our "egalitarian" society, where we have tried to prove that environmental differences alone account for the disparities we see in the worldly status of humans. A sense of equality is part of our basic equipment, but we seek it in all the wrong places until we find the right one, which is that all humans have equal access to salvation.

However, nativism is not a new idea. It has long been recognized that some type of inherent wisdom is present in humans. For centuries philosophers have proposed innate elements in the human mind. Plato saw archetypes as pure forms in the mind, of which existing things are imperfect copies. This seems to deny the reality of a perfect God, but does acknowledge the human impossibility of attaining perfection.

Descartes defined three principle innate ideas: God, the self, and matter. His was a "no smoke without fire" notion of the archetype: ideas are based on objective reality. The innate idea of God comes from the reality of God, which is no less perfect than the idea. However, Descartes' God is distant and impersonal, having set the universe in motion and stepped into the background.

**Jung’s archetypes**

Through his occult practices and study of “mythology,” which for Jung included the Bible, he developed a "smoke without fire" notion of the archetype. Having no factual, historical basis, they are ideals, divine guides, an internal pantheon capable of moving humans towards transcendence of their mortal limitations. The process of change occurs as the person opens up to the archetypes within.

Jung came up with the following major archetypical elements in the human collective unconscious: the anima/animus, or female and male elements; the shadow, or dark side; the persona; the hero;
the abstract processes of initiation and transcendence; the journey; death and rebirth; and adversity. In a part of the collective unconscious Jung called the "superconscious," there was a place of connection with the godhead, which inspired the process of archetypical transformation.

Later in this chapter we will discuss the parallels between Jung's archetypes and ones in the Bible. However, two immediately obvious omissions in Jung's archetypes are hell and God's law with its death sentence. These omissions explain how Jung could put transformation and immortality in human hands rather than in God's hands.

Morton Kelsey's more recent definition of archetypes has some biblical themes but it, too, leaves out the same all-important aspects. Kelsey's archetypes are good, evil, Satan, angels and demons. For Kelsey, these are not an objective reality but innate unconscious determinants of human behavior.6

**The Bible and the unconscious**

Is there Biblical acknowledgement of the unconscious mind? Yes. The story of David, Bathsheba and Nathan, the prophet indicates this (II Samuel 11). No human has been more consciously aware of God's law than David, who extolls his love for it in several of his Psalms (Psalms 1:2, 19:7, 40:8, 119). Yet apparently David was not conscious of wrongdoing in his theft of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, nor in his subsequent arrangement for the man's death. That is, until God used Nathan to expose the sin to him in the story of a rich man who stole a poor man's one little sheep.

At the conclusion of the story, David exclaimed that the rich man deserved to die. Nathan returned with "You are that man." Only then did David fully see the wickedness in his own actions, and he experienced great remorse. This shows how we are perfectly capable of hiding our eyes from seeing the wrongdoing we commit, even when we know what wrongdoing is.

In the many Biblical accounts of prophetic dreams, such as those of the Pharaoh of Egypt during the time of Joseph (Genesis
37:5), and of Nebuchadnezzar in the time of Daniel (2:3), are examples of God's use of the unconscious mind to transmit information. In those cases, God prevented understanding for his own reasons, rather than this being simply a function of the person's psychological defense equipment.

Archetypes from Genesis

An astounding blueprint entered the human race in the Garden of Eden. The events in the Garden were written in the psyche of our first ancestors and passed on to us. Knowledge of the existential dilemma and the main cast of characters associated with it exists inside us in an unconscious way without our ever having learned about this. It is information carried by humans from their conception, memory traces of real events and prophesies from God.

Since it is impossible to step inside the human mind and inventory its contents, we can only make inferences about it by observing what humans say and do. The presence of the following archetypes from Genesis is supported by the same types of information source used by Jung, sometimes with the addition of large-scale scientific research to which Jung did not have access. The first four archetypes follow the order of events in the Garden.

The archetypical awareness of God

A 1988 Gallup poll found that ninety four percent of Americans say they believe in God. Also, researchers have found that people who have not recently been active in formal religion spontaneously turn to God in a crisis situation. Can there be so much smoke without fire?

For Adam and Eve, a sense of the existence of God, their maker, must have preceded their awareness of even themselves. God was fashioning them before they could think. The same is true for all of us. True, our nature separates us from God. But although we feel this separation, it does not remove the sense of his presence.
One thing I have found in exploring my clients' stance towards the existence of God is that no one is neutral. The issue is charged with strong emotion. If there really were no God, would we feel so strongly? Unbelievers assume that the uneasy feeling of blasphemy that goes with the denial of the existence of God must have been inculcated by organized religion. They keep trying to stamp out God using reason, but it is never completely effective.

Often we experience a sense of God without being aware of it, or calling it that. It can be a feeling that someone who cares is always watching or listening. The sociological term "generalized other," which defines the vague "them" of our imagination, is largely a perception of God. Even the humanist idea of the inherent good of man is really a perception of God waking the conscience. When a humanist honestly scrutinizes his desire to operate according to higher principles, he finds that this is not just pragmatic or utilitarian. He is actually recognizing the presence of a higher audience.

And just who is the "perfect lover" of our fantasies, the one who can read our mind, who knows our very soul? That is no one else but God. We make the mistake of seeking that type of intimacy from our human partner when we do not know God.

If a sense of God is innate, it makes sense that it will be displayed by those who are more open and intuitive. This description best fits children, females, primitive peoples, artists, and certain psychotics. In all these groups there does tend to be an above average acceptance of the supernatural realm.

Naturally, skeptics will attribute this to lack of intelligence among these groups, but there are contraindications to that. Paranoid schizophrenics, for example, who have a strong preoccupation with the supernatural, often display superior intelligence on the Wechsler scales. In Chapter Eight, there is a discussion of psychotic "religiosity," a preoccupation with the supernatural that has not been explained by environmental influences.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psalm 14:1). Some of the world's foremost "brains" have concluded that there
must be a supreme being...Galileo, Newton, Einstein and Stephen Hawking are just a few examples.

However, the sense of the supernatural is not necessarily godly. Humans can easily be led astray by it if the influence of the Bible is absent. The mystical experience of being connected with something out there can lead us to believe we are a part of God. Made in the image of God, we begin to believe we are god, playing ourselves into Satan's hands. As we will see in Chapter Ten, Jung is only one of a long line of deceived deceivers who promote this belief.

The Bible helps us realize that a true awareness of God is the opposite: it is an overarching feeling of accountability, awe, fear, and separation. Psychologists have said that the central problem of our time is alienation. This is true, but it is not alienation from other people. It is alienation from God, deadly in its consequence. Until we know Christ as our free entrance, we experience distance between us and God. Our intuition tells us there is a power greater than ourselves, but we need more than just intuition to find it. We need the facts the Bible shows us.

**Satan archetypes**

The devil, or Satan, was the second source of authority to appear to Adam and Eve. His appearance was deceptive, evil posing as good. Like Satan himself, archetypical representations of him come in many guises.

1. **The snake**

Satan took the form of a serpent or snake to seduce humans into rebellion. Following this, God cursed snakes. He promised enmity between the snake and the woman, and between the descendants of both (Genesis 3:15).

It is not surprising that snakes seem to be intrinsically connected with Satan in our minds. Freudians treat the snake as a phallic symbol, and a fear of snakes as a fear of sexuality. But this fails to account for the fact that fear of the snake is still the leading form of simple phobia in the United States. Are we all so afraid
of the male sexual apparatus even after the so-called sexual revolution in this country? Hardly. Nor do the objective facts about the dangerousness of snakes completely explain the prevalence of the fear. What better explanation than that God put that fear of snakes into us in fulfilment of prophesy?

It is interesting that the snake, as a symbol of deity, is widely seen in pagan religions, all of which whisper the same enticing lie as the original serpent. Topiltzin, in the legend mentioned in Chapter Three, sails away on a raft made of snakes, a key to the Satanic theme.

The ancient pagan practise of goddess worship, popular today among New Agers\textsuperscript{14} often has the snake associated with it as a fertility symbol.

Moreover, the snake on a pole used as a symbol for healing in modern medicine comes from the Bible. God punished the complaining children of Israel by sending in snakes to bite them. When they repented, God told Moses to make a "fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." (Numbers 21:8). The conquered snake on the pole symbolizes God's victory over Satan, a metaphor for Christ taking us back to God's first reference to him in Genesis (3:15).

2. Mother nature
Satan encourages us to worship false gods. These include elements of the creation rather than the invisible Creator. God's curse on the earth after Adam and Eve's disobedience particularly highlights the futility of worshipping it.

The pagan appeal of Mother Nature or Mother Earth is that gentle Mommy has no hell to send us to. We want to cling to Mommy and avoid Daddy's enforcement of the law. But the law is inside us, telling us what we face. We cannot have Mommy (mercy) without Daddy (judgment), and we cannot avoid Daddy. The devil's lie that we can dispense with Daddy only deceives us temporarily, lulling us into a slumber from which we cannot afford to wake unless we know the price for sin is paid.
3. The trickster

Satan has to resort to cunning, and commonly appears as the evil trickster in mythology. He is found among the pantheon of heavenly gods, such as the Norse god, Loki. He also appears in the earthly supernatural realm: trolls, the siren, faeries, elves, the "big, bad wolf," etc.

4. The dragon

Another image of Satan found in both the Bible and mythology is the dragon. The book of Revelation describes the archangel Michael and his host of heavenly angels defeating the dragon, Satan, and his host of fallen angels (Revelation 12:7). Some of the most popular children's fairy stories involve a prince who slays a dragon as a rite of passage.

We appear to have inside us this knowledge of "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), an intrinsic awareness that Satan and his crew are all around us. This becomes even more apparent when we look at psychotic phenomena (see Chapters Seven and Eight). Even our universal fear of the dark derives from this. God is associated with light, the devil and his demons with darkness: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

The archetypical sin nature

Our dark nature is inborn. We may be capable of altruism but it is impossible to escape the extent to which sin motivates us. Although made in God's image, we get in trouble when we try to think like gods and reject God's authority. It opens the flood gate to our inherent evil.

Jung versus the Bible on sin

Jung and the Bible both see an inherent, ineradicable stain in our character. For Jung, the destructive power of this darkness comes only from its unseen quality. Like the dark side of the
moon, it is fear-inducing because it is unknown. It has no death sentence attached to it.

For Jungians, the work of psychotherapy is to defuse the fear of the shadow by acknowledging it. This permits its peaceful coexistence with the "light" side. The positive and the negative, or the yin and the yang, can exist side by side in harmony, enclosed mandala-fashion by one big circle representing unity and wholeness. Thus there is no need of a power higher than or outside of ourselves to provide a rescue, no need for God's pardon in the form of Jesus Christ.

However, Jung's "journey," "initiation," and "transcendence" archetypes imply distance or a barrier between man and God. The difference between Jung and the Bible lies in how this obstacle is removed. Jung says by man; the Bible says only by God.

**Egocentricity**

Much of the sin in our lives stems from egocentricity, or selfism. God's two basic commandments, to love him and to love our neighbors as ourselves, oppose our predisposition towards self-worship.

Confirmation of the inborn nature of self-centredness comes from the considerable research by the Swiss child development psychologist, Jean Piaget, and his followers. Young children appear to be literally unable to adopt a perspective other than their own. By adulthood we have developed the ability to take another's point of view. However, we tend not to do so unless specifically motivated--often by self-interest. Research has shown that although adults are capable of displaying altruistic behavior, this typically only happens when they empathize with the other person. The rest of the time they will act according to self-interest.

The joys of the flesh are an ever-present trap for humans. What is worse is that our thoughts tell us we are killers, momentarily wishing for the demise of those who have wronged us even briefly...that driver of the car stealing the much-sought parking space just as we are delicately manoeuvring our way in. Counseling on a hotline for stressed parents, I discovered how
often parents other than myself had thought about pushing their child over a cliff at some time, much as we all love our offspring. Moreover, we find ourselves committing adultery with our eyes when we are out in public, and our first response to finding a cash-filled wallet on the sidewalk is "keep the money." Human nature is not pretty.

**Are humans inherently good?**

The Bible depicts human nature as corrupt, much to the horror of humanists. In spite of all the research by sociobiologists, anthropologists, and humanistic psychologists seeking evidence that humans are basically good, there is no scientific evidence of this. Research suggest otherwise. Consider, for example, Milgram's brilliant laboratory experiments demonstrating human adults' willingness to knowingly administer what they perceived to be painful electric shocks upon request to unseen victims. Our tendency for violence is also seen in a general preference for aggression over cooperation during the "prisoner's dilemma" game, even though cooperation would benefit both players. It does not take much to induce us to hurt others: "For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood" (Proverbs 1:16).

Children are no more innocent and pure than adults. Right from the start, aggression is much more the norm than cooperation. We see this, for example, in the social learning theorists' extensive laboratory experiments on preschoolers where, despite their opportunities to model nonaggressive behavior, children persistently exhibit aggression. Some of the earliest research on moral behavior has been on children. One finding has been that even when they say stealing or cheating is wrong, elementary school children will do these things if they think they do not face punishment.

Since the role of experience still cannot be discounted, such research does not prove humans are innately bad, but makes it impossible to argue in favor of innate goodness. All the evidence suggests that humans are naturally violent but do not want to admit it. In vain we search the world for the gentle, natural, peace-loving
people who can prove to us that our violence and corruption are the product of the sick society we live in. Yet fossil remains of our ancestors are filled with evidence of murder: smashed skulls. If our society is sick it is because its individuals are sick, with a congenital disease.

Jesus told us who we really are: "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:20-23).

These human qualities are part of us until we die. Only the knowledge of a blanket pardon enables us to be bold enough to face the truth about ourselves. Our "shadow," as Jung called it, has a deadly consequence. It can only be encountered and accepted through the safety of God's pardon, the doorway of Jesus Christ. Only with that safety can we allow ourselves to see the full extent of our darkness and come to terms with it.

The Law archetype

The claim that the Gospel is the only route to mental health rests on the inborn nature of God's black and white dooming law. This cannot be emphasized enough. It is of fundamental importance to whether or not grace is essential for mental health. If the law were not written in our hearts, we would have no need for the God of the Bible in order to be mentally healthy. The sin/death equation would be foreign to us. We could be contentedly ignorant until our lives are over.

However, the evidence suggests otherwise. For one thing, the legal systems of the entire world are based on similar principles incorporating the concept of a "natural law" ordained by a power greater than humans. For another, guilt is a pervasive force in the human psyche. Freud saw that. Existential guilt, deep and without focus, implies a law which says we fall short of the glory of God in our very humanness. It is only cured by the assurance of God's forgiveness for who we are.
Beside this guilt is the fact that all religions address the same universal problem: separation between man and God. There is no more reasonable explanation for this than the existence of an innate sin/death equation.

For centuries, philosophers and scientists have questioned the existence of an innate moral law. In support of the innatist position, Immanuel Kant postulated an a priori "categorical imperative," an internal command to do what is right and an immutable sense of duty.\textsuperscript{21} In recent years there has been increasing empirical evidence for this.

**Lawrence Kohlberg's research on a possible inborn moral code**

The work of the psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg, points to an inherent moral code.\textsuperscript{22} In the research by Kohlberg and his associates, an invariant sequence of six stages in the development of moral judgment were found across several cultural groupings.

In the first four stages, morality is based on a selfish fear of social consequences, a basic concern to save one's own skin. The fifth stage displays a sense of the importance of maintaining the social order for the good of all. The most advanced sixth level of judgment, which Kohlberg called a "Universal Ethical Principles Orientation," is one in which the individual's own conscience is the only criterion of moral conduct. Morality is based on his higher sense of right and wrong without regard for selfish needs, social consequences, or even the social order.

Kohlberg belongs to the "cognitive developmental" school of theorists. This school maintains that the role of experience is to draw out, through an interactive process, what is already there below the surface in blueprint form, waiting to be activated. The moral code requires the opportunity for moral decision-making to stimulate its development. The fact that Kohlberg found the sequence of stages to be universal and invariant suggests that the code is innate.

The work of this school is often used to support the secular humanist position that man is good. According to this position, the "right" socialization experiences will expose the deep godliness of
man, the "wrong" experiences will prevent it from surfacing. Man does not need to be taught to do good. He merely needs to be allowed to unfold in a stimulating, loving environment. Without such an environment, his goodness will stay inside.

From a biblical perspective, the "right" experience is important, but the one that will soften our hearts, expose God's law and motivate us to do good is the grace of God. Human socialization has a role in this only if it is under the direction of God. And even with the assurance of God's saving grace, man continues to have the innately corrupt elements in his psyche.

Unsurprisingly, Kohlberg found that few of the adults he studied reached stage six. Among those who did, most did not function at this stage all the time. A person has no reason to obey his conscience unless he also has a sense of being accountable to God, albeit possibly an unconscious one. When a sense of God is absent, the temptation to break the law has no prohibition other than personal discretion or whim. Using rationalization and other psychological defenses, we humans act in our own self-interest and become a law unto ourselves. Only the fullness of knowing God's love inspires us to follow his law. And even those who know this love have self-serving blind spots.

**Sociobiology**

Sociobiology is also finding increasing evidence for an elaborate system of inherent values in the human genetic structure. Such findings do not prove that God's law stating "the price for sin is death" is born into us. However, as we show elsewhere in this book, this theory makes the best sense of the observable regularities in human thinking and behavior.

**The Bible**

The Bible certainly says God's law is inborn: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their
conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or excusing one another." (Romans 2:14-15).

The law God gave to Moses is written in the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch or Torah. It articulates what humans already know at an unconscious level, although not at the same level of specificity. Reading the law shows us why we have always felt uncomfortable about certain thoughts and actions. This knowledge is not acquired through Bible study. Rather, the Bible brings this innate knowledge up to the level of consciousness.

The law itself contains an acknowledgement of how unconscious our sin may be. But according to God's directive to Moses, we are guilty even when we break the law and "wist it not." Humans can break the law by accident or by unconscious intent and still face the sentence (Leviticus 5:17). If this makes God seem tight, we must remember that he wants us to be sure to see we cannot make it without him, so we will seek his refuge.

Humans are never truly in ignorance of God's law. Conscious awareness of it may be dim or absent. Its voice can become "weak" (I Corinthians 8:7), "defiled" (Titus 1:15), or "seared," as in the case of the psychopath (I Timothy 4:2). Nevertheless, unconscious conviction of it is fully present. Psychological defense mechanisms, detailed in Chapter Six, perform the task of concealment. As in the story of David and Bathsheba described earlier in this chapter, defenses can keep actions conveniently separate from moral evaluation.

The hidden defense artillery silences the internal judge by pushing him out of sight. Then we can allow ourselves to perform those actions that are morally questionable. Yet this is always accompanied by unease, adding another layer of guilt to strain the defenses...and the judge will have his say, eventually.

**The Paradise archetype**

Humans have been seeking Paradise ever since our ancestors were forced out of the Garden. We picture a happy society where everyone coexists in a state of love, the ultimate family and high school reunion. As a child I was sure I would wake up one day in
a fresh, flower-filled world, where my previous existence would seem like a bad dream. There is a memory trace of a perfect world in our collective unconscious. This explains our fascination with Shangri-La and Utopia. Yet all human attempts to remove the flaming sword which bars access to the Tree of Life and a perfect world have led to failure. Only the recognition that we will have it after death enables us to stop insisting we must have it here.

When the explorer Cortez was moving up into California from farther south, he was seeking the mythical fountain of youth. In our preoccupation with eternal youth, is there more than a defense towards death? Perhaps it, too, stems from an innate sense of the youth God will restore in heaven.

**The hell/Lake of Fire archetype**

The nursery rhyme says: "This is the way the old men go. Hobble-dee, hobble-dee, hobble-dee, and down into a ditch." This is a scary picture for young children. Our sense of Paradise is the glimmer of light in the midst of foreknowledge of the dark pit. Why were Adam and Eve afraid when they knew they were going to die? It was because they somehow knew about a place of utter darkness resulting from their separation from God. This is the ultimate abandonment, the reality basis of existential guilt and anxiety, the abyss underneath waiting to swallow us up.

We innately sense two things. One is a place or state of utter darkness and desolation; the other is continuity past this lifetime. Unfortunately, our psychological defense apparatus generally keeps the two separate, at least at a conscious level.

In our complacency, we assume that we will continue in some desirable state, certainly a state no worse than the present one. The widespread popularity of accounts of "near-death" encounters with angels and white light attests to our search for evidence of this. But we are foolish if we believe a near-death experience can be equated with an after-death one. Satan bolsters the lie that there is nothing to worry about, sending visions of those "angels of light."

Besides, not all near-death experiences are so positive. In my own practice I have listened to some hellish "near-death" accounts
from individuals who professed to have neither a current religion nor any religious education earlier in their lives. Nevertheless they reported post-major-surgical experiences of "visiting" a place that was dark and fearful, filled with malevolent presences.

Imagery about this place of terror keeps coming up in our mythology, dreams and other aspects of our awareness. The underworld theme is found in the Greek myths of Ceres and Persephone, the Minotaur, and many others; it occurs in the myths of all societies.

A 1990 Gallup survey found that three out of five people say they believe in hell. However, only a small percentage think they have excellent or good chances of going there, even among those who profess to have no religion. A higher proportion, almost four out of five, say they believe in heaven, a finding which makes sense given the human tendency be less likely to suppress good things. The same survey showed that the proportion of "hell-believers" has actually risen during a period of at least thirty years in which mention of hell has been almost absent from the pulpit. This certainly lends credence to the presence of a hell archetype in the collective unconscious. It also suggests that humans deceive themselves into thinking they will not go there.

The sense of the dark abyss or "black hole" is a key feature in existential psychotherapy. It is treated in that school as if its importance lies only in the here and now, rather than being seen as an intimation of what is ahead. Yet existential psychotherapy views separation anxiety, most apparent in children but also common in adults, to be a form of death anxiety.

If there is no hell, why does research show attitudes towards death to be prevalently negative? Except among Christians, positive expectations about death appear to be unknown in the literature but we hear plenty of negative ones, such as death-related depression. This depression has been shown to have five factors: despair, dread, sadness, depression, and finality. Moreover, lurking death anxiety is demonstrated by adults who, though claiming they have no fear of death, exhibit significant response
delays and changes in galvanic skin response when presented with death-related topics and words.\textsuperscript{30}

If hell were a myth, it would make no sense that all religions conceptualize some form of it. Like existentialism, Hinduism and Buddhism have temporary hells. The Bible and its man-made derivative, the Koran, have permanent ones. Jesus described hell as a "furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:42), and as "outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:13). The gnashing of teeth Jesus describes in all his references to hell indicates the rage we will feel at having been given a chance to escape, and having thrown it away: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:28).

We may argue that a loving God would not subject us to eternal darkness. But we cannot know God's motives, and such an idea only tempts us into thinking hell might be worth risking. Rebellious as we are, only the prospect of unending torture will make most of us turn our faces towards God in more than a passing way.

**The rescuer archetype**

This brings us to the question of whether or not there is a rescuer archetype to bring a sense of closure to our archetypical dilemma. In other words, did God give us an innate conflict without also providing an innate conflict resolution mechanism?

It certainly appears not. Evidence suggests there is a rescuer archetype, Jung's "hero." Its presence is most clear in the thinking of disturbed people. For example, Walsh states that: "Belief in an ultimate rescuer is seen in many patients with disturbed personality and behavioral patterns (severe passivity, dependency, masochism) and in some patients who feel especially vulnerable to loss and depression.\textsuperscript{31}

This does not mean that belief in a rescuer is pathological. On the contrary, psychopathology is a doorway to the collective
unconscious (see Chapters Seven and Eight for a discussion of this in psychosis). Through phenomena that surface during mental illness, we can learn a great deal about what goes on in all of us.

The first Biblical reference to the rescuer is in God's curse on the serpent (Satan): "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen 3:15).

The seed of the woman refers to the genealogy of Jesus Christ, descendant of Eve, who truly bruised the head, or plan, of Satan, the inhabitor of the serpent. Because of God's gift of Christ, Satan's plan to send the entire human race to hell was destroyed.

Mythology gives us plenty of evidence for innate knowledge of a rescuer, God in human form. Yet mythology inevitably brings a Satanic twist to this. The mortal human becomes the hero who attains godhood and immortality. In mythology the hero is clearly not everyman. There is usually something special about his birth. It is of a supernatural order, setting him apart from others. Through communication with the gods he becomes a god himself, winning immortality through self-sacrificial bravery.

The events defining him often bear a remarkable resemblance to those we are told about Jesus. Consider the various legends on the Toltecs' most glorious king, Topiltzin, who lived around 900 A.D. According to different stories, the following happened to Topiltzin. he burned himself in a funeral fire; his heart went into the underworld for four days and returned as the morning star; and he parted the sea and walked away through it, finally sailing away on a raft made of snakes.

By 900 A.D., factual accounts of Christ could have reached the Americas so this legend may not be purely archetypical. Although it contains many striking similarities to accounts of Christ, the Satanic twist is there. Jung makes the mistake of regarding such legends as indications of man's innate ability to save himself.

Based on mythology, Jungian theory emphasises the pivotal role of the "hero" in a misguided way, as a role for the self. Jung-inspired "hero" and "warrior" workshops have been popular in recent years. It appeals to our pride to believe that we can
rescue ourselves if we act boldly. However, deep inside we know that no amount of bravery will enable us to pay the price for sin. Laying down our own lives will not buy us out of our dilemma. The price for sin is disconnection from God and only God can free us by paying it.

The Genesis reference to God's provision of a rescue is obscure but God has a habit of using riddles when he wants to test us. He has planted a germ of knowledge in our psyche, beginning with the image of the seed of the woman bruising the head of the seed of the serpent.

The Topiltzin legends indicate our innate sense of the central role of a god-man, a savior. Our unassuageable thirst for rescue stories and human heroes mirrors our unconscious need for Christ. But our human heroes let us down. The sports star discloses the presence of a sexually-transmitted disease; the movie star becomes a paunchy, alcoholic wreck. And our pictures do not fit the reality of the events around the life and death of Jesus Christ. We do not see him physically unattractive, with no white horse or sword, led like a dumb lamb to the slaughter, dying a cursed death with pierced hands and feet (Isaiah 53; Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 22:16).

Judging by the universality of blood sacrifices, we are innately aware that the shedding of blood is essential in some way for our atonement: "for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

However, knowledge of the specific details of the atonement must come from Bible study. We are dependent on God not only for the rescue, but also for the information that makes us feel secure about it. God is looking for a certain kind of response in us, a willingness to seek and to listen, perhaps.

**Other archetypes in Genesis**

The following three archetypes are in the minor league in the sense that they do not bear on our existential dilemma, yet they explain much about the difficulty of life in this world. All three are prophetic curses which show us that when God makes a promise, he keeps it.
Childbirth

God placed an unequivocal curse on all women through Eve. In my atheistic days I used to ponder over why childbirth (and also, by extension, menstruation) had to be a painful affair. It seemed to go against evolution because humans seemed to have a much more difficult time with it than any other living thing.

Well, evolution is a myth and the fact is God placed several curses on women from the time of Eve. God said "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;" (Gen 3:16). That has borne true in many ways, and it is interesting that "the curse" is a term women still use in reference to menstruation.

Male domination

The next archetype is a stumbling block for feminists. Yet why else would it be that, despite the feminist revolution of the sixties, women continue to be second class citizens? According to Genesis, it results from another of God's curses on Eve. Eve was told "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen 3:16). It is in the collective unconscious of women to focus their attention on men and to allow men to dominate them. This is the source of all the problems women have in their relations with men.

For many years, scientists have debated over whether sex differences are due to nature or nurture. There is little contesting that male and female societal roles are different, but why? Back in the 1930s, the sociologist Talcott Parsons described the male role as "instrumental," in contrast with the "expressive" role of the female. Men do; women feel.

Science has discovered small differences in the construction of male and female brains that suggest an innate basis for male-female differences in cognition and personality. For example, females have more connections between right and left brains in the corpus callosum. The left brain is said to be more instrumental, analytical, and action-oriented than the right, which is more expressive, receptive, imaginative, intuitive, and spatially-
oriented. This could explain why men tend to be more single-minded and less emotionally expressive; they may be able to shut out right hemispheric functioning and stay with the left hemisphere. On the other hand, if women are more likely to use both sides of the brain, this could explain why they think more globally and intuitively. It also makes sense of their somewhat reduced ability to produce a cognitive structure, which could be described as "structure hunger," a lack of firm boundaries as compared to men.

In research on electrical activity in the brain, women are found to have larger "evoked potentials" than men, an indication of greater sensitivity to certain stimuli. Women's increased sensitivity, intuition and receptivity may explain why they seem to be more open to the spirit world, and thus more likely to accept non-Biblical forms of spirituality than men. The first woman certainly fell for the Satanic seduction.

Moreover, most of the Greek and Roman demons are female, e.g., Hecate, the Harpies, and the Gorgons. These myths seem to express a widespread unconscious recognition that the receptivity of the female makes her an easier target for Satanic deception than the male. This explains the current trend towards feminist spirituality, with its rejection of Christ and espousal of the female as goddess.

Receptivity and sensitivity are not inferiority, however. Men are not superior, just different. God is not a sexist. Women, last to appear in God's order, may be superior in certain respects. A man and a woman complement each other. Each needs what the other has so that both can be more effective. Doing needs to go hand in hand with feeling. The female benefits from the male's leadership, his ability to take action. The male benefits from the female's sensitivity and emotional clarity. His ability to lead is enhanced by the woman's sensory apparatus, her antennae.

The problem arises when humans reject God. Then male leadership becomes domination. Domination of females by males derives partly from the ungodliness of man. A man without God believes he is under no other authority than his own. His natural
hardness inclines him towards exploitation. The problem also stems from the ungodliness of the woman, whose experience of her own powerlessness and vulnerability makes her cling to a man who abuses her. Without God, each member of the couple is striving to get more from the other than the other has to give. "Getting" is the motive for the relationship, rather than "giving."

Both the woman and the man need to know that the relationship, desirable as it is, is not essential. This comes from perceiving that God will provide for all our needs. He will make up for our inherent deficits. In a male-female couple, when each leans on God, there can be interdependency without addiction. When each depends on God more than on the other, each can appreciate the complementary nature of the relationship and not resent the role differences. There is no fear about giving.

Jung conceptualized male and female principles to be present as archetypes in the collective unconscious of all humans. He called these the "animus" and "anima." The Jung-based theory that domination of the female by the male would end when the male's internal female, the anima, and female's internal male, the animus, surfaced has some truth. But the male only develops his expressive side, and the female her ability to take action, when each knows they can lean on a forgiving God who has total control of reality.

If humans, both male and female, are made in the image of God, God must incorporate both male and female aspects. Interestingly, one Jungian analysis of the behavior of Jesus in the four gospels finds equal amounts of "anima" and "animus" behavior. The silly Jungian purpose is to show us we can all be androgynous like Jesus, for we are all assumed to be part of the godhead. The anima/animus archetypes are seen as enabling each human to develop equally strong maleness and femaleness.

But this is to deny the value of the inherent differences. A biblical view of the animus/anima, if such exist, is that they are a blueprint for both a literal reality and a spiritual one. The presence of the opposite sex archetype makes us seek to establish a partnership to round us out: a "help-meet" (Genesis 2:18).
Second, it shows us our relationship to Christ, the bridegroom who unites us with God and prepares a heavenly home for us. In a sense, men play a female role towards Christ just as women do, a surrender.

Clearly, no human means will stop male domination/female subjugation if God established it. The only solution for both sexes is to claim the payment for sin provided by the God of the Bible. Only then can women be free from psychic enslavement to men, and men from exploiting women. Then genuine intimacy will be possible. Women cannot liberate themselves; only God can do this, in this world and the next.

**Thorns and thistles**

The third archetypical curse involves the hardship to be involved in obtaining food. God's curse on Adam particularly highlights the uselessness of the pagan practice of praying to Mother Earth, or Mother Nature. God told Adam the ground was cursed because of him. From then on, there were no more convenience foods; there was no more simple reaching up to pick fruit from the trees during a stroll through the garden. Food would have to be produced through hard labor, which would bring sorrow (Gen 3:17). There would be thorns and thistles to contend with, and bread would be eaten only after much sweat. This hard life would be ended by a return to the dust that man was taken from. Not a pretty picture.

The bumper sticker reads "Life is hard, then you die," cynical but true on an archetypical level. It would be a cruel joke if there were no God to call upon and only the prospect of death and hell ahead.

God has warned us to expect hardship but Satan tries to make us think life should be easy so we are angry about the difficulties and injustice in this world. He wants us to shake our fists at God and turn away from him. Instead, we need to see the situation is temporary, that God has to prune us if we are going to bear more fruit, and that we have a Comforter in the midst of the sorrow of
life. God can be called on to fight our battles, and he will blow strength into us via the Holy Spirit.

These curses that God sent on down through the generations show us that he keeps his promises. This reassures us that God's promise to provide the payment for sin is true.

To sum up…

Despite the tares, Jung has some good wheat for us. His most useful contribution is the concept of archetypes, innate unconscious ideas guiding human thought and action. The archetype construct explains how everything of importance that Adam and Eve learned in the Garden of Eden can be present in the human psyche, exerting an influence on us.

It is our contention that humans inherit an archetypical time bomb: 1) knowledge of the existence of God and his dooming Law that destines imperfect humans to the Lake of Fire; and 2) a sinful, law-breaking nature that cannot avoid the Law's deadly sentence. Although God also put knowledge of a rescuer in the human psyche, the Savior who was willing to step on the bomb in our place, humans need the information in the Bible to overcome our natural tendency to think we can rescue ourselves.

Other archetypes from Genesis that add to the theme of despair followed by hope are: Satan, hell, paradise, and some specific prophecies affecting our day-to-day life in this world.

There is a major difference between a Bible-based view of archetypes and every other view of them. Jung and other theorists see archetypes as symbolic of human potential for transcendence of earthly limitations. The Bible shows us they are representative of an objective reality outside of human control. Familiarity with God's Word is essential if we are to perceive their true meaning; only the Bible can bring closure to the war between the archetypes.

Notes


4. Jung, C. J. (19--). *VII Sermones ad Mortuoso*. (Published anonymously), documentation of Jung’s occult experiences.


36. For a discussion of this see "Just How the Sexes Differ," (May 18, 1981). *Newsweek Magazine*, pp. 72-83


Chapter Five

Can Freud Help Us?

Bible believers tend to throw up their hands in disgust at Sigmund Freud. His ideas continue to permeate today’s mental health profession for mostly the wrong reasons. However, Freud’s work can help us frame a Bible-based view of psychology despite his animosity to God. He gives us a way to look at internal conflict concerning the *sin=death/hell equation*. Freud might be surprised that his work is used this way, yet it is integral to an understanding of why accepting the shed blood of Christ is the only route to mental health.

Freud’s model versus the Bible

Freud has made a tremendous contribution to our biblical model of psychological functioning, but we have to see how his atheism distorts his work. Only then is it safe to use his model to illuminate the psychodynamics of our crazy-making attempts to deal with an innate sense of doom.

What’s right about Freud?

Through Freud we can see why accepting Christ is the only route to mental health. He gets so much right, such as:

1) Freud’s three part structure of the psyche; he broke down the human mind, or psyche, into three potentially conflicting elements: the “id,” the “superego,” and the “ego.” Our model sees these as the “sin nature,” “God’s Law,” and the “ego.”

2) Freud’s idea of a dynamic unconscious aimed at resolving a basic conflict; he saw it concerning only sex, our model sees it as the *sin=death/hell equation*.

3) Freud’s delineation of our psychological defense network;
and 4) Freud’s view of guilt as the basis of psychopathology. He saw it as sexual guilt, but we see it as a sense of deserving eternal damnation. In fact, Freud recognized that humans are in a perpetual state of guilt-ridden internal strife but never got to the bottom of it.

What’s wrong about Freud?
While we can use Freud’s structure of the psyche, we have to reject his ideas of the content within the structure. Although “atheist” Freud wrote at a desk covered in idols of eastern gods and goddesses, he argued that all religion is universal obsessional neurosis, if not outright delusion. Failing to perceive the Bible’s focus on active walking in faith, Freud saw only a passive, psychologically defensive purpose to religion that he called “regression in the service of the ego.” His rejection of God, in line with the Darwinism of his time, limited his curative attempts to worldly issues alone, primarily concerning sex. He was off track in his psychologizing of Scripture and his refusal to consider the reality of God, the Lake of Fire, eternity, or Christ’s atoning death.

Two models of the human psyche: Freud versus the Bible
Freud conceptualized a three-way division of the psyche, or mind, into: the "id," the "superego," and the "ego." This is a useful model from a biblical perspective, except the respective parts would be "sin nature," "God's Law" and ego.

Agreement: In both Freudian and Bible-based views, mental illness is due to conflict between the two elements of the psyche corresponding to human nature and morality.

The "middle-man" ego uses crippling psychological defenses in a vain attempt to eliminate the conflict. The ego's work is done largely below the level of consciousness. Although the Bible shows us the ultimate powerlessness of the ego (Latin for "I"), Freud's depiction of its role in creating psychological defenses helps us understand the way our mind distorts and hides from the existential dilemma.
The Bible-based model and the Freudian one agree that until this conflict ends, the human mind is in a state of anguish. We try to resolve it or hide from it but do not have the power to end it. This is a conflict- or tension-reduction model. The goal is escape, but that can only happen when a person knows the total forgiveness of God through Christ.

**Disagreement:** Despite the similarities between the Freudian and Bible models, the true conflict is powerful beyond anything Freud imagined. It involves man's relationship with God, not man's relationship with himself or other humans. Eternity is its major concern, not this lifetime. In Freudian theory, the fight is between the innate id and the learned superego. It is a battle to be fought and won on an intrapersonal, human level by changing the way a person thinks about himself. The Bible, on the other hand, shows us a war between the sin nature and an innate, dooming Law. It is a clash that humans cannot win by changing their thoughts towards themselves; it is won by changing the way they think about God and Christ.

Humans flee, internally, from the edge of destruction although they unconsciously know they cannot escape through their own means. They hopelessly run on a conveyor belt which pulls them towards a dark precipice.

The major differences and similarities between the Freudian and biblical models are summarized in Table One on the next page.

**The id versus the sin nature**

According to Freud, humans are born with a "pleasure principle," or drive for sensual fulfilment which, early on in his theory development, centred on eros, i.e., sexuality. Sexual pleasure is the primary goal of a wild, violent, childishly demanding, selfish, inherent nature: the "id." Freud went as far as to describe it as a "ravening wolf," just as Jesus described the inner workings of the hypocritical Pharisees (Matthew 7:15). This is the Freudian equivalent to the sin nature which, although mistakenly narrowed down to sex, otherwise parallels it closely in its innate origin and guilt-arousing function.
The learned superego versus the innate Law

Both Freudian and Bible-based views see the basic product of the conflict between the law (superego) and human nature (id) to be guilt, a sense of deserving punishment. This guilt and the anxiety associated with it cause mental illness.

In Freudian theory, guilt results when the demands of the unruly id come up against the restricting superego, or "reality principle,” the supposedly internalized beliefs and mores of society transmitted primarily through the father. The idea is that if the overly harsh superego is acquired through the socialization process, it can be unlearned and replaced by one that is kind and tolerant. Then there will be an end to guilt.

However, this is where Freud and the Bible profoundly disagree. The Bible shows the law to be an immoveable object. It cannot be softened or purged from our hearts. There is no way Freudian methods can eliminate conflict. The terrible guilt that makes humans mentally ill is not relieved by altering the law, but through knowledge of a dispensation God placed in it. Conflict is ended when humans perceive that the "sin equals death law" contains a God-given reprieve.

The Oedipus complex

It was clear to Freud that the superego (law) was present from early childhood. He blindly assumed that its task entails only sexual prohibition. This led him to conclude that it must be learned when the child first experiences genital eroticism at approximately the age of three. To explain why the child would swallow a painfully thwarting moral standard, he devised a strange theory. In the bizarre, classical Freudian theory of the Oedipus complex, which still has some acceptance, the young boy takes on the superego as a defense. According to the theory, the castrating father stands between the male child and the supposed first object of genital lust, his mother. So the boy identifies with the feared father, internalizing his moral value code to ward off the sexual impulses that would doom him if acted upon. Now he is protected
### Table One: Freudian and Bible-based models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freudian model</th>
<th>Bible based model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Id</td>
<td>1. Sin nature (SN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarity:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innate</td>
<td>Innate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Superego</td>
<td>2. God's Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarity:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clashes with id, produces guilt, psychopathology</td>
<td>Clashes with SN, produces guilt, psychopathology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Differences:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned</td>
<td>Innate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No death sentence attached</td>
<td>Death/hell sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ego</td>
<td>3. Ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarities:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has task of resolving conflict between two opposing sides</td>
<td>SN versus Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Id versus superego.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses defense mechanisms.</td>
<td>Uses defense mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Differences:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict is worldly.</td>
<td>Existential crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human means can resolve it.</td>
<td>Human means <em>cannot</em> resolve it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-analysis can soften superego, channel id, develop healthier defenses.</td>
<td>Only a dispensation from God can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure is never reached</td>
<td>Closure can be reached</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
from being castrated by the father, the rival towards whom he supposedly has homicidal impulses just like Oedipus in the Greek tragedy.

Does this not sound far-fetched? Yet there are people who reject the factuality of the Bible and swallow this unwieldy Freudian formulation of the superego without even blinking.

Ad hoc research I have conducted over this issue in my practice has produced some confirmation that men have sexual thoughts towards their mothers. But none have reported that this was accompanied by a fear of castration from his father. Moreover, the same men reported sexual thoughts towards other female members of the family.

"Cut off"

It is likely that the Oedipal formulation was a result of Freud's unconscious awareness of a dire consequence for transgression. Funnily enough, the expression "cut off" can be applied both to Freud's idea of the ultimate punishment and the biblical one, except the latter is about eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire, a lot more severe than eunuch- hood.

Freud's arrival at this formulation displays unconscious awareness of the sin/death equation. In liberal Judaism, there is no belief in the resurrection of the body despite clear references to it throughout the Old Testament. An afterlife is to be attained primarily by having children. So perhaps for Freud, who came from that liberal tradition, castration unconsciously connoted loss of an afterlife.

The castration complex was Freud's attempt to explain the origin of the harsh internal critic who tells us of the imminent "cut off" from life. But Genesis shows us the true nature and origin of this critic: the Law which entered humanity through the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Penis envy

Note that there is no strong counterpart to the Oedipus complex for the girl. In spite of Freud's formulation of the Electra complex,
the girl's hypothetical incest-related fear of her mother has no great significance. Instead, she, too, identifies with paternal values more strongly than maternal ones. The mechanism is "penis envy," a desire for the power symbolized by the male sexual apparatus.

Freud was close to the mark in seeing guilt arising from a law given by the father. His mistake lay in making the innate Law from God into a moral code learned from the human father. The Father in heaven became the father on earth. He did hit on something of importance here, though. That is the idea of a sex difference in the dynamics of God's Law. It makes sense that because the male is more violence-prone, he acquires his sense of accountability to God through fear. This is less true for the female. She is naturally less violent and more nurturing, thus less likely to see herself as a sinner and less fearful of God because of that. Her increased spiritual receptivity inclines her to identify with a generic god, failing to perceive the need for Christ. This explains why the God of the Bible generally favors men as spiritual leaders.

Taken as a whole, Freud's formulation of the superego has the fabulous quality of a delusion, in itself a defense towards the universal fear that Freud, himself, could not confront.

**Generic superego acquisition**

Post-Freudian generic psychodynamic theory has a broader concept of superego acquisition. The child identifies with the morality of significant others, motivated by such factors as reward and perceived power. It is true that humans do learn some moral values in this way. What they acquire is only superficial, however, and creates confusion if it contradicts the deeper, inherent knowledge of God's law.

**The ego versus grace**

The third member of the trio in both models is the "ego," the middle-man with the task of resolving the conflict. Freud saw that the ego could not alter the superego without outside help, which was where psychoanalysis came in. And if the id was innate, humans were stuck with it; so mostly what the ego had at its
disposal was subterfuge: concealment, distortion, or rechanneling through defense mechanisms.

**Ego defense mechanisms**

Not realizing the true purpose of defense was to ward off the knowledge and the reality of eternal damnation, Freud and his followers nevertheless made brilliant analyses of the elaborate network of defense mechanisms carrying out the ego's task of concealment and distortion.

Walls are erected to contain, hide and divide the naughty id. The id is only allowed to come out and play when it is disguised as a little angel, or when the vigilant superego is distracted, persuaded to step back temporarily, or permanently changed through the work of psychoanalysis—a practical impossibility from a biblical standpoint.

A person must avoid the guilt-producing conscious sense of transgression—of being a doomed sinner—at almost any cost because the truth about its consequence is potentially overwhelming.

However, at best, defense produces only a superficial semblance of sanity. Underneath the surface is a war between the id and the superego leading to guilt and psychopathology. Instead of having an appropriate outlet, the unacceptable, guilt-laden drives, thoughts and memories fester behind the defensive walls, hidden from conscious awareness. Anxiety and a host of other emotions are concealed or "bound" too. These elements attempt to surface but they are contained, a phenomenon Freud called "resistance." The emotions do great damage as they are acted out in a distorted fashion at an unconscious level. They produce the many, varied forms of psychopathology. Since they cannot be resolved outside of grace, they cause unending pain. In the following chapter the defense gambits are discussed in some detail.

**Ego control**

The other ego mechanism is control or taming of the id impulse (sin nature), to be discussed in the next chapter.
Six mistaken ideas of the basic conflict made by Freudians

Although there are grains of truth in their ideas, Freud and his followers have missed the mark about the terrible conflict which causes mental illness. What follows are six mistaken attempts to reach the crux.

1. Sexuality as the root
   In the early Freudian model, the basic conflict lay between the sexuality of the id and the mores of the superego. The goal of psychoanalysis was to bring about peace by accepting the id and bending the superego.

2. Life against death
   Freud found that fear and guilt remained in his patients after years of psychoanalysis, long after their sexual issues had apparently been resolved. So he changed his notion of the id and added two basic drives: an aggressive survival instinct in conflict with a death instinct.

   This was because Freud realized that the violence in man was not attributable to thwarted sexuality. It was a separate drive, coming from his desire for survival, life. Yet since he also found so much self-punitiveness in humans, he also conceptualized a drive for extinction. But what he was seeing was no death instinct. It was a powerful defense mechanism: man chasing his own tail, unconsciously trying to pay for sin by punishing himself.

   Note that this conflict was inherently irresolvable. Two inborn, opposing drives were always going to be at odds. A latent death wish could not be channeled in a way that did not thwart the desire for life.

   Implicitly, Freud was concluding that man's basic conflict was not to be healed through psychoanalysis, and he was right. Psychoanalysis, or any other type of psychotherapy, can only plug holes in a dam that shores up a huge black reservoir. Since Freud failed to bring the God of the Bible into the picture, he could only come so far along the road.
Furthermore, this life versus death idea of Freud's did not gain much acceptance. Only a couple of his followers developed it. Others came up with different ideas about man's basic conflict.

### 3. Life as death

Norman O. Brown\(^6\) tried to close the gap between Freud's life and death drives. He postulated that the life wish, expressed through sexuality, was also a death wish. The "little death" of the sex act was a return to the womb of peace and safety, reentry into Paradise. Sex was both life, through procreation, and death, through self-annihilation.

The problem is, even for those who are not enamored with life, this lacks intuitive validity. To honestly confront the reality of death is to be aware of how much we want to continue being "us" for eternity. We want our children and our parents, all our loved ones, to go on being "them." In fact, we cannot envisage a state of not being.

For those who find life overwhelmingly painful, death can seem a welcome escape as long as it is a state of peace. But the belief that death is necessarily peaceful is a delusion fostered by Satan. Hell is real and genuine escape is found only in through Christ. If the "little death" of sex is used as a psychological defense, an escape, it becomes addictive because it never produces closure. The more a person seeks it, the less satisfying it is. Humans sense, deep inside, that there is no peace to be found in death *per se*.

### 4. Unloving hearts

Karen Horney said "the conflict born of incompatible attitudes (towards other people) constitutes the core of neurosis and therefore deserves to be called basic."\(^7\) To paraphrase this biblically, Horney found evidence that humans have little love for their neighbors. She saw this unlovingness as the basis of guilt. However, she got it backwards. In truth, breaking the commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 19:19) does lead to guilt but this is not the core problem. Unlovingness is but a symptom of our sense of separation from God.
In another attempt that was more on target but still off the mark, Horney defined basic anxiety as the feeling a child has of being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world. This is exactly the human condition outside of connection with God.

5. Fear of extinction

Anna Freud, daughter of Sigmund, took the position that the basic conflict was powerful, but there were not sufficient data to make any hypotheses about its nature. She acknowledged that she had no idea what was really the root of our human turmoil: "What it is that the ego fears either from an external threat or from a libidinal danger cannot be specified; we know that it is in the nature of an overthrow or of extinction, but it is not determined by analysis" (Freud, 1946, p. 85). This is the closest and most honest neo-Freudian stab at identifying our unconscious fear of hell, about the best anyone has ever managed without seeing the truth in Genesis.

6. Psychosocial competence

Erik Erikson looked at "psychosocial" development, postulating a drive towards competence and fulfilment in family relations and work throughout the life span. He de-emphasized the role of any one basic conflict or drive, proposing instead a series of conflicts, or developmental tasks, each building on the last.

Erikson's theory is of interest because it reflects a popular misconception. He saw the initial conflict as one between a basic sense of trust versus mistrust. In theory, this will affect a person's religious orientation later in life. To be able to trust God, the child must have been able to trust his caregivers in infancy. In other words, good parental care is the foundation for a good relationship with God.

However, the idea that our concept of God is primarily a projection of the father or mother has been discredited. God-image and parent-image are linked, but the relationship is not strong, and we do not know which way the influence goes.
self-image has been found to be a stronger independent predictor of God-image than parent-image.\textsuperscript{13}

The closer humans get to God, the more possible it is that they will be alienated from their human parents. Jesus said "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." (Matthew 10:34-35). In fact, generally we only look to God when our human relationships go bad and we are crazy with loneliness.

The truth is, God's love can reach us regardless of caregiver deficits in our childhood. Confronting our dilemma and God's rescue will enable us to see the sun of God shining behind the dark clouds of bad parenting. God is the only parent who is completely trustworthy.

**Psychoanalysis versus the Gospel**

Our existential conflict is outside the human domain; so must its treatment be. The healing impact of the Gospel departs radically from psychoanalysis in many ways.

Psychoanalysis strives to cure neurosis on two fronts: one, by changing the superego, the law man carries around inside himself; and two, through the psychological manipulation of his guilt-provoking basic drives.

However, the law is God-given and inborn so humans are stuck with it. So according to a Bible-based view, mental health is achieved not by changing the unchangeable law which God put in man's heart, but by knowing in our hearts and believing in God's dispensation within that law. Once the Holy Spirit has opened us up, the tempering of our egotistical drives is the fine tuning. But this fine tuning can only "hold" when the basic fear is quieted. Otherwise the rumblings from deep inside keep pulling us out of adjustment.

Of course, as Anna Freud stated, our true conflict is so deep it does not come out in Freudian psychoanalysis. It is only free to surface when there is the reassurance that God paid the price for
Can Freud help us?

sin, that we are protected from what we fear the most. It is only safe to look over the edge when we know we cannot hurt ourselves falling. Vertigo, incidentally, is only another of God's ways of reminding us of the abyss beneath.

Psychoanalysis aims at the humanly impossible, a drastic restructuring of the psyche. This is a "born again" experience without God, returning to the emotional infancy of the pre-Oedipal stage before the "bad" superego penetrated the psyche. The aim is to replace it with a permissive superego and an ego stronger in its tasks of defense and control.

Freud focused on changing the individual but some of his later followers, such as the Herbert Marcuse, theorized that society had to be changed before the individual could change. Little did they realize that a humanistic revolution removes a corrupt, repressive government only to unfetter the sin in the populace.

In terms of defense, the Freudian goal is to replace less functional, primitive defenses with more functional, sophisticated ones. "Sublimation" is the best defense, a transformation of the guilt-producing sex and aggressive drives into a drive to create products beneficial to society.

In classical psychoanalysis and, to a lesser extent, in more time-limited psychodynamic therapy, these processes are thought to drastically restructure the psyche: bringing the conflict into consciousness and working through the situation with a goal of liberating the id from the repressive superego, thereby undoing harmful effects of the past. In theory, the harsh superego (or internalized parental standard) can gradually be replaced by a liberal one, but in practice this is impossible because the moral code (Law) is inborn.

Major areas of disagreement between the biblical and Freudian approaches lie: A. in the treatment of guilt; B. in the role of experience; C. in the conceptualization of fixation and stages; D. in the role of child abuse; E. in the need for defenses; and F. in the role of the future versus the past.
A. Treatment of guilt

The Freud-based mental health establishment says we can reason our way out of guilt, call bad good, and become psychologically healthy. However, guilt is the bruise indicating a wound that will not heal through topical medication. Not surprisingly, Freud found guilt persisted in his patients after many years of attempting to erase moral absolutism. Undoubtedly the superego (Law) contains learned elements which are potentially reversible, but these are only a small part of the problem. The crux of it is that the supposedly internalized critical parent is actually inborn. The ineradicable Law will not stop giving us the awareness of deserving punishment in the form of eternal separation from God, universal knowledge otherwise known as existential guilt.

There are two sources of guilt. One is existential, an overall sense of missing the mark of perfection and being damned for it; the other has to do with specific transgressions. We have no control over the first, and some control over the second. Either way, guilt is inevitable. Therefore its cure must be the mercifulness of God in His provision of the death that pays the penalty on our behalf. God accepts us, simply as a result of our claiming Christ’s atoning payment.

Research shows that in the right context, guilt is beneficial. It is associated with indices of healthy psychological functioning for those who know grace. However, the same research shows that if the assurance of grace is absent, guilt is not such a positive sign.

All too often, Freudian-based therapy separates a person even further from reality, providing a detour from the truth. Rationalization and intellectualization are its major products, particularly among the "YAVIS (Young, adult, verbal, intelligent, socioeconomically advantaged)" clients who are its ideal candidates.

Expensive psychoanalysis takes humans back over the past to weed out those hypercritical parental "introjects." After a whole lifetime there can be no substantive progress, just more guilt and confusion under the defenses. The same applies to the less
ambitious short-term psychodynamic therapy. The innate sin/death law keeps saying humans are doomed.

**B. The role of experience**

To be sure, the sin/death equation implies a diminished role for past experience. However, experience is not irrelevant. Interaction with the world, especially the family, affects the type and severity of psychopathology. Defenses are affected by experience; so are emotional reactions, beliefs, expectations, opinions, attitudes, and habits. Genes also play a part in the nature of the illness, but that does not concern us at present.

Consciously or unconsciously, we learn coping methods and defenses for our existential conflict. Seeing irrationality or unfairness in our parents, we vow to avoid repeating their mistakes. Yet we find ourselves engaged in many of the same familial defensive patterns. Those old patterns happen to be there to avoid something even worse: exposure to underlying, potentially overwhelming existential guilt and anxiety.

Psychotherapy can help to replace the old patterns by some new patterns that may look better, feel better, and enable us to function better. A house built on sand can be shored up for a while. Maybe it can stand for a long time if it is not subjected to much stress. Stress has a way of thrusting our lack of foundation closer to the surface of consciousness. The defense walls give way and if we do not seek God at that point, the result is collapse into illness. Only the Gospel gives us a foundation of rock.

**C. Fixation and stages**

Research has shown that an unfinished task exerts a hold, interfering with new learning.\textsuperscript{17} This helps explain the phenomenon Freud called "fixation," an emotional arrest supposedly caused by an unresolved conflict during a stage in psychosexual development. Just as Freud theorized, humans do keep striving for closure in their basic conflict, but true mental health comes from knowing the sin-debt has been paid once and
for all time as a gift from God. That alone is what produces real closure, or peace of mind.

The fact is, nobody can feel safe enough to willingly embark on a developmental voyage of new learning unless there is a sense of God's support. Fear of the unknown triggers the deeper fear that must be avoided. This means that humans without God are emotional dwarfs, only moving forward to a new stage when forced to do so by circumstances, never fully accomplishing the lessons of that stage.

Some researchers in the psychology of religion have found stages in the development of religious faith. But from a biblical point of view, there is only one transition of importance. This is the transformation from unbeliever to believer through a perception of the reality of hell and of the God-given rescue from that place. Only the Bible believer can become mature in those qualities psychology calls "adult," known biblically as the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9). These include patience, persistence, integrity, wisdom, love and commitment. Once the ego acquires the message of grace, God's freely available and everlasting defense, those forward leaps essential to psychological growth can be made in confidence.

D. Understanding the abused child

The fact that bad experiences can intensify the pre-existing guilt and deepen psychopathology is never clearer than in the case of the extremely abused child. This child adopts some particularly pathological forms of psychological defense which become long lasting. They include identification with the aggressor; infantile regression; dissociation, which can lead to multiple personality disorder; self-mutilation; substance abuse: and massive repression, including repressed rage which leads to psychosomatic and conversion disorders.

The basic reason why this happens is that the child perceives this to be the terrible punishment for the sin he finds in himself. Since he senses he will continue to fall short of perfection, i.e., be a sinner, he expects life-long abuse and even comes to feel anxious
when it is not happening. This is because he has learned to depend on it as a means of temporarily relieving guilt.

At the same time that the abuse relieves guilt in the child, it also triggers murderous rage and hatred that can lead him to become an abuser himself. Even though rage seems justified on a rational level, God's Law in the child's heart tells him it is wrong: "He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth" (Proverbs 14:21). The additional guilt from rage creates the need for even more massive defense in the form of self-punishment.

Underneath this at the deepest, unconscious level, the child's anger is towards the God who must have abandoned him. He rejects the “abandoner” god, blinded by the obsession of getting revenge, stuck in the past. One thing can change all this: the sense of being undeservedly rescued from a sure drowning, safe in God's arms forever. A painful past pales in comparison with escape from the Lake of Fire and everlasting life with God.

E. Can we dispense with defense?

Unsurprisingly, the traditional mental health definition of normalcy, or even superiority, in psychological functioning involves a certain degree of defensiveness. A low score on the defensiveness scale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) is generally considered symptomatic of pathology.\(^1\) That is because the root conflict has never been cured through the secular world of psychotherapy, of which the MMPI is a part. Outside of a relationship with God through Christ, we humans will always have a need to psychologically defend against guilt and anxiety, a need to believe that we are good guys when we are not.

According to our Bible-based view, the purpose of all the psychological defense equipment so cleverly identified by the Freudian school is to defend against potentially overwhelming guilt and terror over the prospect of the Lake of Fire. Ego defenses are a psychological "cover," ultimately ineffective but pervasive equipment. Defenses are the sand we put our head in as we try to escape the ravages of our inner turmoil. The overworked ego of a
nonbeliever can snap at any time, opening the flood gates towards the panicky sense of imminent doom. His ego is a poor, weak, inefficient intermediary, unable to produce the state of peace we call mental health.

Secular psychotherapy aims to help the person develop "healthy," sophisticated defenses in place of primitive, dysfunctional ones. Lacking knowledge of the Gospel, humans have to have defenses. Unless threat is removed, we go insane without them. Research supports this. An inverse relationship exists between defensiveness and the lifetime prevalence of serious psychiatric disorders.²⁰

However, there is no need for psychological armour when there is no threat. If all is forgiven, all can be known. A biblical model of the healthy person is one who has no use for psychological defense. The ego of a believer is freed from the need to resolve the conflict between the id and the superego. Christ is the intermediary who has already achieved reconciliation between man and God, or more specifically, between man's sinful nature and God's Law. Only our failure to comprehend this and our pride (see Chapter Two) maintain the defense front.

**F. Focusing on the future and not the past**

Psychoanalysis focuses on the past, but doing that can turn a person into a pillar of salt, with no forward movement. Only when one stops looking at the past is it possible to move on but it is too scary to do that when there is the sense of something very bad lying up there on the road.

Once a person sees the light of the Gospel, the problematic elements of life begin to get resolved. The dark shadow is gone, no longer do they face the Lake of Fire for the slightest infringement of God's Law. Now they can have the assurance that God is on their side and enjoy peace of mind.

**To sum up...**

Freud can help us. He offers us some good wheat among the tares. His formulation of intrapsychic conflict helps us understand
Can Freud help us?

The psychological dynamics of our existential dilemma. The Freudian model sees the need for reconciliation between the id and the superego to attain mental health. The biblical model agrees with this, but in a way that is profoundly altered by the elements of the conflict.

In the biblical view, the conflict is driven by avoidance of eternity in hell. In the Freudian one, the conflict is driven only by worldly gratification. The critical difference is that the biblical counterpart of the superego is God's innate Law which tells humans they are doomed by their ineradicable sin nature. This is an archetypical psychic conflict that only God can resolve: escape from hell through reconciliation between imperfect man and perfect God. The Gospel, and only the Gospel, offers mental health.

There is nothing new to Christian psychotherapy about incorporating the tripartite Freudian model of the psyche. However, none of the previous Christian theorists have said that God's dooming Law, the structural equivalent of Freud's "superego," is inherited by all humans as the root cause of psychopathology. They have therefore not gone as far as saying Christ, as God's gift of the payment for human sin freeing them from the penalty when they claim it, is both necessary and sufficient for mental health (see Chapter Twelve for a discussion of Christian approaches to mental health).

The Bible-based definition of the basic conflict—the sin=death/hell equation—implies a fundamentally different approach to psychotherapy. The focus needs to be on the future rather than the past, on the relationship with God through Christ rather than the relationship with the family. A primary role of the ego in Bible-based psychotherapy is to acquire knowledge of the Bible with its message of damnation/salvation and then “chew the cud.” We need to ruminate over that message, drink in its warning and blessing, and let ourselves experience peace of mind.
Notes


2. Central conference of American rabbis (approx. 1900). Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. "We reject as ideas not rooted in Judaism the beliefs in bodily resurrection and in Gehenna and Eden as abodes for everlasting punishment and reward."

3. For an exposition of this, see Luthman, Shirley Gehrke (1972). *Intimacy: The Essence of Male and Female*. San Rafael, California: Mehetabel and Co.


16. Watson, P.J., Morris, R. J. and Hood, R. W., Jr. (1988). "Sin and self-functioning, Part 1: Grace, guilt, and self-consciousness." *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 16*, pp. 254-269. This is the first of a series of five studies by these authors. The work shows that guilt is not necessarily related to maladjustment. For a subsample of students in a Christian college, guilt was associated with indices of adjustment.


Chapter Six

The Freudian Fig Leaves

Psychological defense mechanisms enable humans to hide from painful reality; they also help humans think they can avoid the Lake of Fire through their own means. They are the Freud-discovered fig leaves that divert people from the truth and keep them on track for the Lake of Fire. In this chapter we are going to look at how humans cope with the \textit{sin=death/hell equation} using these defenses, why they are worse than ineffective, and where the true solution lies. The author’s book, \textit{The Deadly Perfectionism Trap},\textsuperscript{1} talks about defenses in some detail, but we will look at the major ones here.

Why defenses?

The very intensity and pathological side effects of the psychological defense arsenal make its existence inexplicable unless its purpose goes way beyond the concerns of this world. So much psychic energy is poured into the ego’s varied and colorful menu of defenses that it is clear that they are there to fight something terrible. The extensive fig leaf armor only makes sense as equipment to ward off a fearsome destiny. Humans sense they are in a terrible bind and feel compelled to do something about it. Until they know God has provided the only valid defense, the shed blood of Jesus Christ, they must resort to psychological defense in order to cope from day to day. If they did not have the fig leaves, they would become both more physically and emotionally disabled than they are when defenses are in place.

The reality of invisible defense mechanisms has considerable intuitive validity, and there is also research evidence to indicate its presence.\textsuperscript{2,3} However, Jesus Christ’s shed blood is the only defense that is of any lasting use to us; it is our “forever” cover, the ultimate refuge. Compared to that, what are psychological defenses other than temporary stop-gaps? They can actually
hinder our functioning by keeping us from facing the painful truth and its remedy, the God-given eternal bailout that cures existential guilt. However, fear makes us cling to psychological defenses until the Gospel enters our spirits. Peace comes to us from the message that Christ paid our penalty and all is forgiven by our heavenly Father.

**Existential guilt**

Freud viewed basic human guilt to be sex-related, resulting from the illicitness of sex, a triviality compared with the sense of deserving to go to the Lake of Fire. Our forefathers may have been ashamed of their nakedness in the Garden after they disobeyed God, but this did not concern sexuality in any way. They hid because they sensed they were now under the wrath of God, lacking a cover. Existential guilt, the sense of deserving eternal damnation, is the all-important matter.

**Fear of abandonment:** Existential guilt is the true source of the “fear of abandonment” that brings many people into therapy. Their fear is close to the truth except that they are using the defense of displacement, redirecting their sense of being separated from God and destined for the Lake of Fire into their relationships with humans.

**Low self-esteem:** As we saw in a previous chapter, existential guilt is also the source of “low self-esteem,” the lack of self-approval due to inner knowledge that one cannot attain perfection and, worse, that this is eternally damning. It can cause varied symptoms that seem unrelated to any concern with the Lake of Fire, such as anxiety and depression, addictions, and physical illnesses that include auto-immune disorders.

**Different types of defense mechanism**

A large variety of psychological defense mechanisms range from simple and global to complex and specialized, moving developmentally towards increased sophistication. However, when a person is under stress, the more advanced defenses can give way
to primitive ones, and if these fall apart, there can be a state of emotional breakdown and possible mental illness.

A “primitive/sophisticated” division is frequently mentioned in the psychodynamic literature, but the author has discovered a more important division according to the two major tasks of defenses.

**The weakening effect of defenses**

Psychological defenses have an overall effect that is opposite the one really needed. A person is weakened by having walls inside; Jesus said that “every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matthew 12:25). Behind the walls, tools of distortion keep the truth from surfacing. This “divided self,” a term R. D. Laing used for schizophrenia, can be used in a more general way to describe lack of psychological integrity due to psychological defense.

Some illnesses act as defense mechanisms, distractions from the main problem. Other defenses are more clearly psychological, causing a different kind of pathology, such as regression, compulsive thoughts and actions, memory problems, attention deficits, self-loathing, fear of success; and self-mutilation. What is more, we all use them to some extent even after assimilating the gift of salvation, because they become established early in life and tend to persist.

**Hiding versus pseudo-atonement**

One task is to hide from the truth, often using the more primitive defenses. The other task is a vital one that the psychoanalytic school failed to recognize: the attempt to escape eternal punishment through actions aimed at atonement with God. We call the second group “pseudo-atoners” because they cannot reach their unconscious goal of making a person completely flawless in the eyes of God; they provide only the illusion of self-cleansing. Despite that, desperate people become compulsive in their use of them. The sin=death/hell equation in the human heart says that only total purity from conception to death would keep a
person out of the Lake of Fire. This sends out a relentless message that is only put to rest when humans cover themselves with the perfection of Christ.

1. Hiding and the volcano
   One task of the ego is to keep the truth from coming into consciousness through “hider” defense mechanisms. At times this is conscious, but humans are mostly blind to the fact that they are hiding. Satan wants it this way; if humans cannot see the truth and do not even realize they are hiding from it, they stay lost.

   However, the threatening sin=death/hell equation keeps trying to erupt into consciousness, like lava from inside a volcano. This is a hydraulic process, constantly exerting energy.

2. Pseudo-atonement
   The other line of defense strives to resolve existential guilt through action, doing what it can to pay the penalty for sin by works, suffering, self-purification and the like. The goal is never reached but the activity tends to find increasingly economical and acceptable modes of operation.

   Hiders and other more primitive defenses
   The hider defenses arise earlier in development and aim to avoid the awareness of being a sinner. If the consequence of imperfection is existential guilt, then becoming blind to one’s flaws makes sense as a way to avoid that guilt. The sense of being imperfect must be kept below the surface, thrown out or distorted in some way. Hiders include repression, projection, regression, delusions and fantasy, and acting out.

Repression
   The most basic defense keeps threatening information from entering consciousness, like stuffing something into a closet. On a continuum from more to less conscious, there is suppression, or conscious avoidance (“I know it’s there but I will not look at it”), denial, or conscious negation (“I kind of don’t really know it’s
there”), and repression (“I have no idea it is there”).

Repression keeps elements of a conflict mostly under the surface of consciousness. Up on the surface, there may seem to be complete ignorance or a simple loss of memory. Threatening memories and innate knowledge surrounding the sin=death/hell equation are buried. However, the battle still rages under the surface and sends up signals that enter consciousness when a person’s guard is let down, such as when they are asleep or under stress.

The awareness of being a sinner, of having done wrong (and therefore deserving of eternal damnation), is the major target of this defense, especially in people who have personality disorders. They are never the offender, other people are the bad guys. People also hide from the knowledge that sin has a dire eternal consequence, either by repressing the moral code or denying its validity.

**Psychogenic amnesia:** When memory loss is a psychological defense mechanism, it is called “psychogenic amnesia.” For example, if a person has been the victim of physical or sexual abuse, especially when this went on for many years, big chunks of memory can disappear into some back cupboard of the mind. The author found in treating such people that the most deeply repressed material involves actions or thoughts that they are guilty about. A sense of their own complicity in the abuse, or feelings of murderous rage toward the abuser, would be deeply buried way below the surface. The reason is that a sense of wrongdoing triggers worldly guilt, which exposes a person to existential guilt.

The remedy, or antidote, to any guilt, not only existential guilt, is the assurance of being forgiven by God at the level of one’s eternal existence, saved when Jesus took all human sin on his back and paid the penalty for it by his death on the cross.

**Regression**

Another way to deal with existential guilt is to go back to infancy, figuratively return to the womb where one has no responsibilities. So a second step after repression is to regress
back to a state of decisionless withdrawal and passive inertia, avoiding blame for the present, future or past: *I do not know what is going on; I have no control, I do not make any decisions; therefore I am not to blame for anything, I am not deserving of punishment.*

Regression may involve a mini-pocket, where a person functions at a normal level in one area of life and at a more primitive level in another, remaining fixated in that area of functioning.

**Types of regression**

**Peter Pan syndrome:** The “Peter Pan” syndrome has been on the increase in the last few years. Adult age humans act like children, avoiding commitment and responsibility, attempting to make others take care of them. This happens particularly when a person lacks faith in God. The political ramification is that the godless come to lean on the state for support.

**Dementia, etc:** It can seem paradoxical that illnesses offer a reward, but they do. Physical illness, dementia, substance abuse, and psychosis offer the opportunity to regress. This is not to deny an initial physical basis for these disorders, but opportunity to escape into them can perpetuate and worsen these conditions. Some humor seen on the wall in a restaurant expresses regressive escapism: *When I get drunk, I sleep; when I sleep, I don’t sin; when I don’t sin, I go to heaven; so let’s all get drunk and go to heaven.*

In reality, no human is ever pure, even in sleep, which is often when the darkest fantasies come out in dream form. Further, the route to heaven is not in human hands but through the shed blood of Christ, so this statement reflects the mercilessly legalistic thinking that traps people in psychological defenses.

**Delusions and fantasy:** Daydreaming, television-watching, movies and novels provide the refuge of passive fantasy, a hypnotic escape into the world of imagination. Active fantasy, as found in the creative arts, can offer the illusion that a person can bend reality to fit their needs. Making a graphic representation of
a hero vanquishing a monster gives the illusion that one has control over it.

A grandiose delusion is a psychotic type of fantasy which is regarded as true reality by its creator: “I am a god; I am omnipotent.” However, there is a curiously realistic aspect to delusional thinking discussed more fully in Chapters Seven and Eight. The major themes in delusional content present an accurate picture of existential reality. Delusions of malevolent controlling forces reflect the awareness of Satan and his demons; messianic delusions reflect a sense of the need for godly perfection to enable one to escape the Lake of Fire.

**Acting out:** The defiant, law-breaking actions of a person who is acting out attempt to deny the authority of the One who put the Law in our hearts. The law-breaker is attempting to prove there are no repercussions for law-breaking, that God is not watching, and that there is no deadly sentence for being imperfect. The louder the internal voice of condemnation from the conscience, the more a person wants to act out in denial of it. This has been substantiated by research on the shame-based origin of this defense. The goal is to drown shame by rebelling, spitting in the eye of God when Satan should be its recipient. This attitude fails to take into account the fact that God has provided the only genuine way out of the Lake of Fire, and done it as a gift of love.

The main course of acting out is often followed by a different type of defense: pseudo-atonement. This is clearly seen when acting out involves an out-of-control habit a person is struggling with, such as an addiction. There is a moment when the urge to use or even binge is overpowering, coupled with blindness to all the reasons for restraint. Afterwards, a purge follows the binge, giving the illusion of self-cleansing to placate the deity (i.e., pseudo-atonement), temporarily alleviating existential guilt and anxiety until the urge to act out resurfaces.

The more deeply a person becomes involved in acting out, the more serious the transgression and the more buried the conscience. The psychopath is an extreme case, a person who has no conscious sense of wrongdoing, yet feels compelled to break the law.
Brainwave patterns and low levels of serotonin in psychopaths suggest their behavior has an element of thrill-seeking, an attempt to relieve boredom and depression. The activity takes a pathological form because the psychopath has typically been harmed by a childhood of physical or emotional abuse and a lack of bonding with parents. He seeks kicks through mistreatment of fellow human beings, apparently excited by his power to manipulate and deceive them in the process. He is asserting his unaccountability to God; this is why Satan worship is common among psychopaths.

**Sophisticated defenses**

There is a big cost to the clumsy, primitive defenses in terms of a person’s aliveness and functionality. Over time more pinpointed, sophisticated ones tend to develop so there is less defense spending: compartmentalizers, analyzers, deflectors and pseudoatoners.

**Compartmentalizers**

A bomb is not dangerous when its components are disconnected. Likewise, certain defenses have the task of compartmentalizing, or separating, elements of the $\text{sin=death/hell equation}$. When sin is not equated with death and the Lake of Fire, there will be no existential guilt, and none of the anxiety that goes with it.

**Isolation:** This defense keeps threatening material superficially disconnected from the conscience. In the example of David used earlier in the book, he knew the law, but he apparently made himself blind to the moral meaning of his actions. In other words, his actions were isolated from the law. He could pretend to himself that he was safe; he need not feel guilt or fear punishment; he could continue on his corrupt course. He did not consciously see how he had done wrong in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah until God showed him through Nathan, the prophet. Nathan knew David would not accept direct reproach. That would only arouse defensiveness, and could lead Nathan to lose his own neck. So he
told David what he had done in an indirect way, through the story of the rich man taking the poor man’s one little sheep. He had to use an analogy in the form of a parable to hold up a mirror that David would not reject.

Isolation acts locally, creating islands of conscious thought separated from any moral evaluation. A person is blind to the wrongness of his actions, and one sin easily leads to another as when David went from adultery to murder. Although that protected David from a worldly punishment, the real purpose of isolation is to deny that one is a sinner qualifying for the death/hell penalty.

**Dissociation:** The dissociation defense involves a withdrawal from one state of consciousness into another. It is common in its mild form, as when one suddenly shifts attention away from a disturbing thought into something irrelevant; or one makes an abrupt transition from a threatening topic to an unthreatening one in a conversation. In psychotherapy sessions with unbelievers, the topic of death can produce the most amazingly rapid shift into some irrelevant area.

There are two highly pathological forms of dissociation. One is the rare “fugue” state often depicted in movies, where a sense of threat makes a person loses all sense of his true identity. He “wakes up” reborn as a new person with no memory of his former self. Clearly this defense utilizes repression of memory as one of its tools. The other pathological type of dissociation is Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), where the ravening wolf of the sin nature and its consequences are kept at bay by breaking him down into some lesser wolves, or personalities. At the first sign of threat, one personality is shed for another: transgress as Mr Hyde, then slip back into Doctor Jekyll to avoid guilt. The mechanism for both fugue and MPD has been described as self-hypnosis involving rapid induction of memory loss and a shift of consciousness into another reality, but it is possible that demonic influence is a factor in many cases (see Chapter Eight).

MPD, other dissociative phenomena, and repressed memory are common in adults abused as children, particularly incest victims.
They experience guilt feelings (fundamentally, existential guilt), a sense of being abandoned and existential powerlessness resulting from the abuse. Dissociation puts them into another reality on the surface, but underneath lies anxiety, guilt, rage and mistrust. Adults abused as children tend to enter dissociated states as abusers and abusees.

**Idealization and devaluation:** This employs a defense called “splitting” causing blindness to shades of grey when a person makes a judgment; “good” and “bad” are kept in separate boxes. The underlying reality is that humans are unconsciously aware that the tiniest flaw dooms them, anything not perfect is bad. However, humans who are without God strive to find perfection in themselves or in another person, they idealize someone they think they can worship and emulate: *if that person can be perfect, then so can I.*

As soon as they discover the first flaw in their human idol, their adoration turns to contempt and devaluation. The rejection of that other human is a mirror of an internal process. Their imperfection is a reminder of their own flawedness and its deadly eternal consequence.

**Analyzers**

Analyzer defenses capitalize on the mind’s ability to erect false beliefs or objective detachment around a threatening thought or action, particularly something that arouses guilt.

**Rationalization:** Unlike many of the defenses discussed so far, a person is conscious when using a rationalization. It is a way to redefine sin or the law to whiten a transgression, an excuse: *everybody does it.*

Perhaps in his mind, David rationalized his seduction of Bathsheba by arguing that she enticed him when she took a bath on the roof of her house where he could see her from his palace. This made it right for him to send his soldiers to fetch her; she was asking for it. And when she became pregnant, he had to cover up his part in it for her sake. He tried to get her husband to spend the night with her but he refused. So what could David do but send
the man back to the front line of the battle where death would be inevitable? That way he would protect Bathsheba’s honor on front of the world. However, David was refusing to see this was for his own protection, and that he had committed adultery and murder, punishable by death according to the Law.

Rationalization desensitizes the conscience by whitewashing sin, leading to progressively greater moral lapses.

**Intellectualization:** Intellectualization separates mind from emotion, involving a loss of spontaneity and integrity. When the intellectualizer expresses his feelings, it sounds detached, as if he is talking about some other person; he lives in his head and not in his heart.

This type of detachment is a common symptom of schizophrenia, although in that disorder it may be due to a malfunction in neural wiring rather than being a psychological defense mechanism alone. In a schizophrenic, the mismatch between emotion and reality is extreme, to a point where he laughs as he describes the death of a close relative.

Intellectual detachment is a goal of some eastern forms of meditation that have been adopted into western psychotherapy in a technique called “mindfulness.” The goal is to simply look at one’s behavior in a non-evaluative way in order to reduce guilt feelings and reach a new level of self-acceptance. The problem is that wrongdoing continually rings the bell of the conscience, and guilt cannot be expiated by anything other than the total forgiveness of God. Mindfulness is just another psychological defense mechanism that covers up the strife under the surface.

**Deflectors**

Deflecting defenses are a set of lights and mirrors acting on a person’s sense of being imperfect. This group includes projection (discussed above as also a “hider”), displacement, reaction formation, and identification. They are bizarre gyrations of a mind desperately twisting way from the sense of deserving eternal damnation. It makes no sense that our minds would distort as much as they do just to protect us from upset in this world.
Projection: This is a clever one: instead of seeing my own sin, I project it on you, as if you are a screen and I am a projector. I must not see myself at fault because it would tell me I am damned. Everything my conscience accuses me of I stick on you, instead of me. It is yours, not mine. I make believe you are anything I want to satisfy my ego. I am never the instigator of a fight, never the aggressor, no, that is your role. Since you alone are the aggressor, it is all right for me to attack you in return. I am not wrong to exploit you because you like to be treated this way. If I ever do something wrong, it is because you made me do it.

The story of the rape of David’s daughter, Tamar, by her half brother, Amnon, gives us a vivid example of not only projection, but also of the way idealization quickly turns to devaluation. The unconscious projection of sin is seen in the action of Amnon after he violates Tamar. His obsession with her turns to contempt, as if she, rather than he, were the guilty party (II Samuel 13).

Paranoid projection: This defense allows a person to maintain that it is not their own sin that dooms them, but that there is somebody out there who wants to harm them despite their innocence. They must be constantly on their guard to avoid being foiled by that someone who endlessly plots against them.

This defense must be differentiated from a realistic sense that Satan and his minions do exist and really are out to destroy people. As the old joke says: Just because I’m paranoid, it doesn’t mean nobody’s out to get me.

Displacement: This defense shifts a threatening thought or impulse from its true object onto something safe, with a goal of avoiding culpability and/or punishment. Anger is vented on some harmless object or on a person who will not fight back. The true object for the anger, other than oneself, should be Satan, who is responsible for bringing humans under condemnation, but few people realize this.

Passive aggression is an unconscious form of displacement where commission is replaced by omission. Instead of a verbal or physical angry attack on somebody, a passive-aggressive pattern is to forget appointments, procrastinate, dawdle and be inefficient.
The passive-aggressive person is very indignant if confronted about the annoying behavior. He is generally blind to it, all the while unconsciously compelled to protect the illusion of innocence.

**Reaction formation:** This defense is the whitewashing of a guilt-arousing feeling, action, or thought that is repressed and replaced by its very opposite. A child who has a new baby brother will display exaggerated affection towards the infant. Underneath this are the homicidal impulses of acute sibling rivalry. Abused individuals often treat their abusers with excessive affection, not just to keep the peace and avoid abandonment but to defend against feelings of rage they believe to be unforgiveable.

**Identification:** This defense is the reverse of projection in the sense that it involves a façade, a covering, taking on some personal characteristic of another person, becoming “them” in some sense due to their perceived power, ability, or virtue.

Jung called this façade the “persona,” and he considered it to be archetypical, or inborn, because it appeared to him to be universal. However, a façade is only needed when a person dare not risk confronting the nature that damns them. Once they feel safe enough to take that risk, the façade can dissolve.

Chapter Five looked at Freud’s idea that the moral code (superego) was learned, and that it happened through the child’s identification with his father. Our contention is that the moral code is not learned but inborn, inherited from our forefathers in the Garden of Eden as the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Even if children do go through a process of identification with the seemingly immortal and omnipotent human father, it is not his damning moral code they want. They already have one of their own. The unconscious reason is their hope that by assuming the identity of their powerful father, they might be able to escape the lake of fire just as their father seems to have done.

This explains why people identify with gurus and religious figures. Psychotics and Christian cults treat Jesus as a figure to identify with rather than seeing him as the payment for sin. If they become just like him they might escape eternal separation from
God. However, whatever progress a person makes towards identification with Jesus, they will still miss the mark. Humans are stuck with a sin nature, and the only way to escape the lake of fire is to claim his perfection as the covering makes us acceptable to God.

**The only genuine defense**

This brings us to the only defense of eternal, absolute value. The only place humans can have lasting peace of mind is behind Christ. He is our everlasting shield, the true atoner who deflects punishment away from us, our valid cover-up. God has given him out of His love for us. All we humans have to do to be freed from the dark abyss beyond death is claim him as ours. This frees us from the bondage of psychological defense armor that twists and distorts us.

The ultimate stage of mature Christianity is to know this fact all the way down to our toenails, a stage that few, if any, believers reach even after many years. This means that all of us use the self-deceptive system of lights and mirrors so beautifully described by Freud. It behooves us to get to know these defenses so we see them in ourselves and fight them with the truth.

**Ego control versus the fruits of the spirit**

The ego has another job besides creating defense mechanisms, which is to control behavior in a somewhat conscious way, including coping with illicit impulses that reach the surface. Freud called this more conscious task ego control. Instead of distorting and concealing the truth, in this case the ego is a negotiator, attempting to tame the sin nature, to “prune” the id, and negotiate between it and the superego (the moral code).

**Ego control: possible outside the Gospel?**

Heinz Hartman\(^\text{11}\) and David Rapaport\(^\text{12}\) have looked at ego control from a secular psychodynamic perspective, but there is a problem with any non-Gospel-based attempt to gain such mastery. The id must come out in the open if it is to be regulated, but this is
too threatening when every time it surfaces there is the intimation of a person’s destiny with the Lake of Fire. The dread of that event lurks in the psyche and a person has a deep sense of powerless towards it. Jesus Christ is the only true asbestos clothing, but if the ego lacks that clothing it is in a bind. It must keep the naughty id hidden in the unconscious area behind the psychological defenses, tied up like a wild animal, cut off from any tempering influence. Taming the beast requires letting it out, but this is which is unaffordable. So secular ego control theorists are talking about something that is simply unattainable through psychodynamic therapy. Without the protection of Christ, it is too threatening to be aware of one’s own depravity, to be conscious of the extent to which the “seven deadly sins” are an accurate depiction of the very nature in which all humans participate.

That is not to say that an unbeliever can have no ego control, but it is limited by the fact that defenses keep so much hidden and by the absence of an unselfish motive. A person can have some success in restraining illicit impulses through secular means but it is hard won and may not last long.

Restraint: Admittedly, the secular ego theorists aim to restrain the beast rather than transform him, i.e., to check negative qualities rather than promote good ones. For them, ego control consists of resisting impulses, postponing gratification, and tolerating unpleasant states such as anxiety, failure and disappointment. The Bible uses terms for this such as patience and forbearance.

Doing good: Regarding positive or “good” behavior, for unbelievers this will generally consist of selfishness in disguise, actions aimed at pseudo-atonement. A person has little inclination to do good while under the gun, desperate for a way out of eternal damnation. Everything changes when they are saved from the Lake of Fire. Only then do they find in themselves an unselfish desire to do good. The relief of a reprieve, and the sense of thankfulness and love towards a loving, forgiving and merciful Father—this is a game-changer. Transformation comes from knowing God has paid the penalty for human transgression with the blood of Christ.
Ego control for a believer

The person who has internalized the Gospel message and knows he is saved from the Lake of Fire can be truly sane. The believer consciously wants to cut the negative and increase the positive, not because this might save him, but out of gratitude to God. His ego is not alone in the process. The Holy Spirit is available at each point along the way, meaning there is the potential for not only curbing wrongful tendencies but for actual transformation. He can go further than partial restraint of immorality into proactively doing good because he is motivated to please God—not that any human on this earth ever stops being flawed.

**The beast of human nature:** The id, or sin nature, is not going to disappear, but when a person realizes that the door to God’s forgiveness is wide open, psychological defenses can gradually disappear. It feels safe to be conscious of the monster within when a person is sure of God’s love, and when he knows that confession is welcomed. Repentance will be a natural result after honest admission of the truth to a forgiving Father.

Part of ego control is knowing when to be silent and careful to avoid worldly feuds and battles. Jesus said: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” (Matthew 10:16) This advice to the apostles applies to all of us. Solomon tells us: “A prudent man concealeth knowledge” (Proverbs 12:13). God is the only completely safe listener.

To display one’s true colors to another person is to risk rejection or even persecution. Sadly, this happens both outside and inside today’s Christian church.

The people with whom a believer has the most freedom are the ones who have faced their own depravity with humility. Yet even they will have blind spots about their own flaws, making them judgmental towards others. The more one looks at oneself honestly, the more flaws one will find, but there is help. The Holy Spirit never stops working on us, as a loving invader carrying a bright light into the dark cave of our corrupt human nature, assuring us of the forgiveness of God. Only he has the power to
bring about the fall of the defensive walls of Jericho. Psychological methods cannot do this, except in a temporary and limited way.

In spite of the fact that a person is saved and aware of having avoided eternal damnation, the same rebellious nature persists, and often ego control does not come cheaply. The writer Paul warns that “tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope; And hope maketh not ashamed (disappointed); because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us” (Romans 5:3-5). God’s use of tribulation to bring about an attitude change is clearly seen in the account of Job, a man who goes through a time of loss and misery and comes out humbled and strengthened in his faith in God.

The surer a person is of being undeservedly saved by our loving Father from the Lake of Fire, the more they can exhibit ego control. It will not feel like a sacrifice to give up old vices. Rather, life will feel more complete without them, and a person’s energy can be better spent on loving others, particularly in helping them know the Gospel. This is why Jesus said “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

To sum up...

We have to throw out much of what Freud says, but his work gives us a framework to view how we function, and explains our blindness to the most important facts concerning life and death. A thorough understanding of psychological defense mechanisms will help us to recognize and move beyond them—that is, once we know the true defense.

As for Freudian treatment, the attempted whiting of the sepulcher using the Freudian fig leaves produces no true peace of mind. It does not address the cause of the terror arising from the sin=death/hell equation. Our only valid defense is Christ’s atoning death. We sense the eyes of God upon us and need to know that He forgives to the uttermost. Then it is possible to drop psychological defenses and exercise authenticity.
Notes


Chapter Seven

Schizophrenia, Psychotic Delusions and God

The mental health establishment defines psychosis as a mental break with reality, but this is not quite true. In a significant way, psychosis is also a break with unreality, because it offers a window to the collective unconscious of humans. Psychotic disruption of structured, conventional thinking allows the deeper truth about man’s terrible predicament to bubble up to the surface. The themes of common psychotic delusions are particularly revealing, as this chapter will show.

Is psychosis a spiritual opening?

Several theorists have concluded that psychosis can involve spiritual awareness in some fashion. Freud\(^1\) and Jung\(^2\) were aware that inborn archetypes surfaced in psychosis. William James\(^3\) saw the "neurotic temperament" as furnishing the condition for receptivity to divine knowledge and religious truth. Anton Boisen (1876-1965), a minister who regarded himself as a recovered schizophrenic, viewed mental illness as an existential crisis of a spiritual nature.\(^4\) Since then, this position has been taken by other American social scientists.\(^5\) There is, in fact, a growing trend in the United States to treat psychosis as a spiritual opening.\(^6\) Thus it is no surprise that spiritual approaches to mental health treatment are gaining acceptance even in the traditionally anti-godly psychiatric profession.\(^7\) Up to now, however, no theorist has seen psychosis as an opening to specific biblical truth.

Focusing particularly on schizophrenia, this chapter shows that psychosis gives us glimpses of our universal
innate awareness of impending doom. That is because the psychotic disruption of the ego's defensive wall of protection permits such a revelation. Terrifying inborn knowledge comes seeping through chinks in the wall.

**What is schizophrenia and why should we be interested in it?**

First, what is schizophrenia? Schizophrenia is a formal thought disorder involving impairment in rational, logical thinking. Its features, which vary in degree over time, include flat affect, i.e., lack of emotional expression; mismatch between verbal expression and affect; loosening of associations; thoughts that go off in tangents; inability to focus; delusions; hallucinations and other perceptual abnormalities; lack of insight; and a regressive withdrawal from reality into a private world, or autism. Schizophrenics (and, often, their family members) are commonly hypersensitive to hearing, sight, taste, smell, and touch. The disorder may or may not be accompanied by paranoia, that pervasive sense that someone or something is out to harm one.

This mental illness, more than any other, can involve devastating cognitive, affective and behavioral impairment. A high percentage of schizophrenics become incapable of taking care of themselves. Even when stabilized by medication, they usually need much outside help. On the other hand, many can function relatively normally as long as they receive outside support.

**Perception and the supernatural**

Research has demonstrated that human perception is selective. What we see is influenced by our expectations, which, in turn, are structured by our belief system. As a result of cultural learning, the "normal" present day scientific non-supernaturally-inclined mind has no way to integrate
information from the spiritual realm. This mind either bypasses supernatural phenomena or attributes them to some non-supernatural agent. This point has been driven home by Carlos Castaneda in his books about an American anthropologist in the world of Mexican sorcery.9

A Bible-rejecting belief system acts as a defensive barrier to a perception of this other "unscientific" reality. It blocks archetypal material from coming up from inside and information of a supernatural order coming in from outside.

However, existential reality can present itself in such a way that it cannot be ignored. The mind is forced to accommodate to it and form a new framework, particularly when the defense walls are weakened, as in a pre-psychotic or psychotic state.10 A breakdown must occur before a new structure can be built, and psychosis is one type of breakdown. In a sense, the lid comes off Pandora's box, the container of inborn knowledge that imperfect humans are destined for the Lake of Fire.

**Schizophrenia and revelation**

Two aspects of schizophrenia lead us to think of this illness as revelatory of our deepest conflict. These aspects are a. form and b. content.

**Revelation and form**

The formal aspect is the breakdown of the conscious thinking process caused by the various chemical and physical changes which take place in the schizophrenic brain. These changes impact the very process of thinking, disrupting the psychological defense network, and dissolving the boundaries between conscious and unconscious thought.

Nevertheless, the schizophrenic is never entirely without psychological defense mechanisms, but at best they tend to be the primitive, all-or-nothing kind which snaps under pressure: thought-blocking, massive repression, affective
splitting, incoherence of ideas, autistic withdrawal, and projection. Meanwhile, the schizophrenic’s hypersensitivity and telepathic ability can give him a strong and pervasive sense of his vulnerability to the spirit realm, and intimations of doom. This is especially true of schizophrenics whose illness features paranoia.

This idea is supported by Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory scores of individuals with psychotic disorders. Their profiles include very low “normal” defensiveness, and high values on the scales concerning a wide variety of bizarre thoughts and sensations, including spiritual ones.¹¹

In other words, when psychological defenses are not working so well, the dreadful truth can seep up to the surface and enter consciousness. Psychosis is itself an attempt to run away from terrifying inner knowledge, but it provides only a painful and fitful refuge. Turning one’s head away from the storm only exposes one to another storm coming from the other direction. Unsurprisingly, the suicide rate for schizophrenics is very high.¹²

**Revelation and content**

The second aspect of schizophrenic thought indicating existential revelation is its pervasive psychic content. This includes telepathy and the "religiosity" theme common to delusions and hallucinations.

**A. Telepathy**

Telepathy is the ability of the mind to receive information from the mind of another, unseen individual. It may be an innate ability, something all intelligent life forms have to some degree that is drowned out by reason, perhaps, in that analytical being, the human. Dogs appear to display it; often they can sense fear or hostility in a stranger long before their owner does.
The available evidence, particularly the research carried out in Russia, suggests that telepathy is no myth. However, this ability is unpredictable, apparently affected by situational factors such as fatigue. For this reason, it is difficult to work with experimentally.

Schizophrenics often display telepathy in spite of their general inability to see themselves objectively or empathize with others. Therapists who work with them can experience the disquiet of finding that the client appears to be reading their mind. For example, more than once a schizophrenic client has called to reschedule an appointment at the same moment I am realizing that I need to change my schedule.

Counselors at a humanistically-oriented residential treatment facility for violent schizophrenic adolescent boys, where physical restraints are minimal, find it dangerous. Any fear on the part of counselors is sensed and used by these boys. This leads to constant “fear of fear,” making counselors subject to frequent, sudden, unprovoked physical attacks. We must note that the humanistic orientation of the environment provides friendly turf to possessing demons.

In both "normals" and schizophrenics, emotional relatedness facilitates telepathy. One schizophrenic I know had an accident at work. A sharp piece of metal flew into his eye, causing a piercing pain but no serious injury. He later received a phone call from his mother, who lived four hundred miles away, asking him if he had been hurt. She had experienced a shooting pain in her eye at the time it was happening to him.

In addition to telepathy, sometimes other psychic abilities are found among schizophrenics. One is pre-cognition. Several schizophrenic clients in my practice have reported pre-cognitive dreams of specific major world disasters.

According to one school of thought, such phenomena are indicative of demonic possession; in certain instances that is probably true. But if God can read our minds and knows the
future as well as the past, it is not surprising that humans, made in the image of God, sometimes find themselves doing these things. The problem is that it is tempting for the recognizably telepathic person to go further. Intrigued by this ability, he may pass the barrier to occultism—seeking information from the spirit world of demons posing as angels of light. This is the way telepathy can lead to possession.

B. Delusions

Delusions, or persistent beliefs that contradict reality or popular tenets, are considered a diagnostic feature of psychosis. However, as compared to the standard psychiatric position, a biblical view of the psyche casts a very different light on what we call delusions.

According to the Bible, Satan has numerous evil angels, or demons, at his disposal (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Matthew 25:41). This means that there are countless invisible dark forces in our presence, spirit beings who wish to gain possession of a live body. So a psychotic's obsession with strange, evil "forces" is hardly unrealistic. A person experiencing what he refers to as "ghosts in the synapses of my brain" is a lot closer to reality than the psychiatrist who maintains this is a complete fiction.

Overt versus covert religiosity

Most delusions are either overtly or covertly religious. Overtly religious ones contain references to God, Satan, hell, angels, demons, and the like. There may be a superficial element of culture-boundness in overtreligious delusions: individuals in Christian environments talk about Jesus, whereas Moslems talk about Mohammed. However, the underlying themes are not culture-bound. One phenomenon in the religious delusions of all cultures is the concept of evil spirits.¹⁶ Psychosis makes a person keenly aware of the power of Satan and his dark angels.
Covert religiosity makes more indirect reference to the supernatural realm. A common feature is the concept of an evil, controlling force of some type.

The mental health profession does not realize how widespread religiosity is because it only recognizes the overt type. However, overt religiosity alone is very common. Among delusional schizophrenic and manic patients, over half of the delusions had overtly religious content. Undoubtedly the proportion would be even higher if it included all the covertly religious delusions of control and persecution to be discussed later in this chapter.

The point is that underlying the obvious superficial distortion of reality in the most common types of delusions, there is truth. Just like dreams and myths, psychotic delusions point to a deeper reality. They embody an accurate perception of a world that "normal" people do not consciously see.

God warned us that our rejecting him would lead to such craziness: "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not" (Isaiah 66:4).

Four major categories of delusions are discussed below: 1) control, 2) persecution, 3) other depressive delusions, and 4) grandiosity. All can take either the overt or covert form of religiosity. Like blind men touching different parts of the same elephant, different psychoses tend to be associated with specific types of delusions, yet they all stem from the same existential crisis.

Research has shown that manic and schizophrenic patients are equally likely to display delusional thinking. However, manics display grandiose delusions; schizophrenics have delusions of control. Both types of
delusion speak of Satan. The first reflects his lying promise of godhood; the second, his ability to use mind control.

**Delusions of control**

Delusions of control have a general theme of telepathic mind manipulation. These are the major varieties:

**Ideas of reference:** One common type of delusion is called an "idea of reference," a belief that everything in the person's environment is focused on that person; the world revolves around him. When the radio plays a song, it is played especially for him; when people are having a conversation in a restaurant, he is the subject.

Beyond the godlike egocentricity in this type of delusion, it does suggest a sense of a supernatural force at work, reaching out at the person through whatever media are available. It is true that God tries to reach us, and he will use "synchronous" events that have this "especially for you" quality to bring us to attention. But we must be mindful that the devil and his demons also try to reach us through cunning juxtapositions. Not without reason is Satan called "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2).

**Thought broadcasting:** The phenomenon of "thought broadcasting," involves a belief that a person's thoughts can be heard by others. Thought broadcasting can be expressed in either active or passive modes. When a person uses the active mode, as in "I can beam my thoughts so people can hear them," it has the quality of a godly self-attribution of supernatural power. This is a close cousin to the currently popular New Age (Satanic) theme that thoughts can produce material transformation. This heresy has crept into the Christian church in the form of “name it and claim it.” The underlying truth is that a person can send his thoughts to God through Christ in the form of prayer, and God will bring about material transformation if he so chooses.
The passive form, as in "other people can hear my thoughts," conveys a sense of a supernatural listening presence who hears what is happening inside a person. In truth, God does listen. But demons also appear to have listening ability, albeit on a limited scale. Attending "aura" readings in the past, I was struck by the amount of detailed personal information spirit channelers appear to receive from the dark realm of demons posing as angels of light.

The Bible shows us, however, that demonic mind-reading is limited. Only Daniel, through God's power, was able to tell Nebuchadnezzar the content of his disturbing prophetic dream. None of Nebuchnezzar's magicians had been able to do so (Daniel 2:27).

**Thought insertion:** "Thought insertion" involves a belief that some alien force is able to put thoughts in a person's mind and control his thinking. Allowing for the reality of the supernatural realm, this perception makes all the sense in the world. The devil's role as an intrusive evil thought planter has been apparent from the time of Eden. However, the Holy Spirit's power of thought insertion is of far greater importance. One example is that when we pray for help, God can send the Holy Spirit to whisper in our ear. Assistance can come in the form of an idea, a fresh perspective. The Holy Spirit is the one who changes a person's mind and softens the heart.

Freud went to the extreme of claiming that spirits and demons are a projection of primitive emotional impulses. The grain of truth in this is that projection can enable a person to dissociate and deny responsibility for an immoral or otherwise threatening thought. Sadly, it is not an uncommon defense to hear in the Christian church—that a demon made a person sin.

A schizophrenic client of mine who was a member of a pseudo-Christian cult enjoyed the attention he received being "delivered" through prayer ministries at his church. He
found it amusing, this phony release from the numerous "spirits" which put thoughts of lust, anger, laziness and larceny into his mind.

True, these thoughts may come from a possessing demon, but they are also an essential part of our nature. Our sense that this nature dooms us—plus pride—are what make us need to lie about it, that is, until we are sure of God's forgiveness and appropriate it via the blood of Christ.

**Other types of insertion delusion:** There are other types of insertion delusion: insertion of sensations, insertion of feelings, insertion of impulses, and insertion of an outside will. These certainly look more like other-worldly possession than psychological defenses, but both could be true.

A demon might capitalize on a psychological defense by taking up residence in the "unlit" area it shields from consciousness. Once the light of God's forgiveness shines in, the demon is forced to vacate. At that point, the Holy Spirit could be the force taking control.

**Thought withdrawal:** Thought withdrawal involves a sense that some force has removed a person's thoughts. The schizophrenic will often claim that part of his consciousness was lost or "sucked out" on a certain occasion.

This may be a perception of the fragmenting role of the illness itself or of psychological defenses. On the other hand, it may be truly the work of Satan. However, God is ultimately in charge of delusions; he can give and remove all the obsessions, fears, covetings, etc. One client reported that he had experienced the same nightmare—of being chased by "aliens" which emerged from his closet—every night since childhood. He left one therapy session resolving to ask God to remove this nightmare and keep him safe from any alien presence. In the next session he reported that the nightmare had not recurred since the first night he had prayed about it.
Persecutory delusions

God said: "Ye shall flee when none pursueth." This is one of His curses for disobedience (Leviticus 26:17). Running away is the goal of psychological defenses in general, and of persecutory delusions in particular.

The underlying truth is that Satan is lurking out there, waiting to trap us, but persecutory delusions may stem from either a genuine perception of demonic oppression or from denial of one’s own dark side. Due to fear and pride, our minds use dissociation and projection to reject the sin nature that puts us under the death sentence.

Persecutory delusions are found in several psychotic conditions. Depending on the disorder, they are given differing explanations by those experiencing them. In schizophrenia and paranoid disorders, they are seen as jealousy of the persecutor. In depression, they are due to moral failure, i.e., sin. In mania, they are due to misunderstanding by the persecutor. Only in organic disorders is no motive seen; the person expresses bewilderment at his "persecutors."

The depressive is closest to the truth. Sin separates us from God and exposes us to the persecution of the devil. But there is validity to the other interpretations. Persecution is motivated by jealousy and misunderstanding on Satan's part. Satan is not only jealous, but also envious of God. Misunderstanding the nature of God's power, he is trying to destroy the most remarkable part of the Creation: humans.

Other depressive delusions: A variety of other types of delusion are common to people with psychotic depression and, to some extent, schizophrenia. Like persecutory delusions, they are true statements of man's state outside of God's grace. Delusions of guilt, poverty, nihilism, death, putrefaction, and illness are all based on a valid perception of the human condition and expectations if God had not bailed us out. We do deserve punishment; nothing truly belongs to
us; we are worthless in terms of our ability to earn salvation; all our good works are like filthy rags; life is meaningless without God; death stalks us; and there is something profoundly ill and rotten about us. A hopeless state without our rescuer! However, the downward pull of these thoughts reverses when we perceive God's grace.

**Grandiose delusions**

There is widespread agreement in the mental health profession about the defensive role of the grandiose delusions that are common in Bipolar disorder with its alternating manic and depressive phases.\(^{21}\)

The act of claiming godliness is a defense; pride is a motive but there is a deeper one, which is the need to avoid the Lake of Fire. The attempt to identify with God is found in the various common grandiose delusions: delusions of entitlement, of messianic abilities, of wealth, of power and giftedness, and of indestructible health and eternal life. Satan's lies at their loudest! Yet through Christ, the most important of these things, eternal life, becomes ours. Some of the others will follow, not through our own grandiosity but through humility before God.

**“Problem-solving psychosis”?**

It has been noted that just after a certain type of brief psychotic-cum-mystical experience, people appear more sane.\(^{22,23}\) Consequently, this has led to a belief that psychosis is inherently problem-solving.\(^{24}\) It has been described as positive disintegration,\(^{25}\) creative illness,\(^{26}\) and spiritual emergence.\(^{27}\) Closely paralleling the Jungian archetypes mentioned in Chapter Four, the following eight themes have been found in the "delusions" of non-Christians having such psychotic episodes:

1. Death: being dead, meeting the dead.
2. Rebirth: new identity, new name, becoming a god.
3. Journey: sense of being on a journey or mission.
4. Encounters with spirits: "good" or evil.
5. Magical powers: telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis.
8. Union with God.

Judging by the content of the delusions, these psychotic episodes are not truly problem-solving. They appear to reflect openings to two sources: a) threatening internal archetypical knowledge; and b) the Satanic lies of demons posing as angels. They provide a deeper sense of reality but offer false reassurance about it.

C. Hallucinations

Hallucinations are another feature of psychotic disorders, particularly schizophrenia. The mental health profession calls them distortions in perception but it is likely that there is more to them than that. One possible indication of their supernatural origin is that family members of psychotic individuals find that the dog leaves the room when the hallucinations start. Moreover, a substantial minority of otherwise normal people report “hallucinatory” experiences, some of which have supernatural content.

Auditory hallucinations

Auditory hallucinations are common in schizophrenia. They are frequently in the form of voices that comment on the person or give orders. Voices rarely say anything kind or constructive; persecution is nearly always their mode.

Auditory hallucinations have been linked to abnormalities in the temporal lobes and basal ganglia. Non-schizophrenic neurological patients report hearing hazy
voices when their right temporal lobes are stimulated electrically.  

This does not mean that the voices do not stem from a supernatural source. An alteration in the brain could mean there is less ability to screen out spiritual reality. The voices that Joan of Arc claimed to hear guided her to lead France in battle, establishing the Dauphin as king. When the Dauphin skeptically asked Joan why the voices did not come to him, Joan replied that they did, but he did not hear them.

Joan's voices possibly had a godly source, but what are we to make of the evil voices heard in psychosis? The psychological explanation is that they are dissociated parts of the self, externalized guilt that is represented as distinct persons. The biblical explanation identifies them as demons. Perhaps both are true. Satan can take any form in his roles of deceiver and accuser. The command type of hallucination, which tells a person he is so worthless he ought to go and kill himself certainly seems Satanic.

**Visual hallucinations**

Visual hallucinations are more likely to take on obvious religious themes than auditory ones, and tend to be more archetypical. Visions of raging fires, angels, demons, and the like are common. We must note that such experiences are not peculiar to psychosis; they have been reported by "normal" people who engage in spiritual practices.

Claims of seeing angels or demons can be valid according to the Bible. One test is the content: Jesus said the tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 12:33). That is, what was communicated during the vision? If any element of it contradicts the Bible, the apparition is demonic. A specific criterion is proposed by the apostle John (I John 4:3): "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."
For example, a client of mine claims to have had a vision of a brilliant, shining light which was accompanied by a spoken "revelation from God." He was told that God had never put animal sacrifices into the law, that the killing of animals was forbidden. This is unscriptural and there is a good reason to consider this demonic. Rejecting a God who asks for the shedding of blood will lead us to reject the shed blood of Jesus, the free pardon God gave us. Paul, incidentally, mentions the rejection of meat-eating in connection with demonic seduction in the "latter times" (I Timothy 4:3).

There are other reasons to doubt the identity of a "divine" apparition. Visions of God? The Bible tells us no human can see God: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33:20). Visions of Jesus? Until his second coming, Jesus told us not to expect any further signs of him after his resurrection, described as the "sign of Jonah," his re-emergence after three days in the fishes' belly, a type of death and resurrection (Luke 11:29). Although Jesus later appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, this was in the form of blinding light. Visions of Mary? The deification of the Virgin Mary is not biblical, so her "godly" apparition can only be demonic.

**Creativity and psychosis**

We may wonder why God would allow such a thing as psychosis in our genes. For the most part it is likely decay arising from the Fall, but could it ever work for good? It certainly appears so. Some of the very same biochemical and physiological abnormalities that are associated with psychosis are also associated with creativity. Under the right circumstances, psychotic detachment from reality can be a blessing.36

During the energetic, less than full-blown, manic phase of a Bipolar disorder, many great works of art are produced.
The composers Handel, Berlioz, and Schumann all suffered from manic-depressive psychosis. Periods of feverish productivity were followed by bouts of deep, incapacitating gloom. However, mania becomes debilitating if the restlessness and distractibility associated with it go beyond a certain point.

The interesting thing about paranoid schizophrenics is that they are often highly intelligent, gifted human beings in whom the breakdown in associative thinking can be an asset that facilitates creativity. In the loosening of associations of schizophrenia, there is the potential for breaking creative ground, making new connections. However, this is when these fragile individuals are in a relatively non-psychotic state. When the illness becomes acute, the person loses the ability to focus on anything. Edgar Allan Poe was one writer who clearly had first hand experience with schizophrenia; so were James Joyce, Anne Sexton, Virginia Woolf, John Berryman and Hart Crane. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest a U-shaped relationship between psychosis and creativity: a moderate level of eccentric thinking and feeling enhances creativity; too little or too much inhibits it. This is further supported by research showing high creativity in family members of individuals who are incapacitated by certain psychotic disorders; shared genetic abnormalities are probably responsible.

The biggest gift of the schizophrenic may be his inability to stop being aware of the supernatural world. This means those who truly hear the Gospel will share it, and feed the sheep. We find schizophrenic characteristics in certain of the prophets. Ezekiel, for instance, displayed an isolating tendency and affective detachment. However, he had no symptoms of disturbed thinking process. His visions and dramatic, symbolic actions could be written off as hallucinations and bizarre behavior if it were not for the fact
that they concerned accurate prophesies. Prophets had to be like Ezekiel, able to stand alone, with an overarching sense of God that made them unafraid of the consequences of what God made them say and do.

Socrates said: "Our greatest blessings come to us by way of madness, provided the madness is given us by divine gift." He saw that the psychotic's creativity cannot come to fruition unless it is God-centered.

To sum up...

Using schizophrenia as a showcase, this chapter made an unorthodox claim for psychosis: it may distort worldly reality but it exposes existential reality. When psychological defenses break down in a psychotic disorder, the lid comes off the sin=death/hell equation to reveal the inborn sense of deserving eternal damnation coming from archetypes universally present in the human collective unconscious.

The secular psychiatric profession tends to regard the "religiosity" of the schizophrenic as delusional in toto. However, the underlying religious themes found in all types of delusions are too consistent with the existential dilemma depicted in Genesis to be dismissed as mere symptoms of mental illness. The truth revealed in psychotic "delusions" shows where some of the real delusions are, i.e., in secular psychology (see Chapter Nine).

However, the truth of the Gospel seems to be missing from the vocabulary of a person who is actively psychotic, despite the religiosity of his delusions. Sensing that only supernatural power will save him, he convinces himself he is God or Jesus. He does not know God loves him and Jesus is his Savior.

This is not to say that psychotic spiritual experiences are always disturbing. A schizophrenic in a catatonic state may later describe having had a profound, oceanic, mystical experience. This is also common in the early stage of
mania, the brief, so-called "problem-solving" psychosis and the "pro-dromal" period before full-blown psychosis takes over. But it is not an opening to God unless accompanied by the only acceptable entrance fee: the shed blood of Christ. Without Christ, the mystical euphoria soon gives way to phenomena that are anything but comforting. As the walls to the unconscious break down further and the person goes deeper into psychosis, the sense of being in the hands of Satan and the desperate existential predicament become a consuming preoccupation.

**Notes**


6. Spiritual Emergence Network, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 250 Oak Grove Avenue, Menlo Park, California, 94025.
The organization is directed by Stanislaus and Christina Grof.


14. Personal observation from a day spent at a Berkeley facility with
a Jungian orientation, January 8, 1983.


New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.


Psychological Bulletin, 107, 1, pp. 82-95.


Chapter Eight

Where Does Psychotic Religiosity Come From?

Why is religiosity so pervasive a feature of psychosis? Scoffers will say that if this reveals anything, it is the influence of some religion that drove the person crazy. However, the small amount of research that looks at this suggests that psychotic religiosity has little or nothing to do with environmental influence. It suggests the opposite, that psychotic religiosity is genetic, and that it may point to universal, innate knowledge. But before we look at this research, let us first explore the origin of psychosis, once more using schizophrenia as our example.

What causes schizophrenia?

The last chapter argued that 1. schizophrenia is a showcase for 2. the existence of universal, innate knowledge of doom which is at the root of all mental illness. What does scientific research say about this?

Organicity

First, is schizophrenia merely a set of maladaptive responses to stress, or is it an organic disease of the brain? If it is a brain disease, the religiosity phenomenon so clearly a part of it can hardly be learned or superficial. To answer this question, we look at some of the research on functional and formal differences in schizophrenic brain functioning.

Functional differences: Among the functional abnormalities in schizophrenia, glucose utilization studies show significantly low usage of the frontal lobes, particularly
the pre-frontal area, and of the entire left hemisphere.\textsuperscript{1} The pre-frontal area is concerned with insight and planning; the left hemisphere is involved in linear, analytical thinking.

Abnormal electrical activity has also been found in the important limbic system, gateway to incoming stimuli and regulator of emotion.\textsuperscript{2} Also, lowered glucose metabolism has been found not only there but also in the basal ganglia which control motor activity.\textsuperscript{3}

\textbf{Structural differences}

There are also structural differences in schizophrenia. When the brain of a schizophrenic twin is compared with that of his non-schizophrenic twin sibling through magnetic imaging resonance systems, certain specific defects are found in the schizophrenic one. The temporal and hippocampal lobes are abnormally small. These parts of the brain are involved with thinking, concentration, memory, and perception, all of which are typically impaired in schizophrenia. There is also enlargement of the fluid-filled spaces called ventricles.\textsuperscript{4}

Brain chemistry is also affected. Drugs that are effective in reducing the symptoms of the disease block the neurotransmitter, dopamine. This suggests an excess of this chemical in the schizophrenic brain.\textsuperscript{5} Dopamine is a protein in the class of catecholamines which transmit information between nerve cells. The excess dopamine could disrupt the limbic system's normal filtering function, causing the schizophrenic to be bombarded with stimuli which cannot be organized and integrated in any way. These findings are consistent with schizophrenic speech patterns that indicate impairment in focusing: digressiveness (or wandering), going off on tangents that seem irrelevant, and circumstantiality.

In sum, the evidence gives clear indication of a brain disease involving drastic alteration in function and form. Its
most important aspect for present purposes is the loss of control of the thinking process. A fragmented mind means a breakdown in psychological defenses against terrifying inborn knowledge.

Possible causes of schizophrenia
What causes this disease? Genes and stress seem to play a role, but they do not tell the whole story.

Genes
There is considerable evidence that the breakdown of normal brain processes in schizophrenia has a genetic basis, particularly from research studies on identical twins and other family members. However, there is an all-important "but." Even among identical twins, the concordance rate for schizophrenia is still only thirty to fifty percent, and common prenatal environment cannot be ruled out as a factor.

Moreover, a constellation of abnormal features accompanying schizophrenia are not in themselves necessarily indicative of psychopathology. Other family members of schizophrenics who have never displayed any symptoms of mental illness may also display certain of these features, such as abnormal eye movements and photosensitivity. We do not know why they do not develop schizophrenia. They may have genotype differences; they may have acquired more adequate psychological defenses; or they may experience less strain on the defense equipment with which they function.

At any rate, the evidence on schizophrenics and their family members indicates that more than just genes are required to explain the development of the illness.

Environment
Many theories have been advanced to explain schizophrenia as a response to a pathological environment.
However, no single environmental factor has been found to display a strong relationship with the disorder.

**Physical environment:** On the purely physical end, viruses or chemical exposure are under increasing consideration. For example, a higher incidence of schizophrenia has been found in the adult offspring of mothers who contracted Asian flu during the second trimester of pregnancy. This is a time in fetal development that is critical for neuronal cell migration to the cerebral cortex. Cell migration is known to be altered by enzymes produced by the influenza virus. In line with this, slides of brain tissue have shown disarrayed cells to be characteristic of schizophrenia.\(^9,10\)

**The family:** For many years supposedly cold, controlling, "schizophrenenegenic" mothers were unfairly blamed for driving their children crazy. But in the extensive "maternal influence" literature, statistical relationships have often been weak or insignificant, and no attention has generally been paid to causal direction.\(^11\) After all, if the mother is cold and controlling, it might be a result of her child's illness instead of its cause. Also insufficient attention is paid to possible genetic similarities or underlying environmental influences common to mother and child.

However, we do know that familial factors such as hypercriticality, hostility, or over-involvement are associated with the relapse rate in schizophrenic patients who are released home after psychiatric hospitalization.\(^12\)

"Crazy" society: When R.D.Laing\(^13\) and others point to a crazy society as a cause for schizophrenia, they have no evidence for that. We can just as easily say that crazy individuals will produce a crazy society.

On a national level, no particular type of social structure as can be described as schizophrenia-prone. In fact, the rate
of schizophrenia in every country in the world is approximately one percent.\textsuperscript{14}

However, it is true that some unexplained local variations in the rate of the disease are associated with ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Low socioeconomic status is generally associated with a higher incidence of all types of psychosis.\textsuperscript{15} It is not clear why. The stress of poverty could cause the illness or vice versa.

**Time spent in illness:** The number and length of psychotic episodes seem to be related to recoverability from schizophrenia: with more episodes or longer ones, the prognosis for recovery is reduced.\textsuperscript{16}

One explanation of this would be that individuals who have more bouts of psychosis have more genetic abnormality, so they are sicker from the beginning. Recent evidence does indicate that adult schizophrenics were also abnormal as children. However, we do not know if those who were more abnormal are sicker as adults.\textsuperscript{17}

On the other hand, it is likely that the decrease in recoverability is due to the fact that the active psychotic state, with its associated changes in chemical balance in the brain, actually causes brain damage, the more so with each episode.

**Demonic influence:** A different type of environmental influence comes from the supernatural realm, to which the spiritual sensitivity of the schizophrenic makes him particularly vulnerable.

Demonic possession and its subtler cousin, demonic oppression, are two modes of spiritual attack that precipitate or perpetuate schizophrenia and other mental disorders.

1. **Possession:** Spirit possession is a phenomenon mentioned throughout the Bible (Judges 9:23; I Samuel 16:14; Luke
Satan and his demons are spirits, able to achieve embodiment only by entering a living being; such spirits are always described in the Bible as evil or unclean.

Is schizophrenia a form of possession? Buddhistic medicine and other types of non-traditional healing consider spirit possession to be the cause of all mental illness.\textsuperscript{18} However, in Matthew's account of healings displayed by Jesus, insanity and possession are differentiated from one another (Matthew 4:24).

Differences in opinion exist about whether demon possession is possible for a true believer in Christ. There is one school of thought that the indwelling Holy Spirit keeps such dark spirit forces outside; they can whisper temptations but not invade. On the other hand there is growing documentation of demonic manifestations among professing Christians.\textsuperscript{19}

Incidentally, the fact that some members of the Christian community consider schizophrenia to be nothing more than a possession state may be largely due to a widespread popular misunderstanding about the nature of the disorder. It still tends to be called "split personality" and gets confused with the highly demonic-appearing Multiple Personality disorder (MPD).\textsuperscript{20}

**Possession criteria:** Possession and mental illness do have many of the same characteristics. Several attempts have been made to develop a reliable set of criteria that differentiate between them. The following criteria are based on Gospel accounts of possessed individuals.\textsuperscript{21} Each criterion is followed, in parentheses, with the mental disorder of which it is also characteristic.

Supernatural knowledge (psychotic disorders; hallucinations, delusions); supernatural strength (manic episodes, other psychotic conditions); going about naked (general deterioration of appearance and social conformity common in psychotic disorders); unable to hear or speak,
seizures, blindness (conversion disorders, organic mental disorders); use of a "different" voice or presence of a distinct other personality (multiple personality disorder); bizarre behavior (psychotic behavior); fierce, violent behavior (antisocial personality disorder, organic mental disorders); unusual behavior/attitudes, e.g., vicious toward self (psychotic and personality disorders); feeling of overpowering evil; self-report of demonic influence.

But since Satan is the great deceiver who is able to appear in any form, a possessed person may not present as abnormal in any of the ways listed. Perhaps part of Satan's deception is to make us believe so many phenomena are indicative of psychiatric illness rather than demonic possession. However, accounts of exorcisms suggest that demonic possession is often conspicuous. This is because Satan's intelligence is limited. If this were no so, he would not attempt to defy God.

About the conversion symptoms: I have observed numerous physical ailments such as blindness, deafness, and other types of loss of function in schizophrenic and non-schizophrenic clients who fulfilled several of the possession criteria listed above. God made some specific curses for disobedience (i.e., rejecting him) that look very much like these symptoms (Deuteronomy 28:28): "The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart."

**Demonic oppression**

Schizophrenics lack barriers to the supernatural, so if not actually possessed by Satan's realm, they are typically oppressed by it. Their defenselessness makes them "fair game" for the pressuring, guilt-tripping techniques used by Satan's minions.

During an internship in a psychiatric emergency ward, I had an opportunity to read the files of patients involuntarily
committed to a locked ward for observation and treatment. Among schizophrenic patients, I found myself being surprised at the frequency with which there was a background of heavy occult involvement by the patient or other family members. This ran from witchcraft, astrology, and spirit channeling to the pseudo-Christian cults.

This impression has been confirmed in my practisce. Nearly always have I found schizophrenics to be involved in some cultic doctrine, either on a private basis or as a cult member or ex-member.

Scientific research supports these personal observations. Either 1. schizophrenics avoid organized religion; or 2. they are associated with a cult, i.e., a highly legalistic religion dominated by the esoteric teachings of its human founder.²³

In terms of the first pattern, an oft-repeated finding has been that self-reported participation in personal and organized religious activity decreases significantly as psychopathology increases.²⁴,²⁵ More psychopathology tends to be found in individuals claiming solitary religious experiences and expressing independent religious ideas.²⁶

In terms of the second pattern, schizophrenia has been shown to be three times more likely to appear in Jehovah Witnesses than in the general population, and paranoid schizophrenia is four times more likely among them.²⁷

In one way or another, the psychotic schizophrenic is under the yoke of psychic bondage, separated from God and seeking him in the wrong places, putting himself at the mercy of demonic spirits. Several of my clients have been actively psychotic schizophrenics who professed to be Christians but also clung to some occult beliefs and practices. As they opened up to salvation purely through the God-given shed blood of Christ, they gained increasing sanity.
Bible based origin of schizophrenia

The "diathesis-stress" theory states that stress plus genes cause schizophrenia. However, science has not been able to establish this. The reason is that genes and stress are just part of the story. The following hypothesis is consistent with both the scientific findings and the Bible:

The root cause of schizophrenia is an innate sense of eternal damnation, and the religiosity characteristic of the disorder is a manifestation of this. Genes only explain why a person develops schizophrenia rather than some other type of mental disorder when stress triggers the deep archetypical fear.

This is why the two major times of life transition are associated with onset of the disease. In adolescence and the forties, a person is dealing with basic existential questions that are profoundly disturbing and cannot be answered satisfactorily if there is no God and no rescue from hell: Why am I here? What's missing? Beyond life, what? Why do I fear?

The unconscious terror of hell sends the genetically-predisposed person into a psychotic flight associated with chemical imbalances and permanent brain damage.

Is religiosity innate?

This is the crucial question. Religiosity is found in all types of psychosis, not just schizophrenia. Is there evidence that this is anything other than innate in origin?

Organic changes in the brain

Some argue that organic changes in the brain somehow fabricate spirituality. We know that people have spiritual experiences when they take psychedelic drugs, ranging from paranoia about evil forces to grandiose feelings of omnipotence and supernatural identification.
In fact, "altered states" of all kinds--meditation, hypnosis, alcohol, drugs—can be accompanied by mystical experiences. Moreover, psychotic imagery shares many characteristics with dream experiences, hallucinogenic drug trips, "near death" experiences, and shamanic experiences.

Altered states are found in certain non-psychiatric organic disorders. One is temporal lobe epilepsy. Just before a seizure, the epileptic often appears as if demon possessed. Not only can he be wildly aggressive and sexually uninhibited. He is also commonly preoccupied with religiosity, paranormal experiences and a sense of a "presence."

However, altered states do not fabricate spiritual experiences, they remove barriers to them by pushing away psychological defenses. This is also what happens in psychosis, potentially leading to some terrifying experiences. Such have been reported by those who have experimented with kundalini, the invitation of demonic forces to enter the body at the base of the spine. Despite what the gurus say about the benefits of mystical experiences, they often take a catastrophic form that leads to neurosis and psychosis.

Religious background
Is there any evidence that religiosity is acquired through the human socialization process? No. One example from my practice is particularly striking.

The case of Klaus: Klaus was born into an intellectual, atheistic family of Jewish ancestry, his father being a well-known child psychiatrist. Throughout his life, Klaus heard his parents condemn all forms of religion; he had no religious instruction as a child.
His first psychotic episode occurred at the age of twenty. During this episode, he recalls the emergence of a strong religious preoccupation. "Voices" told him the devil was going to get him, he was doomed to go to hell, and that God was watching him. He has experienced similar phenomena during all of his subsequent episodes. Yet his only religious training has been in the eastern mystical practices he espoused as he strove for peace of mind after several psychotic episodes. This training utilizes neither a personal God nor a devil concept.

This case is not unusual. The severity of the preoccupation with hell and the devil cannot be adequately explained by influences from the social environment.

Research literature

Scientific research paints a picture consistent the story of Klaus. The findings on religiously-preoccupied psychotics are similar to those on the overlapping population of schizophrenics. One study found more overtly religious delusions in individuals not connected with organized religion or religious practices. They reported high religious involvement but identified less with fundamental beliefs and expressed less support for organized religion. In a somewhat similar vein, a study of messianic delusions in hospitalized schizophrenic men found strong counter-cultural tendencies typically present in these patients, i.e., they were not involved in organized religion.

Another study shows two distinct patterns amongst patients with religious delusions: either involvement in mercilessly legalistic fundamentalism (see Chapter Ten for a discussion of this) or the avoidance of socialized religion. There were two groups: one displayed hostile and rejecting attitudes towards organized religion, and another that strongly identified with the dogmatic concepts of their religious group. Other studies similarly show that if the
psychotic or religiously deluded individual is involved in organized religion at all, it is a cult which attracted him because of a previously-established religious preoccupation.\textsuperscript{43,44}

In general these studies either contradict or do not support the idea that the religiosity phenomenon results from involvement in organized religion. They present, instead, a picture of the religiously-deluded, psychotic individual as a loner and rebel toward the God of the Bible. Like a sheep who has gone astray, he has "turned to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

**Grace and sanity**

My experience has shown that what matters is a sense of grace, i.e., the mercy of a loving God who sent Jesus to pay the eternal penalty in place of humans. Grace profoundly changes individuals diagnosed with a psychotic disorder because it brings them peace of mind. The constant feeling of being doomed and plagued by the invisible demonic world abates. There is underlying sanity in these individuals, although they do not necessarily lose their particular susceptibility to mental illness completely. Nevertheless, they can function fully if they have a God-filled, calm, supportive environment. Their religiosity continues but it now works to their advantage as a healthy clinging to God.

All psychiatric and non-psychiatric symptoms associated with their illness do not disappear. Some symptoms become characterological, part of the personality. Since permanent changes in the structure and functioning of the brain can occur over time, medication may be a continuing necessity.

One client who was disturbed for many years by a vision of an open door with bright red flames surging out of it now reports that she sees a white light shining out of that door. She says she finds the white light a little alarming but
it does not fill her with the terror she had when she saw the flames.

I have had the opportunity to observe a family member who has at one time clearly displayed all the acute symptoms of schizophrenia. Over the years since he began to lean on the God of the Bible, he has changed. Some of his symptoms have completely disappeared: the delusions and auditory hallucinations. Others have been tempered: the autism, impulsiveness and emotional lability. Another feature called "loosening of associations" is less extreme and actually benefits him. It helps him make interesting connections in the writing he is now able to focus on. He has learned to accept his boundaries and obeys a need for much quiet and aloneness. This is certainly a different person from the human being who, at times in the past, would stare out of the window, sitting in the same position from dawn to dusk.

But without the message of the Gospel, the need to flee from the terrible dilemma can produce a state of living hell for one who is genetically predisposed to psychosis.

**Psychotic reality: is it all delusional?**

Some will argue that since schizophrenia and other types of psychosis are sicknesses, psychotic reality lacks truth. On the contrary, there is much to learn from it about the innate sin/death conflict. These are the reasons:-

1. Religiosity, *per se*, is not fabricated. Psychosis involves loss of control of conscious thought. A thought-disordered person is far less able to consciously fabricate than one who is not.

2. The religious nature of psychotic thought is pervasive and universal.
3. If schizophrenia has a genetic factor, how can the religiosity that is almost synonymous with it not have one?

4. So far the research does not indicate that the religious content of schizophrenic and other psychotic thought is acquired through the process of socialization.

5. It makes sense that the tumult of acute schizophrenic disorganization, with its disruption of psychological defenses, would allow material from deep in the psyche to come uncensored to the surface.

6. The underlying themes of delusional thinking are independent of culture and consistent with biblical reality, particularly the common idea of malevolent control by a supernatural agent.

7. The themes of so-called psychotic delusions are found in the non-psychotic population during meditation, chemically-altered states, dreams, and myths. No matter how mild or severe the disorder, in no case has any client I have seen for psychotherapy denied a sense of impending doom.

**To sum up...**

No theory can better explain psychotic religiosity than the innate sin/death equation. The psychotic's sensitive antennae pick up something terrifying in the spiritual realm. He cannot get away from the sense of a malevolent spirit or "alien" world, not visible or knowable through the normal human channels. He sees what most people are blind to.

In our quest to find the origin of religiosity, we looked at the source of psychosis itself, focusing on schizophrenia. Despite evidence for its genetic basis and its associations with some environmental factors, more is needed to explain the incidence of this disorder. There is every reason to
believe that environmental stress merely triggers the deep, innate terror of eternal darkness. This terror leads to psychosis in the genetically-predisposed person. Taken as a whole, scientific research so far supports this Bible-based interpretation.

There is no evidence that socialized religion makes psychotic people unable to stop talking about God, hell, sin, demons, and alien forces. On the contrary, schizophrenic and psychotically-religious individuals tend to isolate. They tend to be loners who are preoccupied with idiosyncratic religious beliefs, although a small percentage of them have some involvement in an anti-Christian or pseudo-Christian cult. The likelihood is that psychotically-religious individuals seek formal religion as a result of a preoccupation that is already established. Even heavy cult involvement would not be a sufficient explanation of their extreme religious preoccupation.

So far, psychotic religiosity has every appearance of being innate. However, more needs to be known about it. For example, how prevalent are the biblical archetypes in psychotic thought content?

Religious cultural background does not affect religiosity per se, but it does influence the terminology and concepts used to describe universal spiritual experiences. Individuals with a biblical background are more likely to talk about demons; individuals from a secular one talk about alien forces. Both are describing the same experience; one is overtly religious, the other covertly so. So we should include the more covert religious delusions in our definition of religiosity instead of only the overt type. A very high proportion of delusions would be included in a definition of religiosity that includes both types, making an even stronger case for psychosis as revelatory of our universal existential predicament.
It must be noted that none of the research provides reliable indications of the type, amount, and causal direction of religious influence. Moreover, none of it examines past influences. Most important, however, is that in no case has any attempt been made to differentiate the freeing role of grace from spurious forms of religiosity.

We need to know more about the relationship between false religion and psychosis, on one hand, and between the Gospel and mental well-being, on the other. My own experience suggests that psychotic episodes are rare or nonexistent for people who truly know the grace of God. Thus they would not have shown up in previous research, which generally uses actively psychotic hospitalized subjects.

**Notes**


22. Dickason, op. cit.


39. Cothran and Harvey, op. cit.


Hell and Madness; Grace and Sanity
Chapter Nine

What’s wrong with secular therapy?

Secular treatment approaches might contain some truth and sound convincing. However, they are generally contaminated by the false gospel of humanism, the belief that humans are inherently good and self-actualizing. The faults of secular therapy have been pointed out by Christian writers such as the Bobgans and Dave Hunt. We have to beware of secularists because even when they do not have a clear anti-Bible message, they may be wolves in sheep’s clothing.

The tricky thing is that humanism is a religion, but this is not generally recognized in the mental health world. Members of that profession stridently argue against the expression of Christian beliefs in the counseling room. They call that a form of religious exploitation and cheap proselytizing yet they fail to see the deadliness of the false religious message that they, themselves, are promoting.

What is more, the humanistic goals of the mental health profession in this country are incongruent with the beliefs of its predominantly Bible-oriented population. Thirty one percent of all US adults endorse the statement that “The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.” An additional twenty four percent agree that: “The Bible is the inspired word of God; it contains no errors, but some verses are to be taken symbolically rather than literally.” Beyond this, another twenty-two percent agree that: “The Bible is the inspired word of God, but it may contain historical and scientific errors.” In other words, seventy seven percent of our population basically accepts the Bible. So why is humanism considered the only acceptable belief
system for mental health practitioners? Why have humanism and other forms of anti- or ungodliness gone largely unchallenged as remedies for psychopathology in a Bible-based country?

One reason is that our great universities, founded for the teaching and study of God’s Word, now demean it. Even in the Christian universities counseling programs are strongly humanistic. “We don’t do much God talk,” explained a staff member at one pastoral counseling program in the San Francisco Bay Area. The result of this is that humans are blind to the inherent contradiction between secular recipes for psychological health and God’s recipe.

Another reason is that a significantly low proportion of psychologists and psychiatrists report a Judaeo-Christian religious affiliation: sixty five percent compared to eighty seven percent of the general public. And only twenty nine percent express a belief that religious matters are important for many or all clients.5 6

Secular therapists often automatically consider the religious beliefs of their clients to be harmful and urge them to let go of those beliefs.7 That is probably one reason why most people suffering emotional distress prefer to seek help from clergy rather than from mental health professionals.8 However, many do end up being treated by the mental health profession when their problems require more than their pastor is able to give.

Satanic humanism

What, humanism is Satanic? Indeed, humanists glorify humans as gods in control of their lives with no power higher than they. This is what Satan wants us to believe: “thou shalt be as gods…” (Genesis 3:5). Humanist practitioners do they usually see it this way; they can be just as misled as anyone else. People are rarely aware of it when they are doing Satan’s bidding.

Deep inside, humans know they are incapable of the only transformation that would produce genuine mental health: resolution of their unconscious sin=death/hell equation. They would have to somehow make themselves totally pure and sinless from conception until death. Their desperation leaves them wide
open to lies that seem to offer promise, but do not produce any more than short term results. Only the Gospel can produce long term “peace which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). Many people would reject humanism if they were aware of its Satanic origin.

Secular “healthy” delusions
Outside the message of the Gospel, a semblance of mental health is produced by what we might call “healthy” delusions. These are ideas about human power, optimism and goodness. People are thirsty to hear that they are omnipotent, that they have every reason to hope, and that they are good, not just for narcissistic reasons but even more than that they sense that something is terribly amiss and they need these defensive delusions to cope. Even a psychotic person can be helped by a grandiose delusion, such as the belief that he is a god (overt religiosity) or some powerful historical person like Napoleon (covert religiosity). An omnipotent person would not have to fear the Lake of Fire; he could stay out of it through his own strength; a perfectly good person would not be separated from God, and would have to actually be a god if he is truly without sin. People cannot live without hope, and they will embrace these lies of Satan to keep them on a somewhat even keel if they have not claimed coverage of the gift of salvation from God. Optimism: “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). Human control and human goodness.: “Thou shalt be as gods.” (Genesis 3:5).

Personal control
Many psychotherapeutic treatments aim to foster a sense of being in control of one’s life, i.e., human power. Research has shown that a high level of a sense of personal control in adults is positively related to psychological adjustment. Although it is clear that an increase in a sense of being in control is beneficial for people who tend to rely on others too much, in an overall sense the notion of personal power is a detour from the truth.
In reality, there is much that humans have no control over, the most important being death and the avoidance of the Lake of Fire. Although humans are made in the image of God, they are not the captains of their souls. The paradox is, they have responsibility for themselves, but lack the control which would enable them to fulfill that responsibility. They must depend only on God for that.

Some think that faith in God means passivity, or as Freud put it: “regression in the service of the ego.” Nothing can be further from the truth. Over and over, the Bible uses the word “walk” in connection with faith. Faith involves being in an active mode, not a passive one.

Some of the world’s greatest self-believers and critics of those who lean on God have repented in all honesty on their death beds, only at the last moment confessing their need for Christ. One of them was founding father of America, Thomas Payne. How many, though, have slipped out of life to face the Lake of Fire.

Optimism

Optimism, the expectation that things will work out for the best, is clearly beneficial to a person’s well-being. Research has shown that optimists experience fewer negative physical symptoms, display faster or better recoveries from certain physical illnesses, and are more psychologically healthy. Cognitive therapy and, to some extent, other secular approaches show effectiveness in producing more optimistic attitudes that enable people to cope better. There is even evidence that humans are hard-wired for an optimism trait.

However, the long term benefits of such therapy have not been established. Optimism is a delusion if it does not hinge on a person’s belief in the God of the Bible and the hope of eternal life in heaven. Only Bible believers have a basis to think that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). For everyone else, there is no foundation for optimism. In a godless random world, there is not more basis for expecting good things to happen than there is for expecting bad things.
Humans have good reason for existential dread, which lurks powerfully under the surface of every unbeliever, no matter how optimistic they are on the surface.\textsuperscript{16} Past programming does not explain this inner terror, and the only way it can dissipate is the assurance that Christ took our penalty on his back.

**Human goodness**

“We are good, we are good, we are good, we are good; deep down inside us we are good.”\textsuperscript{17} This is the basic message of secular humanism and it is simply untrue. The Bible tells us the very opposite, that we are sinners. The truth in the fallacy is that humans have a conscience that tells them what is right and what is wrong, and they feel better when they are doing what is right. However, doing the right thing is usually not our first inclination. The statement made by the prophet in Jeremiah 17:9 says “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?” Many similar statements about human corruption are found throughout the Bible, including those made by Jesus and our friend, Paul. Nobody can afford to know their dark nature until they are sure it will not send them to the Lake of Fire.

**Major secular psychotherapies**

Let us take a ride through the major secular approaches to psychotherapy as a point of contrast with Gospel-based healing. We will find that the secular goals are ones that only the God of the Bible can achieve for us. First we look at the support versus insight dimension, and then we look at humanistic versus non-humanistic therapies.

**Support therapy versus insight-oriented therapy**

There is a distinction in the mental health profession between support therapies that stay above the surface of the human psyche, and insight-oriented therapies that attempt to explore below the surface.

**Support therapy:** The goal of support therapy is to help people recognize their present strengths, build on them, and cope
better. What is wrong with that? Created in God’s image as humans are, they certainly have beauty. However, they cannot appreciate and capitalize on that until 1. their imperfection and its deadly consequence has been recognized, and 2. they have grabbed hold of the remedy: Jesus Christ’s atoning death. Support therapy is like paving over a landslide, a task that needs constant maintenance.

**Insight-oriented therapies:** These therapies aim to help people go below the surface and get to the bottom of their psychological problems. However, nobody feels safe enough to open Pandora’s box more than a chink unless they have the assurance of total forgiveness from the heavenly Father who holds the keys to their eternal destiny. If that assurance from God is missing only superficial insight is possible.

Freudian theory has led to many insight-oriented offshoots besides lengthy traditional psychoanalysis. Transactional analysis, object relations therapy and ego psychology are some of the varieties. None of these models recognizes that the basic issue is the innate existential dilemma described in this book. Instead, they all demonize socialization agents, especially the family. For them, a person’s life history is the problem, but from the perspective of the Bible, it has nothing to do with a person’s history. The problem is a universal, inborn sense of deserving eternal damnation.

**Humanistic psychotherapy**

The French philosopher, Jacques Rousseau, \(^\text{18}\) is an exemplar of the humanistic view of man as basically good, a notion that has been the basis of many utopian revolutionary movements. If man is basically good and external influences are the cause of man’s emotional dysfunctionality, then humans need to be reared unfettered by rules and boundaries. In theory, this will permit them to be happy, and for their innate goodness to develop to the full, but in practice? All we have to look at is the social breakdown in godless societies to know that humans are inherently corrupt.
Humanistic approaches to therapy are typically non-directive and evocative, aiming to foster the expression of inner strength and goodness by offering freedom and removing whatever blocks are in the way. Here we look at Rogerian, Gestalt, Existential and Maslowian approaches as representatives of this school.

**Rogerian therapy**

According to the therapeutic approach founded by Carl Rogers,\(^1\) healing takes place in the presence of unconditional love, or “unconditional positive regard.” However, this ex-seminary student tried to take God out of unconditional love and came out with a fable. Humans may experience flashes of unconditional love towards one another but it is unsustainable for them. Jealousy, envy, malice, pride, and a host of other unloving emotions bubble to the surface and affect human relationships. Some documentation of psychotherapy sessions between Rogers and his clients show that even the apostle of unconditional love became cold and distant towards them at times.\(^2\) He could not practice what he preached.

The problem is, the therapist is just another human being with his own set of biases, judgments, transference reactions, et cetera. A therapist’s love is conditional; one requirement being a fee. Although the therapist comes to genuinely care for the client, sooner or later his time will not be available if that fee is not paid. Besides, no therapist can give us what we need in order to resolve the \( \text{sin} = \text{death/hell equation} \). Only God can do that. We do need unconditional love but the only source of it is the God of the Bible. His gift of Christ’s death to pay the penalty for the sins of undeserving humans is the proof of His unconditional love towards us, God’s love in action. Once we humans know that and claim the gift of salvation, our psychological problems start to clear up.

**Gestalt therapy**

Frits Perls\(^3\) founded a school of therapy that focuses on the present and deemphasizes the past; there is relatively little concern with a person’s history. Its strong stress on self-expression is
based on the humanistic notion of a self-actualizing tendency within each human.

Since humans are made in God’s image there is probably some truth to this idea. However this does not take into account the existence and the effects of the inborn *sin=death/hell equation*. The problem is that imperfection destines humans for the Lake of Fire, and the existential guilt arising from their unconscious awareness of this outdoes any self-actualizing tendency.

According to Gestalt theory, most disorders originate in childhood and involve interference with the process of what is termed “Gestalt formation and destruction.” A gestalt is a conceptual field, the entire set of a person’s ideas, attitudes, beliefs, concepts, emotions, thoughts, etc. Problems arise when, as a result of childhood experiences, the gestalt is rigid and unresponsive to change.

The goal is to break down the rigid “outmoded” gestalt using expressive techniques such as the “empty chair” or psychodrama. This way the “stuckness” is said to be broken down and replaced by a new, flexible, aliveness-promoting gestalt. Gestalt therapy involves much finger pointing; it fosters catharsis of rageful feelings towards the significant others who must have messed up a person earlier in life.

Sounds good in theory, but the reason why a person clings to rigid gestalts (or psychological defenses) is seated in the *sin=death/hell equation*. The conflict is so deep and the issue so threatening that expressive techniques cannot open a person up to it without the assurance of God’s provision of a remedy.

In Gestalt therapy, people role play a dialogue with those supposedly to blame for all their hang-ups, i.e., their own critical parents. Screaming at parents for filling them with guilt and then symbolically rejecting the guilt by handing it back to the parents—this just does not get rid of it. The rigid defenses might break down temporarily but existential guilt and fear force them to come right back because defenses are needed as a means of coping.

After psychodrama, a person is likely to experience new animosity towards the objects of the therapist-sanctioned rage, plus
subconscious guilt for having broken God’s commandment to honor one’s parents. Further, there is an increased desire for revenge that can poison a person’s psyche. This is the very opposite of what God wants for us. He says: “To me belongeth vengeance.” (Deuteronomy 32:35) It is much better for humans to put the matter in God’s hands and be free of that toxin.

Indeed, some secular research shows that catharsis can hurt and make things worse. Satan just loves the fact that humans displace his accusing role on them. He will encourage a person’s self-righteous anger and continue to support repression of the root issue to keep diverting people from God’s gift of salvation. As stated in Chapter Five, parents do have an impact, but far too great a role in a child’s psychopathology is often assigned to them.

**Existential therapy**

Existentialist therapy focuses on the importance of choosing a philosophy towards one’s existence and sticking with it. To an existentialist, it hardly matters what the philosophy is; the important thing is to have one. A person is free to choose a stance on the vital issues of life: meaningfulness versus meaninglessness, life versus death, isolation versus separatedness and freedom versus responsibility. Says Victor Franks, the founder of a form of existential psychotherapy he called “logotherapy,” about healing the human psyche: “the importance of the freedom of the human will is the ability to choose a stand on the meaning of life, which, when found, will produce mental health.”

This means that existentialism takes a stand against the God of the Bible, because according to its theory, there is no ultimate objective reality; the truth is whatever person decides it to be. The universe has no meaning or purpose other than the one a person ascribes to it; therefore there is no higher authority than oneself. Nevertheless, existential therapists claim to be supportive towards a person’s belief in the God of the Bible in that they say they will support whatever belief system the person has. However, that cannot be so because the Bible conflicts with that very idea. The Bible discards every other belief system, including existentialism.
This means that faith in the God of the Bible is likely to be avoided as a topic by an existential therapist, or subtly attacked by them.

The idea that one creates one’s own reality does not convince the internal committee. Deep inside, humans sense their helplessness. They know that they are headed for the Lake of Fire, and that nothing they can do will stop this. Nevertheless, existentialists treat that fate as if it were a state of mind that humans can control.

The existentialists are on the mark in their definition of the basic human questions, but they are way off track in their solutions. The only way to attain a true sense of meaning is in a relationship with God, understanding oneself as part of His intentional creation. The purpose of free will is not for humans to define their own universe, but to make a decision about the essentialness of the shed blood of Christ. The only way to escape isolation is to walk into the arms of our loving Father. The only way to have life is to take God up on his offer. The only way to embrace death is to know it is the doorway to eternity in heaven.

**Maslow’s self-actualization**

Abraham Maslow theorized that mental health was the result of a process of “self-actualization” as a person rises up through a hierarchy of needs. The needs had to be satisfied from the ground up, i.e., from basic survival (worldly physiological safety needs), through human belongingness and self-esteem to the pinnacle.\(^{24}\)

He proposed the following characteristics of the healthy “self-actualized” mind: an accurate perception of reality; acceptance of reality, spontaneity, problem centering rather than self-centering, need for privacy, self-sufficiency, identification with humanity, capacity for feelings of intimacy with a few others, a democratic character structure, a broad sense of humor, the ability to distinguish means and ends, creativeness, a nonconformist personal style and resistance to enculturation, the ability to transcend dichotomies (see things other than in black and white), detachment, the capacity for peak experiences and the ability to attain transcendence.
**Disagreement with Maslow:** With the exception of all the “self” items, these are possibly good qualities, but they are unreachable outside of a person’s experience of the grace of God. Maslow ignores the inherent flaws in human nature which makes “sin-actualization” the reality when people are left to freely unfold. If they lack a sense of accountability to God, they will operate out of the selfish, corrupt human nature. The assets Maslow admires do not flow from what is intrinsically human but from the perception of being lovingly saved by God from the Lake of Fire.

**Partial agreement with Maslow:** However, if we substitute eternal survival for basic survival in Maslow’s model, his hierarchy of needs superficially agrees with the biblical picture. He is right that higher values can be reached only after the basic survival need has been met. He is wrong about what constitutes basic survival, which is in reality eternal survival, avoidance of the lake of Fire.

When people experience the assurance of a God-given escape from the Lake of Fire despite their inherent unworthiness of it, they change. Once their deepest survival need has been met, they start wanting to please God; they have room to concern themselves with higher values. Maslow misses something really important: the need for one’s cup to overflow with God’s love before one begins to truly grow.

**Non-humanistic therapies**

Non-humanistic therapies emphasize inculcation over revelation; learning is stressed rather than attempts to draw on people’s inner strength and goodness; and the primary goals are to foster personal control and optimism. These therapies have become increasingly utilized in mental health treatment in recent years because 1. they have a better track record than the humanistic ones, and 2. success can be measured and quantified for effectiveness studies. However, they tend to make the assumption that there is no need to deal with inherent human programming, meaning that any “gains” made in their approach to therapy are only superficial.
Cognitive therapies

Cognitive therapies focus on changing dysfunctional beliefs, or cognitions. The premise is that the actual facts about a situation are less important than what people believe about it. If they have self-defeating ideas, they will act in a manner likely to make them fail. If they have self-encouraging ideas, they will act in a manner likely to make them succeed. Beliefs are flexible, and people can choose the way they feel and act by changing their ideas. Cognitive therapy teaches a person to challenge the beliefs that cause psychopathology, and replace them with beliefs that promote mental health.

There is much truth to this, but the problem is that, just as in existentialism, most theorists in this field claim that there is no ultimate truth, and that a person can just choose what they want to believe. That is not so. Some inborn scary truths lurk in the human psyche and there is no way to get rid of them. The sole means of coping with them is the Gospel.

Theorists such as Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck have defined strategies for supposedly replacing dysfunctional beliefs with functional ones. Much of their work has focused on trying to cure depression, a disorder in which negative thoughts are often prominent and accessible. Self attack is common in depressed people, but they can learn to challenge what is called “malevolent narcissism” through cognitive strategies. Self-attacking beliefs are to be challenged and replaced by self-constructive ones.

Here is a “perfect” example: One problematic belief humans have is that they must be perfect. This seems utterly unrealistic, and the cognitivist solution is to reprogram this idea with the message that a person is really “OK” in a state of imperfection, thus getting rid of a nagging sense of being worthless and doomed by their flaws. The idea is that one can learn to stop demanding self-perfection and be happily flawed. However, the demand for self-perfection comes from a true sense that imperfection has a dire eternal consequence. This is a problem all religions attempt to address, but only the Bible offers a remedy. Only the knowledge
that God will impute Christ’s perfection to humans can produce relief.

Cognitive therapy echoes the message of Buddhism (see next chapter) in not allowing for the fact that humans are born with some inflexible, basic, inherent beliefs and emotions that are tied to immutable truth. Albert Ellis stated that “the concept of sin is the direct and indirect cause of virtually all neurotic disturbance.”27 This is true, in one sense, but it is the reality of sin rather than the mere concept that is the problem.

It is true that certain problems in our lives can be alleviated without touching on the root dilemma, that humans are damned as sinners. Superficial changes are not lasting, and the root problem will continue to cause psychopathology. Although cognitive therapies show some short-term effectiveness, in the long term the effect wears off.28 because the depressed person’s negative beliefs reflect a truth that will eventually supercede the positive thinking installed by cognitive therapy. Self-defeating behaviors, fear of success, self-punishment, escape into addiction and the other defensive patterns mentioned in Chapter Six stem from existential guilt, the unconscious knowledge of being a damned sinner.

The value of cognitive therapy is its demonstration of the mental health consequence of beliefs. This paves the way for us to see the far reaching importance of belief in the saving grace of the God of the Bible.

**Behavioral therapy**

Behavioral therapy aims to change behavior rather than thoughts.

**Born selfish?** Humans are expected to be like their “ancestors,” the lab rats on which much behavioral theory rests. Thus they will operate out of self-interest, seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. Therefore human behavior can be “modified” though a system of reinforcements, either rewards or punishments. Behavioral theorists come in various stripes, ranging from the radical “observable behavior only” types like B. F. Skinner29 to the moderates like Miller and Dollard,30 who are also interested in
the motivation underlying observable behavior.

There is plenty of evidence that behavioral and cognitive-behavioral therapy is useful in controlling symptoms, particularly those of anxiety disorders such as phobias, and psychosomatic disorders. However, behavioral theory cannot explain complex phenomena such as self-punishment, which seeks pain instead of avoiding it. That is only understandable as a selfish human attempt to atone with God.

The behaviorists are right that humans are hungry and that they operate out of self-interest just like rats, but the most important aspect of this is spiritual. It explains why “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7). Humans sense they are separated from God, who is in charge of our destiny. Spiritual hunger is subtle, though. Food is a motivator, but unlike the rat, humans often do not know they are hungry, or why. They are generally unconscious of their innate sense of deserving the Lake of Fire. But also unlike rats, some humans are concerned about more than just their next meal—although this certainly did not apply in the case of Esau and the mess of pottage. Some are conscious of their desperate plight regarding the Lake of Fire and their inability to escape through their own resources, enough so to run for the cover of Christ’s shed blood. Many in the church have the idea that God appeals to the goodness in man to save him. Nothing could be further from the truth. God is realistic. Like the behaviorists, He understands our selfishness and uses it to move us towards His gift of salvation. The electric shock of recognizing the bad news and the good news will send us scuttling rat-like towards Christ, whose death pays the fee to bail us out of the Lake of Fire into the loving arms of God.

**Social learning therapy**

Social learning therapy, typified by Albert Bandura, is a means of changing behavior through modeling and vicarious reinforcement using observation, identification and imitation of a role model.
Born aggressive? One question social learning theorists have attempted to answer is whether therapy can eliminate human aggression. Can it prevent wars? This rests on whether it is innate or not, and if innate, whether any particular mode of expressing it is also innate, such as physical violence. Ethologists such as Konrad Lorenz have viewed what they consider to be an innate propensity in animals to attack one another without having an apparent opportunity to learn the behavior.

But what about humans? It is impossible to say because no human has ever lived in a controlled environment without an opportunity to learn an aggressive response since conception. What research on children in a preschool situation has found is that instigation to physically violent aggression increases after such behavior is observed in a role model, and decreases after a role model displays non-violent behavior such as cooperation and verbal methods of settling disputes. However, since children display aggressive behavior under both conditions, the source of the behavior is unknown. And even though Bandura found no evidence that social learning is solely responsible for producing aggression in humans, he concluded: “Since aggression is not an inevitable or unchangeable aspect of man but a product of aggression-promoting conditions operating within a society, man has the power to reduce his level of aggressiveness.”

The Genesis account of Cain’s murder of Abel refutes this. Cain had never observed such behavior.

Family therapy and God’s family

Family therapy theories are all based on combinations of the preceding approaches. They, too, define healing process that in reality can only be accomplished through faith in the God of the Bible.

Take, for example Murray Bowen’s definition of “enmeshment” versus “individuality” in the dysfunctional family. Enmeshment is a condition in which family members cannot differentiate their boundaries and are unable to recognize individual needs. Bowen says anxiety causes this; when people are
anxious, they display addiction to other people, and cling to other family members. The major hurdle is that the anxiety they produce the clinging also produces rigidity. In an anxiety state, clingy family members are less able to tolerate each other’s differences than otherwise, because difference threatens the “oneness” they are seeking.

For Bowen the cure is to foster individuation in the family through alliances with individual members. The therapist first allies with the family member who is the most individuated and builds on this so that other family members gradually gain strength as individuals and acquire the ability to distance themselves from one another. However, Bowen’s recipe cannot produce lasting change; that only comes through reliance on God. Family members can truly begin to release the death-grip they have on one another when they perceive they can cling to God, instead. Once they have that “oneness” with God, they can achieve individuation, flexibility, toleration of differences, and genuine support for one another.

**Does research support even short-term efficacy for secular therapies?**

Research on the effectiveness of secular psychotherapy has presented a conflicting picture. One meta-analysis pooled the results of many studies and found that in seventy five percent of them psychotherapy was more effective than no therapy. However, most of the differences were insignificant and there was no evidence for the superiority of any approach to psychotherapy.

There is evidence that certain approaches are superior under limited circumstances. For example, a behavioral technique called “systematic desensitization” is an effective treatment for phobias. However, no secular approach has been found to cure the anxiety underlying phobias.

Research has shown that the therapist is the major variable in therapeutic outcomes, and that therapist traits are key. Steven Rothstein cites the following traits of the effective therapist: empathy, respect, genuineness, warmth, concreteness,
confrontiveness, self-disclosure, immediacy, potency and self-actualization. These qualities are found to be independent of the type and length of a therapist’s training and their clinical orientation. However, it seems to the author that unless these “get real” qualities are only superficial, they have to be based on a person’s sense of being loved and accepted by a forgiving heavenly Father. The more safe a person feels with God, the more genuine, loving and empathetic he can be.

To Sum Up

This chapter took a brief journey through the major secular approaches to psychotherapy. What they have to offer is at best a temporary quieting of the surface, but under that seeming calm lies a deep storm in the human psyche. That tempest must be addressed but secular therapy cannot do the job. It is a tool of Satan that can lull a person into complacency and false hope, masking the real disease and throwing a person off the track of the real cure: the Gospel.

The major humanistic and non-humanistic approaches err in failing to consider the sin/death conflict. They focus on worldly beliefs, expectations and relationships when something far deeper, existential guilt, is the cause of psychopathology. As an issue, nothing can compare with humans’ sense of deserving the Lake of Fire for falling short of perfection. And God forbid that we think that therapist traits are the key. No, the Gospel is the solution. Regardless of how empathetic he or she is, the human therapist is an imperfect human being, one sinner who cannot save another sinner. The therapist who points out the saving grace is the one who can offer sanity.

Notes


4 This percentage may have diminished since these studies were done.


What’s wrong with secular therapy?


27 Ellis, A., op. cit., p. 46.

28 Blackburn, I. M. and Davidson, K., op. cit.


34 Bandura, Albert (1973), op. cit., p. 323.


38 Smith, Glass and Miller (1980), op. cit.

Chapter Ten

Merciless Legalism versus Grace-filled Legalism

One important difference exists among religious belief systems: mercy versus lack of mercy. The issue is not about law versus grace; if there were no damnation nobody would need grace, i.e., the God-given payment for sin freeing humans from hell. We have to differentiate between merciless laws—all those doctrines outside the Torah—and God’s merciful Torah.

Humans are under the Law; they are both condemned and freed by it. Only the God of the Bible puts mercy in the Law, he commits himself in the Law to providing salvation as a gift. It is by the grace of God that humans gain closure to their deepest existential conflict. As we investigate the fine print of the major world religions we will find that all of them except one involve merciless legalism, or a law without mercy. All have a law that demands one hundred percent adherence if humans are to be accepted by the divinity and escape spiritual death and eternal separation from God.

Only one offers a means by which humans can adhere to that humanly unattainable edict—that sounds like a contradiction in terms but really it is not. The God of the Bible promises that He will impute to humans the perfection of Jesus, if they believe in this gift enough to claim it as their cover. The key word here is “impute;” God commits himself to regarding humans through the prism of sinless Jesus, despite the fact that humans are sinners and will continue to be so while in this world.

All the other doctrines demand that humans attain total perfection through their own efforts, an absolute impossibility. Humans’ only hope of escaping the Lake of Fire and, incidentally, gaining lasting mental health is through the attributed sinlessness of Christ.

What is a religious belief system?

Let us backtrack and consider the nature of a religious belief system, which is what psychologists call a cognitive schema, or a
model of reality in the human mind.¹ We all operate with a religious belief system, but most people have no idea what theirs is, so their beliefs remain unconscious and unexamined. Most believe in some sort of a god, and an afterlife, and they assume they will go to heaven if there is one because in their own eyes they have not been a terribly bad person. This assumption is wrong, and very dangerous, as we will see in this chapter. What you do not know or, more likely, refuse to know can kill you.

Research shows that a person’s schema of reality can influence their behavior in many ways. The deeper the root of a schema, the more areas of life it affects. According to Ball-Rokeach et al², a schema can give rise to “selective remembering and forgetting, information processing, decision-making, conflict resolution, ego defenses, denial, withdrawal, judging, intending, trying, praising, condemning, exhorting, persuading and doing.”

**Innate schema:** The theme of this book is that humans possess an innate or inborn schema of existential reality, the sin=death/hell equation. This schema has a profound influence on the human psyche, causing existential guilt, a sense of deserving eternal punishment, as we have pointed out in previous chapters.

**Parsimony:** To be fully accepted and integrated, new learning must resonate with a person’s inborn internal programming. It can augment and amplify, it can add any missing piece to the puzzle, but it cannot disagree. It must also be parsimonious, i.e., it must involve inclusiveness, elegance and closure, following the Gestalt perceptual laws introduced in Chapter Two. These laws state, among other things, that parsimony is a standard by which humans judge incoming information, generally at an unconscious level. This means that a person cannot fully embrace a religious belief system unless it is elegant, fully addresses the sin=death/hell equation, and offers total closure to it.

**The doctrine of perfection versus grace**

Every religious schema outside of the Bible is based on merciless legalism, or the doctrine of perfection. This doctrine, whatev-
er its form, is a bad, unparsimonious schema that cannot offer closure, in spite of the fact that it may superficially appear to do so. The grace-filled legalism found in Bible is another story. Its wonderfully elegant schema provides the only source of closure that is possible for humans.

**The doctrine of perfection (i.e., merciless legalism)**

This doctrine of perfection starts out in the right place when it states that imperfection separates humans from the deity eternally. Another way of saying this is that the price or penalty for sin is spiritual death. However, the doctrine errs from this point in saying that people can remedy the situation by making themselves perfect through their own efforts. The problem is that even the slightest transgression in thought, word or deed is a barrier to God that destines a person to the Lake of Fire. No human has the ability to reach that summit.

Perfectionism appeals to the human ego in its supposition that humans have control of their own eternal destiny. Satan has used pride to lure humans away from God right from the beginning. He started with Eve when he tricked her into disobeying God. He said: “Thou shalt not surely die…thou shalt be as gods; knowing good from evil” (Genesis 3:4-5).

**The doctrine of grace (i.e., grace-filled legalism),** only to be found in the Bible, states that although human imperfection separates people from God and destines them for the Lake of Fire, God will impute the perfection of Christ to them if they claim it as a cover. God loved humans enough to send Christ to pay the death penalty for sin in place of humans. Our only hope for escaping the Lake of Fire is this imputed or attributed perfection. This is based on God’s promise of mercy is in the Law.

The Bible also makes it clear that humans cannot attain perfection through their own efforts. The standard is impossible for them to reach because one blemish spoils the record, one impure thought
is enough to ruin the whole thing. Humans cannot control their functioning to that level, although they certainly try.

**Christ is as pure as His Father**

There is an important point to make here. Only the death of a non-sinner can pay, or atone, for the sins of a sinner. Many people are unclear about the purity of Christ: *he was/is human so how could he not be a sinner?* Well, with God all things are possible, and Jesus was/is God in human flesh. He is completely pure, holy and undefiled.

If Christ had sinned in any way, even just a tad, he would die and go to hell just like all sinners. And if he were a regular human, but somehow sinless, he could avoid death and hell for himself, but he could not cover anyone else’s sin.

Only because He is infinite, God in human form, can His death pay the penalty for infinite amounts of sin for infinite numbers of humans. He charges between us and Satan to provide the covering that makes us invulnerable to the fate our enemy planned for us. Jesus is our rescuer, our only hope. In this lifetime we humans never stop sinning, but His atoning death never stops paying, and paying, and paying.

**Left and right wing religions**

Religions that involve merciless legalism fall into two main camps: 1., the left wing ones that rely on *hiders*, defenses such as denial and general repression of the *sin=death/hell equation*; and 2., the right wing ones that rely more on *pseudo-atonement*, i.e., self-cleansing actions and “good” works supporting the deception that a person is paying the penalty for sin, escaping damnation through their own efforts: Left wingers say: I am not a sinner because there is no such thing as sin. Right wingers say: I am not a sinner because I keep the law and pay for my mistakes. Both these ideas are bad schemas in conflict with the truth residing at a deeper level in the human psyche.
Left wing religions

These are the liberal religions that minimize or ignore sin and punishment. They try to make people believe they are not separated from God, drawing heavily on hidden defenses: massive repression, suppression or denial of the sin=death/hell equation. Either a person believes they are keeping the Law, i.e., they qualify as a good person and not as a sinner, or they see themselves not under any law. Going along with this is rejection or minimization of possible punishment on the other side of death.

About meditation

As a practice, meditation is common to all spiritual doctrines except that the goals and the form vary. In the Eastern religions, the goal is detachment from the personal ego with all its desires and corruption, observing the self without judgment.

The so-called “moment of surrender” which the Eastern schools claim to be the equivalent of going to God through Christ is in no way comparable to it. It is actually a moment of dissociation, a loss of ego boundaries during which a person experiences a sense of identification with the universe or the creation. The Eastern schools identify the Creator with the creation, so this loss of ego feels like a state of connection with God.

However, the Bible shows us the Creator and the Creation are not the same thing. The moment of surrender is just that: a moment that gives a mystical sense of God’s presence but is not connection with God.

Eastern meditation depends on the removal of attention from the world. However, as soon as practitioners get up from meditation and go about their daily business, the mystical sense of connectedness is broken. The high does not last because living in the world requires stressful interactions with ungodly things. The anger felt over getting stuck in traffic jam on the way home can soon bring a person down to earth.

In Eastern meditation one’s worldly existence is considered an illusion, and that hunger, illness and death are not real. However,
no amount of telling oneself that these things are not real will truly convince one.

In some forms of meditation, such as the Vipassana school that is increasingly popular today in the world of secular psychotherapy under the name of “mindfulness,” a person’s dark side is treated as non-threatening, a power one can void through observation and non-judgmental acceptance. This is also an approach used in therapy based on the work of Carl Jung discussed in Chapter Four. The goal is to rob energy from one’s dark side by learning to observe it in a detached manner. Theoretically, the guilt it provokes will fade away and be replaced by self-acceptance. However, this is actually a dangerous lesson in denial that can take a person along the road to psychosis, which is an extreme state of detachment from reality. At the very least this approach merely offers a deceptive veneer that hides the truth.

Eastern-inspired meditation is not the doorway to God and it is highly dangerous for more than mental health reasons. Mantras used in the supposedly innocent Transcendental Meditation are the names of demonic “deities.” Repetition of the mantra invites a demonic spirit to take up residence and control the human who innocently chants its name.

**Humanism**

Humanists make the mistake of proposing that people are fundamentally good. The grain of truth in this is that although we are made in God’s image and have some godly qualities, goodness is not our most basic attribute; selfishness is.

The religion of Humanism has infected the culture over that last century. Part of its deception is to make a person believe it is not a religion, giving it an appeal to atheists and agnostics. However, many are surprised to find that the American Humanist Society is a chartered, tax-exempt religious organization.

Humanists may not use spiritual language, but when they talk about the natural goodness of humans, they are getting into a spiritual issue. To say that, deep down inside, humans are good is the
same as saying they are gods. When Humanists say things like: “Your flaws are not real, you simply need to perceive your inner beauty,” this is a lie. It is easy to see why people fall for it because it is appealing to the ego, but it has a deadly eternal consequence.

Humanists state that any evil found in humans is the result of outside influences; any guilt or low self-esteem they experience is caused by other people’s wrongful, unloving attitudes towards them. Flaws a person exhibits are only on the surface. People must adopt only positive ideas and not judge themselves or others harshly. Humanism does not ask you to change yourself, but to change your perception of yourself: “You’re perfect as you are, you’re no sinner, you were born good.”

So the task is not to make yourself perfect but to recognize that you are perfect already, and that you will happily live forever. In reality, you are hiding from the sin=death/hell equation lying in your heart, repressing your sense of being in a state of separation from God. In its place you try to create the delusion that there is nothing to fear and that you are good, an idea appealing to the ego—the same pride the Serpent used to make humans rebel against God in the Garden of Eden. However, a part of you on the inside does not buy the idea there is nothing to fear, and that part of you is very afraid. Rejection of the concept of eternal punishment sticks in one’s craw, so the psychological defense mechanisms are kept busy trying to keep it down.

**Atheism**

Most religions incorporate good works, suffering and punishments into their orthodoxy of actions aimed at gaining atonement with the deity. However, the same tendency is found in an unconscious way in individuals not involved in a religion, including those calling themselves agnostics or atheists. All are driven by the same unconscious need to escape eternal separation from God and the lake of fire.

Though they are not conscious of it, atheists are in the same sin=death/hell quandary as anyone else, so they, too, operate under
perfectionism. This means, of course, that there is no such thing as a through-and-through atheist. Their unbelief is only on the surface; it is better described as “anti-belief in God.” Atheists repress the awareness of God, the Law and hell. However, their vehement protests against these realities give them away. Why resist so much unless you sense that God is real, and you have a bone to pick with him? Your bone is the same as Satan’s: envy and resentment of His power.

**Zen Buddhism**

*Do not condemn yourself or others:* Zen denies death and hell, the sin nature, and immorality. This philosophy promotes acceptance of things as they are, including human faults and flaws. You must stand outside your emotions and observe them in a state of non-judgmental detachment. In other words, you are to disconnect the elements of the sin=death/hell equation and “go with the flow.” *There is no hell. Accept your sins. Give them a new name that will not trigger guilt.* Like Humanists, Zen adherents engage in massive repression of sin, guilt, the sense of being damned, and the sense of being under the Law.

In reality, Zen philosophy advocates a type of myopia where one lives only in the present. But try as you might, you will not find yourself able to live in the now, and be in the moment when you are unsaved. This is because your inner self carries a load of painful baggage regarding your eternal destiny. A part of you knows you are on the road to hell, and that part cannot relax or be fully present. The relaxation is only superficial and the effort one must make to go with the flow is antithetical to the restfulness it demands, unless one is a dead fish.

**Liberal Christianity**

*You are a lovely and beautiful human being made in the image of God, getting more and more Christ-like every day.* Liberal Christianity diverts people from thinking of themselves as sinners. Christ is a role model for them, not the sin-bearer. *There is noth-
ing to fear and no hell awaiting you. God is love and He would never inflict punishment on His children. This sounds appealing but it is another lie from Satan that attempts to keep humans away from claiming the shed blood of Christ to pay for their sins. Ignorance of grace in the Law perpetuates anxious reliance on the bad schema of trying to be Christ-like as a means to avoid eternal separation from God.

Liberal Christians have no comprehension of the true meaning of grace, so they strive to attain perfection mostly through good works that unconsciously attempt to pay the penalty for sin. Their primary defenses are 1., hiders—I’m not a sinner; might have been one once but not any more—and 2., pseudo-atonement in the form of moral “good works”—see what a good person I am, I feed and shelter the homeless, etc.

Bible study that might lead them to the truth, particularly the Law and the Gospels, is replaced by a few snippets of misconstrued doctrine from New Testament epistles, coupled with discouragement from doing independent searching of Scripture.

**Right wing, merciless religions**

Unlike the left wing ones, right wing merciless religions affirm sin, law and punishment. They err in telling their adherents that if they stick to the beliefs and rules of the sect or denomination, they can avoid eternal punishment through their own efforts. In other words, salvation is through works, not grace.

Compared to unbelievers and left wingers, people in right wing religions are more likely to be conscious that imperfection separates them from the deity and more enlightened about a bad place beyond death. That is because these truths are expressed—after a fashion—in their doctrine.

Instead of denying even the concept of sin and repressing one’s sense of being corrupt, these things are very much part of the conversation, with more conscious emphasis on moral behavior as the means to connect with deity and avoid hell. In terms of defense mechanisms, a person relies on pseudo-atonement more than hid-
ers, deluding themselves they are paying the penalty for their sins: *work hard and suffer, then you can stay out of hell.*

The false belief is that one can gain justification through one’s own actions. This involves partially repressing one’s awareness of sinfulness; employing some “second stepper” defenses like rationalization, justification, and reaction formation; and engaging in heavy *pseudo-atonement* in the form of “good” works and suffering.

**New laws**

One feature of the right wingers is that they fabricate laws that humans can, in theory, keep. They have their own definition of perfection using a set of do-able codes, such as public prayer five times a day, church attendance several times a week and the avoidance of alcohol and smoking. If you keep their rules, they say, you can make yourself perfect and earn your way in. These codes carefully omit sins of the mind like envy, pride, lust and coveting that humans have no control over.

Each specific religion has its own recipe for theoretically getting right with the deity, good deeds and suffering in this world to pay the penalty for sin, enabling one to escape eternal separation from God. It is a kind of pay as you play plan. Commit a sin, then do a good deed or get punished to make your record clean again. The idea appeals to the prideful do-it-yourselfer human nature that actually rejects the authority of God. One can only maintain the delusion by avoiding the realization that one is rotten to the core, and that God judges not only actions but also thoughts (e.g., “thou shalt not covet” Exodus 20:17). Deep down a person can have no peace under such a bad schema because there is inner knowledge that the standard is way above their supposedly good deeds. Also, those deeds are in reality tainted by the selfish purpose of trying to stay out of eternal trouble.

Works can temporarily reduce the painful emotions that go with existential guilt. However, that only applies to the conscious *feel-
ing of guilt. The actual guilt does not go away. Deep down you continue to sense that you deserve eternal separation from God.

The only effective remedy is humanly impossible: total purity from conception onwards. Nobody can change what happened in the past. Nor can any human control what goes on now in the heart and mind to any significant extent.

Yet as far as God’s Law is concerned, what goes on inside the mind is as important as all behavior. Love for God and love for neighbor “twenty four seven” is the criterion. Under your skin you know you can never meet that standard, but your reject the voices of your internal committee that say this to you. Outside of grace, lies are essential to your being able to function in this world, and Satan will do all he can to encourage them.

Right wing merciless Christianity
Right wing merciless Christianity says: Yes, you are under the law of death and hell for sin, but you can and must work your way out of it. The belief is that Jesus came to save you from being a sinner, not to pay the penalty for your sin. In other words, either Jesus came to show you how to earn salvation through your own efforts, or He paid for your sins only up to the time of salvation and now it is up to you to never sin again.

Merciless “Christian” creeds do not offer the comfort that humans thirst for. Jesus came to be the perfect sacrifice whose death paid the penalty on our behalf, acting as a covering for all of us who reach out for it, taking our sin away from the eyes of God. Never mind that you remain a sinner for the duration of your time in this world. You are forgiven, safe, loved.

The devil made me do it: is sin demon possession?
One defense used a lot in certain types of right wing Christianity is the attribution of personal flaws to demons. The mechanism is, first, hide from ownership of your sin nature; then, when you have sinful thoughts and behavior, project it all on demons. You are not in denial about your involvement in wrongdoing, you just
refuse to own it. Demons must be possessing or oppressing you. You are not a sinner; the problem comes from ungodly spiritual entities that beset you.

The idea that you should no longer be a sinner after you are saved is a common one in the Christian church and it is very dangerous because it sets up a false expectation. When that anticipation is inevitably unfulfilled, you go into deeper denial and doubt that you are saved. You feel cheated and guilty and become cynical. A new, hard shell can make you resist ever revisiting the truth that saves you.

**Traditional Buddhism**

Many eastern religions assist perfectionism by bringing in the lie of reincarnation. If you think you can keep coming back, then there is plenty of time to make yourself perfect. If there are as many lifetimes as you need, there is no need to worry. *If you don’t become perfect this time around, better luck in your next incarnation.*

As long as you come closer to perfection by the end of one incarnation, you step out on a higher plane in the next one, leaving behind your past baggage. On that higher plane, if your good deeds exceed your bad ones again, your next incarnation will be even better, and on and on until you reach the godhead and the desired state of peaceful non-being or *nirvana* from which imperfection separates you.

Of course, you go backwards if you commit more wrong in the next incarnation, and might even wake up in one of the many hells, but they are temporary, they last only one lifetime. For a Buddhist, the hells are not the problem; the trouble is *this* world and its pain. The goal is to attain a state of non-being, to erase the personal ego, thereby escaping this world.

However, the idea that a person has nothing to fear because they can go on trying indefinitely is from the father of lies. *Thou shalt not surely die,* said Satan in the Garden, denying what God had told our forefathers (Genesis 3:4).
Right thinking is part of the eight-fold path of righteousness that a person must follow to a level of absolute perfection. Human expectations, or desires, cause suffering, so you have to get rid of them, along with all the other imperfections of the self. Then you can escape the samsara, or painful wheel of life, with its endless process of death and reincarnation. If this sounds do-able, the previously-mentioned problem must be remembered: selfish intention. Why does a person care about right thinking? The reason is the unrighteous, selfish desire to reach nirvana.

Also, there is a crazy-making conflict in the fact that one must desire to reach the state of not desiring; and that one must use the ego in the process of trying to get rid of the ego. This is a quandary making one into a dog chasing its own tail.

**Hinduism**

Hinduism is an offshoot of Buddhism, similar except for the addition of a pantheon of good and evil gods. They help or hinder you in your journey towards the perfection that enables you to escape the “wheel of life.” Once you have reached the essential state of total perfection because your karmic debt has been erased, you escape this world and enter bliss.

**Islam**

Union with the deity is to be attained in this monotheistic religion by making your good deeds exceed your bad ones. If you attain this before death, you will be able to cross the razor sharp bridge over the lake of fire instead of falling into it. Thus you enter Paradise, where seventy two doe-eyed virgins wait for every man. But if your good deeds do not add up highly enough, you fail to cross that bridge and drop, instead, into hell for all eternity.

It must be pointed out here that salvation through performing more good deeds than bad deeds is not peculiar to Islam. It is found in many religions, and it might sound easier than attaining absolute perfection. However, human corruption is so deep that
this is just as impossible, especially considering the matter of selfish intention.

**Grace**

There is only one religion, if we apply that term to *the* truth, where God gives mercy. The concept of Christ as the One who paid the penalty on our behalf is of supreme importance. Martin Luther was reading the book of Romans when he discovered this liberating truth at a time when the church was selling salvation for money.³ Paul, the writer of Romans, got his knowledge from a thorough grounding in the Pentateuch, the Law God gave to Moses.

The Law specifies that God will accept the death of a substitute for the human sinner. Before Christ, the acceptable substitute was a clean animal (chewed the cud, parted the hoof, etc.). Now Christ is our substitute. He has taken our punishment and we are saved by claiming the payment He made for us.

**To sum up…**

All the religions outside of God’s Word are merciless. They are bad, perfectionist schemas that stick in the craw and keep humans separated from God. They start out in the right place by acknowledging that imperfection separates humans from the deity, and that there is something very bad about that on the eternal level. Therefore, all religions acknowledge the same problem and have the same basic goal we find in the Bible: to attain the essential state of perfection that enables humans to reconcile with deity and avoid a bad event beyond physical death.

From that true starting point, all the other religions go wrong. They go into perfectionism, which is the doctrine that you, the human, can make yourself sinless through your own efforts.

The left wing ones basically say: *You are not a sinner. Under your skin, you are perfect already. All you need do is believe it. Follow our recipe and you will be able to see this.* The right wing ones say: *You are a sinner but you can cleanse yourself. Follow*
our recipe and make yourself flawless through good deeds, suffering, or self-purification.

In both cases, the task is to be accomplished by you. Either you must believe you are already flawless, or you must make yourself flawless. The first recipe involves telling yourself a terrible lie. The second recipe involves both lying to yourself and struggling to achieve an impossible task.

There is no permanent or genuine peace of mind under these doctrines. They only intensify the existential guilt coming from the sin=death/hell equation. None offers a viable means to reconcile with God. Only the substitutionary blood atonement covenant in the Law does that. It is merciful legalism, or grace. God will impute, or attribute, to humans the perfection of Christ if they claim coverage of his shed blood. The writer of the following verse from the book of Hebrews is basing the following statement on Leviticus 17:11, quoted elsewhere in this book: Without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22).

Notes


3 Luther, Martin (1483-1546). Luther was reading the book of Romans when he learned about salvation by grace. Internet: www.religionfacts.com/christianity/people/luther.htm
Chapter Eleven

Dangerous Spiritual Therapies

Some dangerous mental health treatment approaches combine religion and secularism in the form of spiritual therapy. What is wrong with them? They expose a person to a false religion that keeps them on track for the Lake of Fire—in that sense they are no worse than secular therapies—but they also potentially open a person up to demon possession. Since the 1994 version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth edition (DSM-IV),¹ with its inclusion of “Religious or Spiritual Problem,” there has been more open acceptance of spiritual therapies. This has slightly increased acceptance of Bible-based ones, despite the general animosity towards the gospel in the culture at large, particularly in the mental health profession.

In Chapter Four we looked at Jungian therapy, a major underpinning in the spiritual mental health movement. Our first stopovers in the present chapter are two Jungian offshoots: psychosynthesis, and the more eclectic transpersonal psychotherapy. After that we go to the sinking sand of the popular Twelve Step program of recovery with its generic god-as-we-understand-him, an offshoot of Christianity that has evicted Christ.

Psychosynthesis

Psychosynthesis is a therapeutic form incorporating Jungian and Gnostic² assertions of the divinity of man and the central role of inner knowledge, or gnosis. It seems that theorists who devise models of the human mind like to divide it into threes, and the founder of psychosynthesis, Roberto Assagioli,³ is no exception. He proposed a three-part egg-shaped model which consists; from the center outwards, of 1. a conscious self or ego; 2. three areas of the unconscious: lower, middle and the spiritually aware higher unconscious or superconscious with a “higher self” at its apex; and 3. surrounding all this, a species-aware collective unconscious.
The path to healing begins with knowing the various sub-personalities which may be in conflict. When these are known, they become targets of attempts to control or tame them by ego mechanisms in the conscious self. When this is accomplished, the ego migrates from the middle unconscious to the true or “higher” self, the unifying center around which the fourth step of forming a new, harmonious personality can be formed.

What is this really saying? It is making the claim that humans are divine, that they just need to tinker around with problematic parts of themselves so as to hook up with the divinity inside them. The reality of existential guilt is missed, the damning aspect of sin is not recognized, and the need and free availability of Christ as the payment for sin goes unseen. In place of the truth, it offers the false idea that healing comes from connecting with the god inside and organizing all other elements of the personality around it.

**Transpersonal psychotherapy**

Since the 1970s, psychotic religiosity has been the focus of the non-traditional world of “healers.” A school called “transpersonal” psychology is typified by the Spiritual Emergence Network, ⁴ which views mental illness as a psychic process, a potential spiritual awakening, one, however that does not involve an opening to the Gospel. As interested in spirituality as the members of this group seem to be, and as scholarly in approach as many of them are, they appear to be ignorant of and resistant to the Bible. This is largely because the notion of dependence on the mercy of God does not appeal to the pride-seeking ego.

According to transpersonalists, psychosis is itself a healing process. A person in a psychotic state is regarded as experiencing a spiritual opening to a divine inner self. This is antithetical to the Bible; although psychosis can open up a person to the spirit realm, this can only go in the direction of the demonic without the presence of the shed blood of Christ. A true opening to God must be accompanied by Christ’s blood as the only viable payment for sin. However, there is no immediate fee for access to the demons posing as angels of light. Sin separates humans from God but not
from demons whose aim is to enter and possess a living human. A spiritual opening to a demon has a terrible eternal cost. It keeps a person on track for the Lake of Fire and, as a bi-product, deepens their insanity.

Transpersonal approaches may include past life therapy, the use of psychedelic drugs, out of body experiences, near-death experiences, spiritual crisis, spiritual emergence, witchcraft, shamanic practices, intensive meditations, mysticism, spirit channeling, and on and on. The shamanic practices favored by this school make spirit contact central, fostering worship of the creation but not the Creator. The popular shamanic journeying attempts to create rebirth through visualization of a voyage through the underworld out into the light, encountering human and animal spirit guides along the way. These guides are in fact demonic entities, minions of Satan whose goal is to keep humans lost.

In fact, the therapeutic practices advocated by this group include most of those forbidden by God in Deuteronomy 18. What else is the coiled snake of the so-called “kundalini” energy but a representation of Satan? Asking this “energy” to enter one through one of the supposed “chakra” energy centers located at the base of the spine is to invite demonic penetration.

No genuine healing takes place among these practices. At best, only temporary relief can occur. At worst, there is a worsening of symptoms. A friend of the mine who was deeply involved in eastern mystical practices and sorcery in his youth claims to have been temporarily blinded during a kundalini experience. The retinas of both his eyes were partially burned. He regained his sight later but, unsurprisingly, decided to discontinue his psychic exploration.

Some research suggests that the transpersonal approach may be dangerous to its own practitioners. A study compared psychiatry residents with community-based “alternative” (i.e., transpersonal) healers in terms of manifestation of different kinds of psychopathology. Although the alternative healers displayed no more obvious pathology than the other group, they reported more dissociative experiences, more major symptoms of schizophrenia.
(hearing voices and having hallucinations), more ESP experiences, and more symptoms of Multiple Personality Disorder. However, this is an area that needs more research; we cannot draw any inferences given the lack of randomization in the design of the study.

For a while I thought I could have one foot in each of the camps of Bible-based treatment and transpersonal therapy. I still advertised in New Age papers and every so often I would be asked to treat someone who had formerly practiced spirit channeling for a livelihood. These people had become physically ill, depressed, paranoid, bulimic, anxious and/or psychotic as a result of their spiritual practices. They saw that their illness stemmed from their work, knew they could not continue to earn a living that way but were not willing to give up their journey into the occult. Some presented with the full set of criteria for demonic possession outlined in Chapter Eight. Typically they attributed their problems to “becoming ungrounded,” which is a necessary feature of their spiritual practice, necessarily going “out of body.” Even when they knew this left them wide open to spirit (demonic) possession, they found themselves unable to stop doing it. When they came to me it was for help in guarding themselves while entering such a trance state. Few would accept the necessity of asking for the protection of God through the shed blood of Christ, because this would cut them off from all other spiritual sources. One or two were receptive to the Gospel, but that was rare. In order to be willing to give up occult involvement, one has to look at one’s eternal destiny and see there is no hope outside of Christ. This truth was what led me to end my own involvement with transpersonal therapy.

**Twelve Step Recovery**

The Twelve Step self-help program for recovery from addiction has caught on like wildfire in the United States because it works as well or better than other treatment modes but involves no monetary expense for participants. This self-help group movement began with the formulation of Alcoholics Anonymous (“AA”) in 1935 by
a stockbroker and a physician and gradually spread into a variety of areas of human weakness besides alcoholism, eventually sidestepping Christ in favor of a generic god. In the supposed interest of being non-discriminatory, the most fundamental tenets of the Bible are omitted. It has a worldly focus on habit control and has long forgotten the sense of deserving the Lake of Fire that sends people into addiction in the first place.

Twelve steppers usurp God’s sovereignty as they, themselves, decide who God is: a “power greater than ourselves” or “god as we understand him” (GAWUH). Although twelve-steppers call their god “him” they are in no way limited by this. For many of them god might be an impersonal brick or their Teddy bear.

The big flaw in the AA twelve steps
Let us walk the steps and separate the lies in them from the truth.

The first three of the twelve steps
1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of GAWUH.

The most important of the twelve steps is #3, which cannot be negotiated without Jesus Christ. One can go through steps #1 and #2 without any problem but #3 is barred if a person lacks the “entrance fee.” One cannot turn over one’s will and life to the real God without making the payment for sin, i.e., by offering the shed blood of Christ. One can only approach God in the name of Jesus. People think they can go to any generic deity they choose for any purpose they like, not thinking that there might be demons out there who would be glad to take over a person’s will and life.

The problem is, a person needs the God, not some invented GAWUH. They can recover from addiction without God’s help
purely by relying on group support but the most significant transformation comes from appreciation of the gift of salvation.

A biblical translation of the first three of the twelve steps

1. We saw that the price for sin is death and admitted that we were lost sinners, powerless over our separation from God, doomed to destruction in the Lake of Fire.

2. Came to believe that God rescued us from the Lake of Fire as a gift by paying the penalty for our imperfection with the shed blood of Jesus Christ; He allowed us to claim that payment to free ourselves eternally.

3. Claimed that unearned, undeserved payment; experienced peace of mind arising from the total forgiveness of God, unfettered access to Him, the expectation of eternal life in heaven; and feel increasingly influenced by the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit.

Step #3 is the crux, because only with the entrance fee of Christ’s atoning death can humans come in front of God and turn over their lives to Him. Anyone who says they need no entrance fee is implicitly putting themselves in a place of equality with God. Sin is the barrier for us and it must be dealt with; it so happens that God has done that because He loves us.

The remainder of the twelve steps

The remainder of the twelve steps deal with a process of recognition of sin, confession to God, oneself and another human being; and a process of making amends to all others one has harmed.

Except for a few superficial moves, the other steps cannot be negotiated by anyone who does not comprehend the forgiveness of God. People must remain blind to a full recognition of their own sinfulness and their corrupt nature until sure of being forgiven. Otherwise, such recognition only leads to the painful conclusion one is damned and in a hopeless state. Denial and a host of other psychological defense mechanisms keep the lid on most of the
truth. Of course, in order to recognize the need for Christ, a person has to have the perception of being a sinner to some extent, but to start with all they need to see is that they fall short of perfection. They do not begin to see the full extent of their depravity until they reside safely and securely in the arms of God with no fear of being abandoned.

Though the twelve step approach advocates confession to another person along with confession to God and oneself, this is not taught in God’s word. Confession of sin is between a person and God; the Bible does not tell us to bring another human being into the picture. This makes sense: another human being is not God, and does not have His understanding and ability to forgive. This means a person cannot feel safe fully opening up to another human being. Our only safety is with God, when we are under the cover of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The twelve steps finish with a commitment to seek conscious contact with GAWUH through prayer and meditation, and to spread the word among other addicts. First of all, contact with God is impossible without going through the doorway of Christ. Secondly, the word to be spread is not the free availability of the AA program but the Gospel, the knowledge that God has given us a way to avoid the Lake of Fire.

**Personal experience**

As a therapist, the author has counseled many who are involved in AA. Typically they try to follow the steps in a feeling and conscientious way but reach a state of frustration when they find something is missing: they still feel guilty and hopeless. Also they may have an experience of being close to deity when they are attending an AA meeting. They say they have a powerful sense of being forgiven there, one that the church-goers among them never experienced in any church. The problem is that they find themselves unable to seek God when they are outside. This is because their sense of connection with God at AA is not real, it is a group-inspired counterfeit that is only present in a meeting; they do
not have that ongoing personal relationship with God through Christ.

This state of frustration can be an avenue for a person to open up to the gospel. However, many are led astray by the Twelve Step movement. Either the movement itself becomes GAWUH, in the form of clinging to social support, or the generic deity concept opens the door to eastern spirituality and demon possession.

The Twelve Step movement has rapidly produced “converts” and led many to quit addictions of various types. This may have nothing to do with God; only Christians in the program reach God because they go through Christ, not GAWUH. However, abrupt, dramatic cures for alcoholism and other addictions can and do occur outside of a person’s relationship with God. A sudden insight can provide an awakening, a shift in beliefs and attitudes that lead to a rapid change in behavior.

For example, research has shown that instant cures of cigarette smoking can occur in response to an experience of humiliation.\(^8\) This phenomenon can be explained by a term taken from Gestalt psychology called “perceptual shifting,” a secular type of repentance, not faith in God.\(^9\)

**To sum up**

Outside of a relationship with God through Christ, spiritual psychotherapy is dangerous as it opens up a person to demonic possession. This chapter reviewed three major non-biblical spiritual approaches: psychosynthesis, transpersonal therapy, and the Twelve Step program. All involve attempts to enlist the spirit world to heal a person from addiction or other psychiatric disorders. This only opens the door to demonic possession, because there is no access to God without Christ.

Do they work? Well, research has shown that all forms of psychotherapy can be effective as long as they are conducted by an empathetic therapist; in other words, the characteristics of the therapist are the most important factor.\(^{10}\) So these approaches may be instrumental in short-term recovery as long as the therapist has
the right stuff. However, they can also lead to a worsening of symptoms and outright possession states.

The real danger is their long-term effect: the illusion of spiritual connection that creates a false sense of security. This keeps people separated from the one true God, from the gift of salvation and from the peace of mind possible.

Notes


4 Spiritual Emergence Network, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 250 Oak Grove Avenue, Menlo Part, CA 94025. This organization was founded by Stanislav and Christina Grof.


of Clinical Psychology, 62, 735-750.


Chapter Twelve

Fatal Flaws in Christian Psychotherapies

Are the popular theories and approaches to Christian counseling any better than the secular ones at addressing the \( \text{sin}=\text{death/hell equation} \)? Do they get down to where the real issue lies? Do they relieve the underlying existential guilt that triggers mental illness? Do they produce peace of mind? Unfortunately, these questions have to be answered: For the most part, no.

Legalistic perfectionism and liberalism

The two common pitfalls forming the basis of today’s Christian mental health treatment are legalistic perfectionism and liberalism. These “-isms” miss the narrow path of grace that lies between them. Merciless legalism preaches against the sin that causes existential guilt; it prescribes the avoidance of sin as the recipe for recovery from mental illness. Christian liberalism is a version of humanism in Christian clothes. It says that humans made in God’s image simply need to realize how wonderful they are; then they can gain sanity. Both imply human godhood; they embody the Satanic doctrine of perfection which says that humans can connect with God through the perfection they can attain or find within themselves. They focus only on this lifetime and ignore death and the Lake of Fire.

The truth is, sin is the fabric from which humans are woven, and our only hope lies not in getting rid of sin but that that God forgives sin totally and finally when we claim the shed blood of Christ to pay the deadly penalty. And no matter how wonderful humans are, the recognition of this does not eliminate the nagging but realistic sense of deserving punishment that causes existential guilt.
Humans must rely on grace, the gift of salvation from the Lake of Fire, to recover from the various mental illnesses caused by the accurate sense of deserving to burn there when they die. Everything changes when a person has the assurance of being one hundred percent forgiven by God. The root of mental illness has nothing to do with this world, and everything to do with one’s eternal destiny. One would think that Bible-based approaches would recognize this, but they are blind to it. They contain some truth, but they are contaminated by the leaven that spoils the whole lump.

Jay Adams and stopping the sin

One approach typified by the widely-known Jay Adams\(^1\) attributes mental illness to guilt concerning specific sins, not considering the importance of the state of being damned as a sinner. His recipe for mental health is to admit to one’s sins, claim the forgiveness of God, and quit doing them, thus removing the guilt that causes psychiatric symptoms.

Like many other Christian psychologists, Adams bases his approach on the work of O. Hobart Mowrer,\(^2\) who advocated a confrontational psychotherapeutic approach that blamed patients in a guilt-arousing atmosphere. The theory was that this would force them to admit their flaws and reject the sinful behavior that sent them to Mowrer’s version of hell, which was neurosis or psychosis.

Specific sins versus the state of being a sinner

The problem is that getting rid of sin, period, is a practical impossibility, except in isolated instances. Adams is right in saying that quitting some trespass can reduce guilt and make a person feel saner. For example, to end an adulterous relationship can remove a huge burden from a person.

God gave us a moral code in the Law of Moses, and the more closely we follow it, the less we are stabbed by guilt. However, this does not end the state of being a sinner, damned outside of the
atoning blood of Christ. To give up some sin does not end the state of being a sinner, nor does it change a person’s eternal destiny and the deep existential guilt.

Our friend, the apostle Paul, expresses the impossibility of eliminating sinfulness in humans by talking about the difference between intention and ability: “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; But what I hate, that do I.” (Romans 7:15). The more one admits sin in one’s life, the more one sees there is little personal control over it. God will not remove the sin nature, nor will he necessarily remove any specific sin that a person prays about (although He often does). Three times Paul asked God to remove a “thorn in the flesh” (II Corinthians 12:7), later named by Paul as “concupiscence” (Romans 7:8). Three times God refused to remove the thorn, telling him that His grace was sufficient, i.e., that Paul was forgiven through the shed blood of Christ.

The knowledge of God’s grace is what keeps a person humble and appreciative of Him for the gift of eternal life in heaven. This transformative awareness brings peace of mind, makes one love God, and makes one love one’s neighbors to the point of having a sense of urgency about their being given the information that saves them, i.e., the fact that God has given humans the means of escaping the Lake of Fire, the place that everyone is destined for if they do not claim that gift.

The thorns that stick in a person are a reminder of the truth: that they are forgiven sinners; forgiven, but still sinners while they are in this world. Without that thorn, they might start to think too highly of themselves and forget about the gift of salvation.

Caveats on the matter of quitting specific sins

There are several other caveats regarding the matter of ceasing a sin:

1. Some types of sin have a psychologically defensive function, acting as an escape from existential reality. Lies, addictions, evasions, and many other behaviors can fit that category. A person
not cognizant of the forgiveness of God who quits that type of sin may become more mentally sick, rather than less so.

2. For many, overcoming some sin is accompanied by self-congratulation and a swelling of pride, things that might be a lot more wrong than whatever was eliminated.

3. For anyone who is not saved, cleaning up one’s act has an selfish (i.e., sinful) goal that is often unconscious. The objective is to earn brownie points towards one’s salvation, i.e., trying to pay one’s way out of the Lake of Fire, or to maintain one’s salvation status. This attempt to atone for sin through one’s own efforts is not only futile. Although it does not consciously attempt to commit blasphemy, it does so by striving to stand in place of God, so it is also a sin.

**The sin nature**

The worst aspect of Adams’ “specific sin” approach is that it misses the real issue: man’s sinful nature and the impossibility of eradicating it. The sin nature is born into humans and there it stays during our stint in this world. The Adams approach only adds another layer to the guilt, fear, rage and other dark emotions that are the reaction to a sense of being doomed and incapable of doing anything about it in one’s own strength.

It fosters a wild goose chase to hunt down the specific sin supposedly causing the anxiety, depression or other symptoms. In the process a person feels they must be a worse sinner than other people around them who do not suffer from a mental disorder. And others often tend to act accordingly, blaming a person for staying mentally ill because they must be holding on to some secret sin.

Adams fails to highlight that fact that humans’ only cure for guilt is God’s gift to them of the payment for sin providing access to His total forgiveness and eternal life in heaven. The relief this produces is accompanied by a humble and true desire to please God and mental health.
John White: grace is important but not essential

Christian psychiatrist and writer, John White, looks at two ways in which sin is connected to mental illness. The first is the “specific sin” route, the flaws of which were discussed in connection with Jay Adams.

The second way White connects sin to illness is partly right. He correctly sees the Fall and the entry of sin into the human race as causing the loss of God’s protection, leading to various types of debilitation in man: physical illness, mental illness, decay and death. There is truth to this but White does not go far enough. He does not see mental illness to be triggered by a sense of deserving eternal punishment for falling short of the glory of God. So he does not view the assurance of grace to be absolutely essential to mental health.

The fact is, the Fall led to a predisposition to develop mental illness, possibly through a corruption of the gene pool, but existential guilt interacts with this susceptibility to produce the actual disease. However, with the assurance of salvation by grace, a person’s level of guilt gradually decreases so it no longer causes psychopathology.

M. Scott Peck’s liberalism

M. Scott Peck’s books have been very popular not only among pastors and psychotherapists but also for the general public. However, his notion of spirituality is more closely related to Gnosticism, the pursuit of inner wisdom, rather than the essentialness of approaching God through Christ. Therefore it embraces human solutions rather than godly ones. Peck has an idiosyncratic interpretation of the Bible that has led him to many false conclusions:

Skewed notion of grace

For example, Peck equates original sin with laziness, to be cured by the upward movement of grace. This means he does not
see human depravity, particularly what he calls “evil,” to be inborn, part of a sin nature; he sees it as curable.

In reality, grace does produce spiritual growth, but by removing the barrier between man and God that is caused by human imperfection or sin. Peck does not view this as a barrier; since he regards the story of Adam and Eve as a myth, he sees an open door to God through human perception. So he sees no need for the payment for sin and therefore makes Christ inessential.

He equates God with grace as an inanimate force which, Hindu-fashion, causes the spiritual evolution of man, making each generation more godly than the last. This is very different from the Bible’s pictures of 1. grace as God’s provision of a free pardon to be freely claimed by humans if they are to avoid the Lake of Fire after physical death; and 2. man’s depravity being the same from generation to generation. The Bible shows that our corruption changes only ontogenetically (over the individual life span) not phylogenetically (over the span of human existence); and it alters only as a function of our adherence to God. The more we cling to God, the cleaner we become, and our access to Him is only through Christ.

Unconcern about human eternal destiny

In his focus on human life in this world, Peck minimalizes the importance of death and the sin/death= hell equation.

Knowledge

Says Peck: “When we truly know what we are doing we are participating in the omniscience of God.” However, no human can truly say this because we lack God’s vantage point; his omniscience is vastly beyond our comprehension. A remark like this shows a very limited perspective. Humans cannot even begin to see themselves clearly until demolition of the psychological defense walls starts. This is triggered by the assurance of the total forgiveness of God.
Questioning God

Even more presumptuous is Peck’s advice that humans question God about His motives, because this seems to be in the spirit of heckling rather than wanting to gain an understanding.

The healing of evil

Peck shows his true humanistic colors when he talks about the transformation of evil: “The healing of evil—scientifically or otherwise—can be accomplished only by the love of individuals.” Where is God in this? The fact is, it is God’s love that transforms, not human love.

There is even more confusion when he goes on to say: “When one has purified oneself, by the grace of God, to the point where one can truly love one’s enemies, a beautiful thing happens. It is as if the boundaries of the soul become transparent, and a unique light then shines forth from the individual.” These are lovely words. However, the truth is that one can only love one’s enemies after being inspired to love God for the undeserved gift of salvation which cost Him dearly. One loves ones enemies because first one is loved by God despite having been in a state of enmity towards Him. Jesus says: “To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Luke 7:47). The more we see the depth of the depravity that God forgives us for, the more we appreciate the gift of salvation. We acquire love for God and our neighbor this way only, and this love gives one the desire that others, including enemies, not go to the Lake of Fire.

The purifying that Peck mentions is done not by oneself but by God through the Holy Spirit.

Paul Tournier: False guilt?

Paul Tournier was a Swiss doctor who wrote extensively about the relationship between the spirit, the psyche, guilt, and physical healing. His work has been popular for many years in Christian psychotherapy circles. In his book “Guilt and Grace,” he differentiates between two types of guilt. One is “false guilt” and
the role of other people’s judgments in making us feel inferior according to supposedly false standards. However, although it is true that there is misplaced guilt, it does not arise for the reason Tournier gives. The true reason a sense of inferiority and deservingness of punishment can so easily be triggered in us is that deep down we know the smallest flaw separates us from the perfection of God and destines us for the Lake of Fire after death. In other words, any criticism can prompt the $\text{sin}=\text{death/hell equation}$.

One of Tournier’s examples of false guilt is the woman who is ashamed about a home that is less than perfectly clean. Despite Tournier’s assertion that this arises out of distorted and superficial human standards affecting the woman, it really derives from her own realistic sense of being unclean, i.e., a sinner.

For Tournier, “true guilt” is the “failure to dare to be oneself,” and not existential guilt, which is the awareness of deserving eternal separation from God. By not recognizing the role of existential guilt, Tournier does not see that the very reason humans cannot be themselves is that first they need to know the total, saving forgiveness of God. Humans cannot afford to know and be themselves when a member of their internal committee tells them their very humanness damns them eternally.

Neurosis is not, as Tournier says, a conflict between the true and the false. The task of psychotherapy is therefore not one of weaking out the false guilt. Neurosis is based on the guilt over missing the mark, which is resistant to confession because its consequence is so deadly.

Moreover repentance from sin is not the door to grace, as Tournier says it is. He has it backwards. Grace precedes repentance from sin. First one must turn towards the gift of Christ and be saved by grace. When a person has the assurance of salvation, he can feel free enough to open up to who he really is and begin the process of repentance. This is inspired by love for God, thankfulness for an undeserved rescue from the Lake of Fire, and a sense of safety.
Tournier describes the “happy guilt” of the Christian who “begs” for grace. Well, it is true that the Christian is in a happy position because guilt has lost its eternal sting, but grace is not something anyone must beg for. Grace is the gift of the free pardon, already given to us and open to be claimed. Grace allows us the drop the psychological defenses which have blinded us to our true personality as sinners. Grace is what gives us peace of mind, or mental health.

The Minirth-Meier Clinic

A group of Christian psychiatrists at the Minirth-Meier clinic have written extensively on the relationship between Christianity and psychiatry. They point to the God of the Bible as a provider of mental health but, much like Jay Adams, focus on the way peace of mind comes from Christ’s removal of sin from the soul. They, too, fail to see that mental illness is fundamentally caused by the $\text{sin=death/hell equation}$. In reality, it is God’s forgiveness of sin that leads to peace of mind, and not the departure of sin itself.

Satan uses the false expectation that all sin will be cleansed from our nature to makes us question our salvation and reject God. Many fall away from their fragile grasp on Christian belief when they find the sin nature alive and kicking after they are “saved.”

In Minirth and Meier’s book on “co-dependency,” a term for addiction to another person, they point it the need to substitute this for an attachment to Christ. However, they do not see this as the only cure. They state: “The most effective means for overcoming codependent relationships is to establish a relationship with Christ himself. This is done merely by realizing that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God;” that there is a penalty for sin, yet sin’s penalty has been paid through Christ’s death in our peace. Because of this, we can receive forgiveness, meaning in life, enablement to overcome sin and even addictions, and a home in heaven forever merely by trusting Christ.”

All this is true, but Minirth and company miss the core cause of codependency, which is existential guilt. Humans innately know
they are doomed as sinners, and codependency is both an attempt to pay for sin by the “good deed” of playing a caretaker role and also it is a desperate clinging to another human in place of God. It offers temporary hiding from the death/hell sentence through psychological defenses. The defenses include displacement, whereby attention is focused on another person’s problems instead of one’s own; and pseudo-atonement, or striving to atone for one’s own sin, in this case through suffering, martyrdom, and rescuing (see Chapter Six on pseudo-atonement).

However, the way out of codependency is not just through a relationship with God through Christ as a helper in this world, but by something of far greater importance. That is to claim Him as the sin-bearer whose death provides the only acceptable form of atonement to God. By clinging to Christ as the sin-bearer, a person’s need for pseudo-atonement dissipates as they relax in the knowledge of having escaped the Lake of Fire and look forward to eternal life in heaven. The pathological need to cling to another human also disappears.

**The Inner Healing movement**

Inner Healing focuses on the healing of past hurts, and it has been promoted through the writings of the Linn Brothers and Agnes Sanford. It uses guided visualization, mentally reliving painful experiences and putting them in a healing context by picturing an indwelling Jesus who comforts, consoles and heals the pain of an abused childhood.

Some Christian writers have accused this movement of occultism, and it does seem to verge on it in its visual manipulation of the Son of God. God gave humans the ability to visualize, but the question is how to use this tool. Jesus is not the genie of the lamp who will do whatever a person wants, and to say that one has a god inside is blasphemous.
Blaming the past instead of the sin=death/hell equation

The bigger problem with this approach is that it blames a person’s history for their present psychopathology, much like many of the other mental health treatments of today. Traumatic past events can indeed trigger pathology, as we see most clearly in the case of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. However, history is only part of the problem. What really energizes PTSD is the underlying sin=death/hell equation. A terrifying real-world event blasts away a person’s defenses against the sin=death/hell equation and puts them in a permanent state of anxious arousal due to the surfacing of existential guilt, the sense of being destined for the Lake of Fire. This explains why the symptoms of PTSD can persist for a lifetime; a person has been opened up to their inability to avoid hell.

Secular treatments for PTSD involve the creation of new defense mechanisms, a primary one being dissociation, using hypnotic techniques like EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing). EMDR separates a person’s experience of past trauma from a fear response by having them re-experience elements of the fearful event along with an unrelated repetitive visual stimulus, creating dissociation of the memory from fear. This has some similarity to Inner Healing in terms of attempting to build a non-pathological response to a painful memory, except there is no attempt to visualize an inner Jesus. In both cases, there can be some reduction in symptoms but no genuine resolution of the deep existential conflict.

There is nothing inherently occultic about using visualization for healing purposes. The Bible is full of metaphors, stories both fact and fiction, and word pictures that draw on humans’ God-given ability to visualize. God puts this material in the Bible to help us know that Jesus is real, that He has always been available to humans, and that salvation is by grace, a gift from God. A person who dwells on such images will gradually gain the assurance of being saved out of the love of God towards humans, accepted in spite of being far from perfection.
Instead of looking at the past and getting stuck like Lot’s wife, our focus should be on the future. Our friend Paul agrees with this when he talks of “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth into those things which are before” (Philippians 3:13). Heaven lies in front of believers in Christ. Putting one’s thoughts on the possibilities available in heaven takes the sting out of death and gives shape to our hopes. This will cure depression and a host of other psychiatric maladies.

To sum up…

What may go by the name of Christian psychotherapy misses the true source of mental illness, which is existential guilt, the sense of deserving eternal damnation.

The real cure: To feel free to open up, to tell the truth, to accept oneself and be at peace—these are goals of all types of psychotherapy. However, they can only be met through claiming the shed blood of Christ as the God-given payment for sin. When people know they are accepted totally by God despite being sinners, that they are on the “salvation ship,” that they will not be thrown off it because they continue to be flawed, and that they have the status of absolved sinners, this changes things. On that safe and sturdy ship they can appropriate his forgiveness on an ongoing basis and feel safe enough to tell the truth about themselves. It is not a matter of self-acceptance as much as it is seeing oneself forgiven and understanding that one has avoided the Lake of Fire.

This knowledge is the only source of inner transformation in a person. The assurance of God’s forgiveness and the prospect of eternal life in heaven make a person thankful and willing to do what pleases him. There will be voluntary behavioral and attitudinal change instead of performance under duress, and there will be true mental health. However, it will not happen overnight, and, thanks to the sin nature, it will never, ever come close to the total purity of God.
Notes


7 Peck, (1978) op. cit., p. 274.


11 Minirth, op. cit., p. 70.


Chapter Thirteen

Research on Religion and Well-Being: Where’s Grace?

This book has provided compelling evidence of the power of grace. That is, biblical, theoretical, and anecdotal evidence show that existential guilt, the sense of deserving eternal separation from God, is the root of mental illness. It follows that peace of mind, or mental health, derives only from the assurance of being saved by grace, i.e., salvation from the Lake of Fire as a gift from God.

But is there scientific evidence for this? This chapter will look at findings from researchers on the psychology of religion to see if they have found any evidence for the healing role of grace. Beyond the personal testimony and anecdotal evidence already discussed in this book, can we find evidence for this in social science research?

Before looking at the research on grace we will dip into research on religion and well-being, and on the mental health benefits of forgiveness. First some caveats:

Caveats

Age of the research: Much of the research cited is relatively old, but it helps set the scene for studies on grace.

The subjects: Much of the research in this area is not conducted on people who believe the Bible, and therefore any benefit it seems to display for religion cannot be due to the gift of salvation. Sadly, as this nation moves increasingly in a “post-Christian” direction, there are fewer real believers to work with.

The measures: Also, “religion,” “religious involvement” and other commonly-used measures may have little to do with anyone’s perception of grace.
Not experimental: The research does not establish cause and effect because it is correlational, i.e., it is not designed in an experimental form. When two things are related, it is impossible to know if one causes the other, or whether both are due to some other factor/s not being studied. However, that is not unusual in social science research and it does not mean its results are not useful.

Anti-religion bias

The idea that religion benefits mental health contradicts the view of the anti-religion secular mental health establishment that has existed since Freud defined religion as “regression in the service of the ego.”

The role of sin: Cognitive and humanistic theorists maintain that religion, particularly the Christian variety, is harmful for mental health because of its focus on sin, which they see only in the light of guilt tripping.

They are both right and wrong about that. They are right that if the focus is on the elimination of sin, this only increases the guilt underlying mental illness. They are wrong in failing to see the role of the sin nature, particularly in that sin has a deadly eternal consequence. So they are blind to the deepest reason for human hopelessness, which concerns being stuck with the sin nature and with the dread punishment for sin. Therefore they fail to see how this produces existential guilt, the terrifying sense of deserving damnation for falling short of perfection. And, of course, they are far from recognizing the essentialness and free availability of the atoning blood of Christ, humans’ only hope.

Psychotic religiosity: The presence of psychotic religiosity is another reason why the mental health community has assumed that all religious involvement is bad. Apparently, the prevalence of the psychotic’s spiritual preoccupation never led scientists to perceive its universal, innate source. However, as Chapter Eights shows, psychotic religiosity is a pointer to a real spiritual dilemma shared by the entire human race.
In fact, the results of a large-scale 1983 study of patients in a psychiatric clinic contradict the “religion is bad for mental health” idea. Rather than being more likely to be religious, the clinic patients were less likely to than the general population to report a religious affiliation. Similar findings were produced in earlier studies.

**Background to research on the psychology of religion**

The psychology of religion is not a new area of investigation. Before 1900 two men were performing introspective studies on the religious experience. There were William James in the United States and Wilhelm Wundt in Germany, but after that came a lull in scientific investigation of this topic until the 1970s. However, several textbooks on the psychology of religion have been published since then.

**Measurement of religiosity**

Early scientific studies often treated religion as if it were monolithic. When research on the Christian population did begin to break down religion into different factors, it looked at denomination, single aspects of religious behavior such as frequency of church attendance; and the degree of religiousness people say they have. It produced some interesting findings despite the fact that none of it focused on grace.

**Denomination and psychiatric patients**

Denominational differences have been found associated with psychiatric diagnosis in mental health patients. In the 1983 study mentioned above, a breakdown was made of people in various denominations according to their diagnosis. While the “no religious preference” and “unknown denomination” patients were high on substance abuse and psychosis, those highest in psychosis belonged to cults, both “Christian” and non-Christian: Christian Scientists, Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons and Adventists (not technically a cult but focuses much on behavioral health and end times prophesy rather than salvation by grace).
The less severe neurotic and adjustment disorders belonged to the more orthodox groups: Non-Mainline Protestants had more depression and adjustment disorders of childhood; Catholics had more Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and hysterical neurosis; whereas Mainline Protestants had more marital maladjustment and hysterical personality.

However, the overall finding was that those involved in a denomination of any kind were less likely to become mentally ill than those claiming no religious affiliation, but one cannot conclude anything about this. The finding may be due to social support or other factors rather than the reliance on God that can only happen after a person is saved by grace. As to the differences in disorder associated with specific types of denomination, the problem is that we have no idea whether they promote mental illnesses, or whether people who are already sick are attracted to them.

Assuming, however, that denomination does have an effect, it may be that “salvation-by-works” in Catholicism and Mainline Protestantism leads to the higher levels of distorted hysteria and obsessiveness that were found. The liberalness of much Non-Mainline Protestantism focuses less overtly on works, possibly explaining why existential guilt surfaces in the form of depression rather than “busyness.”

The finding for psychotics is consistent with research mentioned in Chapter Eight. They tend to avoid organized religion, but when they do engage it is in a cult.

Church attendance
Research on single behavioral measures of religiosity has produced more consistent associations with mental health than denomination or self-reports of religiosity. Church attendance has been the most fruitful single measure. Much evidence shows that church attendees are more physically healthy and live longer. They are also less likely to commit suicide, be delinquents, or report marital dissatisfaction. Church attendance has been associated with general well-being, duration of marriage,
satisfaction with family life, and commitment to the institution of marriage.\textsuperscript{15} On the other hand, church attendees consistently report less psychological distress;\textsuperscript{16} and schizophrenic attendees have lower rates of re-hospitalization.\textsuperscript{17} However, how much of these findings is due simply to social support is unknown.

**Self-reports of religiosity**

A non-behavioral measure of religiosity used in the research is to ask people how religious they are. Findings show that religiosity has a profoundly positive association with the management of life crises and stress.\textsuperscript{18} Religious persons display lower blood pressure,\textsuperscript{19} better adjustment and happiness,\textsuperscript{20} lower morbidity when recovering from coronary bypass surgery,\textsuperscript{21} and an improved recovery rate from burns.\textsuperscript{22} In a longitudinal study of 1,650 men and women in their early fifties, religiosity was positively related to the overall well-being of both sexes and the job satisfaction of men.\textsuperscript{23}

With regards to family life, religious students view their families as more happy, warm, and accepting than non-religious students.\textsuperscript{24} Religiosity in married couples is associated with better marital adjustment, happiness, and satisfaction.\textsuperscript{25} In fact, this measure has been found to be the most important factor in both husbands’ and wives’ marital satisfaction.\textsuperscript{26}

Contradicting the popular myth that religion is sexually repressive is the fact that very religious women report greater happiness and satisfaction with marital sex as compared with moderately religious and non-religious women. The very religious group claim more frequent orgasms and more satisfaction with the frequency of their sexual activity.\textsuperscript{27}

Religiosity is also generally a negative predictor of serious self-destructive behavior. Over and over in the research, drug abuse and suicide have displayed negative relations with measures of religiosity.\textsuperscript{28,29,30,31}
All this sounds good, but unless the self-reports include a person’s sense of God’s grace, we do not know what it really means.

**Research on religion and well-being**

Jesus promised well-being for those who look to God: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). “His righteousness” is imputed to us when we claim coverage of the shed blood of Christ, and “these things” include mental and physical health.

Research on the relationship between religion and well-being has generally shown a positive relationship between the two. One 2001 compilation shows that religious involvement is associated with well-being, happiness, life skills, hope, optimism, a lower rate of depression, a higher rate of recovery from it; and a lower rate of suicide, anxiety, psychosis, alcoholism, drug abuse and delinquency; and a higher rate of marital stability.32

So far so good, but we are left unclear about exactly which aspects of religious involvement are associated with benefits, i.e., we are in the dark about the role of grace, certainly in the case of cult members who are included in the well-being research. The fact that cult members report lower levels of psychological distress both immediately after conversion33 and four years later34 makes one think that in this case social support is the beneficial factor.

**Religion: good or bad?**

Despite the positive associations between religiosity and well-being we have seen, the overall trend of this research has not been so clear. Although religiosity measures have shown consistent positive relations with physical health,35 some conflicting findings have been reported in its relations with mental health.

One overview of twenty four such studies found a mixture, but religion did have more positive than negative associations with mental health.36 Another even more comprehensive analysis of one hundred and sixteen studies produced a similar finding.37 This
Research on Religion and Well-Being

seems to generally disprove that religion is harmful to mental health.

**Intrinsic versus extrinsic religiosity**

For several years the scientific community has recognized that some forms of religion may be beneficial and others harmful, so they tried to come up with a measure for a good kind of religiosity. One well-researched distinction lies between the supposedly “good” active or intrinsic religiosity (i.e., living one’s faith, religion as an end in itself) and the “bad” passive or extrinsic kind (i.e., attending church but participating without conviction, religion as a means to other ends). Gordon Allport’s self-report measure is generally used to define this dimension, and it is not confined to any particular religion so it could as easily refer to Buddhism as Christianity, and it clearly does not allude to salvation by grace.\(^{38}\)

Clearly the dimension has some validity: intrinsic religiosity has been found associated with decreased symptoms of mental illness whereas the extrinsic kind has been found associated with increased symptoms of mental illness\(^ {39}\) and lower levels of psychosocial competence.\(^ {40}\) In a study that controlled for the effects of church attendance and background characteristics, the intrinsic qualities of religiosity defined by reportedly feeling close to God or some generic spiritual force, and praying, were associated with increased happiness and satisfaction.\(^ {41}\)

Among students, intrinsic religiosity is associated with increased personal responsibility, an internal locus of control (i.e., perceiving oneself rather than external agents in control of one’s destiny), intrinsic motivation traits, and grade point average. Extrinsic religiosity displays associations with dogmatism and authoritarianism; and negative associations with personal responsibility, internal locus of control, intrinsic motivation, and grade point average.\(^ {42}\)

**Intrinsic cult members?**

So how is it that cult members sometimes display higher scores on intrinsic traits, when we would expect them to be higher on
extrinsic traits? For example, Mormon students, particularly returning missionaries, displayed higher intrinsic religiosity scores than students in non-Mormon campuses. Yet Mormonism is a highly works-oriented religion promising godhood in eternity for those who stick to the rules; whereas those who break the rules not only lose out on godhood and salvation but also get ostracized in the Mormon community. For those living in Salt Lake City, the Mormon headquarters where the study was done, this can mean loss of a job, family and home. So Mormonism fosters religious practice as a means to earn one’s way to heaven, like any religion that does not offer salvation by grace. Those deeply committed to the religion appear intrinsic because they have merely internalized its extrinsic demands to a great degree.

In line with this, belief in God and the practice of religion have been found to be unrelated for Mormon males. Powerful social sanctions lead them to practice Mormonism whether they believe in it or not. In the study just cited, intrinsic religiosity was associated with sociability, well-being, responsibility, self-control, tolerance, making a good impression, and achievement by conformance. This looks like a “pleaser” façade, a false front consistent with the strong relationship between intrinsic religiosity and social desirability in the group. Outside of grace, what might appear intrinsic is really a high level of reliance on oneself.

The U-shaped relationship between faith and positive functioning

The reality is that strong faith in anything, regardless of its proven reliability, can be empowering up to a point, whereas lukewarmness is a paralyzing form of apathy or even willful ignorance. Based on the first chapter of the book of Revelation, lukewarmness is more abhorrent to God than strong sentiments against Him.

For example lower levels of racial prejudice have been found in both those strongly pro-Christian and strongly anti-Christian, i.e., Salvation army cadets and members of the Young Humanist Association; and in both very frequent church attenders and non-
attenders. Individuals in these two extremes have also been found less likely to administer severe electric shocks in experimental studies of compliance, more likely to have had mystical and religious experiences; and more likely to report increased overall happiness and fewer pathological mental and physical health symptoms.

Religiosity and death
Research shows that people become more interested in religiosity as they age, and that religious attitudes and behavior are positively related with adjustment to aging. However, we do not know why this is. Is it a form of whistling in the dark, or is it a true sense of eternal security?

Intrinsics and death
Some research on intrinsicness sheds some light on this question. Unsurprisingly, research has found intrinsic religiosity in a Bible-based population to be linked with positive attitudes towards death. This does not seem to stem from religiosity per se, but from specific doctrine, because when Christian intrinsics are compared with Buddhist ones, only the Christians see death in a good light.

True intrinsicness
When a religious belief system involves merciless legalism, or attempts to gain salvation by human efforts, religiosity cannot be an end in itself. No matter how inspired a person seems to be by love for God, the underlying motivation is one of means, not end. A person is relying on his own actions to escape the Lake of Fire; meaning the goal is an extrinsic one.

True intrinsicness can happen only after humans know their selfish but desperate need for salvation has been met by a gift from the Father. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob gives humans everlasting “bail money” in the shed blood of Christ, the only acceptable coin, as proclaimed in the Law. This “money” pays the
fine for the sins of all humans, enabling them to escape the Lake of Fire, and it is free.

Truly intrinsic religion, real heart-felt love and gratitude to God coupled with a desire to please Him, depends on the sense of being reprieved from the Lake of Fire by Him while being totally unworthy. This is the power of grace.

**Salvation by grace versus “grace plus”**

Misunderstanding exists in the Christian community about the real meaning of grace. Frank Minirth, a psychiatrist, is a member of the Christian mental health profession who writes about the difference between salvation by grace alone compared with “grace plus,” a fear-inducing works-oriented notion of salvation implying Christ’s work of atonement is not sufficient to save a person. The “grace plus” idea is common in today’s church. Minirth describes a look of peace on a woman’s face as he helps her to see that all her sins are paid for by Christ, i.e., salvation is by grace alone.

**Research on the benefits of forgiveness**

In recent years the role of forgiveness has been investigated in many different contexts. Forgiveness has generally been associated with physical and mental health benefits, but what is researched is rarely a sense of the forgiveness of God, only gained through Christ. Often the concept of “self-forgiveness” or forgiveness of others is the focus.

Interestingly, where the research does look at the role of religion, the finding is that it may encourage a person to value forgiveness, but it does not necessarily enable them to forgive. This makes sense; although religions promote forgiveness as a value, only the perception of being totally and undeservedly forgiven by God motivates a person to forgive others: *who am I not to forgive when, sinner that I am, I am forgiven.* In other words, only grace inspires a person to forgive. Merciless legalism, including the “grace plus” Christianity of today, does not allow a person to do that.
Research on prayer

The considerable amount of research done on prayer has produced inconclusive results, probably because it has been conducted in an unscientific way. Subjects were biased because 1. they prayed for themselves; or 2. they were not randomized to an experimental and control group, so they knew they were being prayed for, and/or 3. they were influenced by foreknowledge of the type of person or group praying for them.

A study of prayer and physical recovery: The one known double blind study that avoided this type of contamination produced an interesting result. In a 1988 University of California experiment, the “prayed-for” group in a large sample of coronary care patients made significantly better progress in recovery than the “non-prayed-for” group. The double blind technique in the experiment involved hospital staff and participants who knew they were in a study involving prayer, but did not know who was assigned to the experimental or control group. Each member of the “prayed-for” group was assigned to seven intercessors, “born-again” Christians with an active prayer life, who prayed for them daily for several months. The “non-prayed-for” group was not given any special attention, and may have benefitted from the intercessory prayers of family members or friends outside the study. In fact, given the nature of the study, and the fact that patients could choose not to participate, one might expect intercessory prayer would increase for all subjects, and diminish outcome differences between the two groups. However, the difference in favor of the “prayed-for” group on an overall measure of progress in recovery was highly significant.57

Research on grace

So far the one exception to the “grace-blindness” of the scientific community has been a research program by a group at the University of Tennessee done in the late 1980s. In a series of studies, this group investigated the roles of both guilt and grace in relation to mental health and general adjustment among Christian students of various denominations. One aim was to show that the
awareness of guilt and sin, so widely attacked by the secular mental health profession, is only dysfunctional if it is not accompanied by the assurance of grace.

Using self-report measures of guilt and grace (which also included items on sin), the first study in Part One of a five part series found that the greater a person’s sense of grace the more healthy was their functioning. The study also showed that guilt was not uniformly associated with maladjustment. Where it displayed negative associations with healthy functioning, these were largely erased by partially out grace. In other words, a sense of grace cancelled out the negative effects of guilt.

Part Two of the series of studies found that a negative relationship between intrinsicness and depression was actually attributable to grace. In other words, grace is a more relevant measure of true relationship with God than intrinsicness. This interpretation is also supported by the fact that with grace statistically partialled out (i.e., its influence removed), intrinsicness was associated with an internal locus of control and self-efficacy, which are forms of faith in oneself rather than in God. Grace is the important factor.

In Parts Three to Five of the series grace was found to be associated with less depression; more emotional empathy; less distress and depression; and a belief in authority and egalitarianism; less narcissistic exploitiveness; less Machiavellianism; and less excessive individualism.

Comment on the research on grace

There is a sparse amount of research on grace, but what little exists certainly points to its benefits. It also suggests that religion is damaging to mental health if it raises the specter of sin without the accompanying assurance of God’s total forgiveness as a gift.

Secular psychology is correct about the harm done by harping on the elimination of sin. However, nobody is healed by ignoring the terrible consequence of sin, and the Bible provides the only viable remedy. The solution is not the elimination of sin but the
forgiveness of God which led him to give humans a way to pay the penalty without going to the Lake of Fire.

**The case of Cynthia**

Grace is largely misunderstood in the church. A potent example of this occurred to Cynthia, a woman who had manic-depressive disorder. She listened to a mercilessly legalistic Christian broadcaster preaching against sin on the radio one evening and she panicked. He had triggered her fear that she faced eternal damnation due to various shortcomings of her own that she was only too aware of. She began to scream and throw things out of an upstairs window as a result of a sudden manic episode and this led to a night in the psychiatric emergency ward. It must be added that Cynthia did not have her feet planted on the foundation of grace in the first place. She belonged to a “grace plus” church where personal virtue was also essential for salvation. However, as Cynthia heard more and more about salvation by grace alone she gained mental stability and there were no more psychiatric hospitalizations.

**To sum up…**

This chapter took a trip through research on religion in general, finally coming to benefits associated with a person’s perception of grace. Because grace alone brings peaceful closure to the sin=death/hell equation, this wonderful God-given solution has to be ultimately the only important factor among all the apparent benefits of religion. A small amount of large scale research on grace was carried out nearly twenty five years ago, with no known studies since that time. The research does suggest the superiority of a sense of grace over other variables but clearly much more needs to be done.

**Notes**


Chapter Fourteen

The Bible and mental illness

Hell and grace: what do they specifically have to do with the many different types of mental illness? That is the subject of this chapter. Chapters Seven and Eight highlighted the fact that schizophrenia is a showcase for the spiritual dilemma that affects all of us. The present chapter focuses on how that dilemma relates to other categories of mental disorder, many of them relatively common. We will see how each, in its own way, derives from existential guilt, the awareness of deserving eternity in the Lake of Fire.

Hell, grace and the DSM

If humans fail to take the God-given rescue from the fire, they cannot be sane. They can be no more than defense-bound emotional cripples at risk of developing one or more of the mental illnesses defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the "bible" of the mental health profession.¹

If everyone’s faith were perfect, would anyone have mental illness? This is a moot point because nobody has perfect faith. Since genes play a role in predisposing a person to become sick, they might still have some symptoms despite strong faith, particularly if they developed the disorder before they grasped the gift of salvation. Since human faith is smaller than a mustard seed, all of us display some degree of psychopathology. The boundaries between normality and mental illness are quantitative rather than qualitative.² Each of us can recognize some of our own tendencies in the afflictions seen during a jog through the DSM.
The DSM gives names and describes symptom patterns very well, it but does discuss the origin of the disorders; it gives at best an illusion of explanation. “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (I Corinthians 1:20).

Why so many different disorders?
Why are there so many different mental disorders if there is only one root problem? The reason is that different types of genetic and experiential environment affect the psychological defenses employed, the severity of the disorder, and the intensity of affect (the emotional climate). There are complex interactions among these factors, but each disorder grows out of the same awful crisis.

Guilt, shame, fear and rage
At the bottom of every mental disorder is existential guilt: the awareness of deserving eternal separation from God. This creates potentially overwhelming emotional pain in the form of fear, shame, and rage.

The Genesis account describes fear and hiding, an outgrowth of the guilt felt by Adam and Eve after their disobedience towards God (Genesis 3:10). Guilt is a sense or a state of deserving punishment, but humans are afflicted with a special kind of guilt: the sense and the reality of deserving eternal separation from God, destined for the Lake of Fire after leaving this world.

This chapter will show that guilt, fear and rage vary in how prominently they feature in various mental illnesses. In the depressive disorders, shame and guilt are out on the surface ("I'm to blame"). In the anxiety disorders, fear may be specific or diffuse, unidentified, and semi-conscious: the so-called "free floating anxiety." Rage predominates in disorders involving some type of defiant or explosive acting out, found notably in Mania, the personality disorders ("You're to blame"), and disorders of impulse control.

The good and bad sides of guilt, fear and rage: The good side of the painful emotions is that they can lead a person to seek God. Solomon, just like his father David, describes "the fear of the
Lord" as the "beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7). Suffering is legitimate if it takes us to God and the one means of rescue from our terrible sentence. The bad side of the guilt and fear is mental illness—but that is only temporary, curable by the gospel. Similarly, the "heathen’s" rage (Psalm 2:1) is due to a sense of powerlessness about his eternal destiny. It can open him up to the “good news” that out of His love for humans, God has given a way to avoid it

**The spectrum of mental disorders**

The DSM is a classification system in a constant state of revision so as to better achieve its thorny task. Its breakdown of mental disorders is based on a behavioral analysis that ignores the underlying spiritual dynamics yet its map is a useful way to organize them.

This chapter describes many psychopathological offshoots of our crisis, each one with a different message and manner that is only on the surface. In each case, we point out how the knowledge of saving grace specifically applies to the healing process. This Bible-based interpretation of the DSM is not fully comprehensive, but it does cover the major classes of mental disorders, their subgroups, and many of the individual disorders. These are the major classes:

A) psychotic disorders;
B) neurotic disorders;
C) personality disorders;
D) substance abuse disorders;
E) a catch-all group of disorders of impulse control;
F) the psychosexual disorders;
G) factitious disorders;
H) psychological factors affecting physical condition;
I) central nervous system impairment; and
J) disorders of a more transitory nature precipitated by external stressors.
Differences between psychotic, neurotic and personality disorders

The major difference between psychotic disorders (the focus of Chapters Seven and Eight) and neurotic ones concerns the degree of contact with “this world” reality (to be contrasted with existential reality), and the relative intactness of defense armor.

Although a psychotic person may have a clearer sense existential reality than "normal" people, he has no insight into the gross distortions in his thinking, perception, or behavior. In other words, he has lost touch with “this world” reality.

The neurotic does have insight into his generally less distorted thought and behavior; at least he often knows when he is acting inappropriately even if he feels unable to control this behavior. He has a clearer sense of “this world” reality than the psychotic but less sense of existential reality. Delusions and hallucinations are rarely part of his experience.

Psychotic and neurotic disorders can occupy relatively short time periods and present with broad, acute dysfunctionality. On the other hand, most personality disorders are chronic patterns of self-blindness typically associated with dysfunctional social relationships. According to the DSM, such patterns must last at least two years in order to be classed in the personality disorder category.

A) Psychotic disorders

The psychotic category in the DSM includes:

1) the schizophrenia family;
2) the affective or "mood" disorders involving depression in some way; and
3) the disorders organized around specific prominent delusions.

1) Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a family of disorders described in Chapters Seven and Eight.
2) Affective disorders

Affective disorders are primarily disturbances of mood, appearing as valleys, peaks or a combination of the two. They may have a cyclical quality, the depressive lows alternating with upswings.

At the psychotic, sicker end of the continuum are two disorders. One is Major (or Clinical) Depression with or without psychotic features. The psychotic features consist of persecutory and other mood-congruent delusions or hallucinations. Most of these were discussed in Chapter Seven. The other is some form of Bipolar Disorder, with alternating highs and lows.

In the middle of the continuum are the neurotic depressions in which psychotic features are absent, and the Cyclothymic disorder, a milder version of the Bipolar disorder. These disorders are less debilitating but they still tend to be pervasive and lasting.

At the other end of the continuum are the more temporary situational (or adjustment disorder) depressions.

Depression

God cursed Adam with "sorrow" (Genesis 3:17), but promised Eve a heavier dose: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow" (Genesis 3:16). This was no idle threat. Among males, the lifetime prevalence of all the recorded types of depression throughout the world is between fifteen and twenty one percent; for women it is almost double, from twenty five to thirty nine percent.³ Nobody knows what the unrecorded figures for this very common disorder look like.

Depression is like being inside a big black cloud full of hopelessness, despair, and darkness. In Major Depression, despondent thoughts go along with "vegetative" symptoms: low energy; too much or too little sleep; and either overeating or loss of appetite. Even movement and thinking can be slowed, a condition called "psychomotor retardation." Psychotic features are common but not always present.

Due to the darkness of thought patterns and the vegetative symptoms of Major Depression, a person loses the ability to function except on a basic level. The will to take action is missing.
Getting up out of bed, bathing and eating become formidable chores. The person feels constantly tired and disoriented. For an unsaved person who has nothing to look forward to or hope for, why make the effort to do anything?

Guilt is more apparent than fear or rage in depressive disorders. Depressed people report more dysfunctional guilt than "normals." In fact, they are often highly verbal about their extreme worthlessness and deservingness of death. Depressives are only too aware that they miss the mark of perfection and they express this frequently. They are generally oblivious to the fact that their dark thoughts about themselves consume them—a malevolent, self-injurious form of narcissism.

The secular world of psychotherapy tends to regard this negative thinking as distorted, a departure from reality. But according to the Bible, the preoccupation with being unworthy, guilty, and deserving of punishment is anything but unrealistic. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

There is, however, a delusional element in the self-attribution of blame that depressed people often heap upon themselves. Gilt makes them falsely believe they are the cause of the ills of everyone and everything around them. There is a sliver of truth to this because as they slip deeper into depression, their gloom certainly is likely to be a stressor for others. However, their sense of being toxic is way beyond reality. A friend loses a job because of a lay-off, yet depressives suspect they, themselves, are the cause. Any life they touch must be tainted by them.

**Suicide:** The depressive's belief that he is a blight on himself and others unavoidably leads to thoughts of suicide. It looks like an escape, an act of good riddance for the world. If he is having "command" auditory hallucinations, the voices, which have every appearance of the demonic, will try to drive him to kill himself.

Even those who believe in God can find themselves weakening to the idea of committing suicide. At those times their faith is not strong enough to reassure them that God would get them out of the hole they find themselves in. They may not take that step of committing suicide because it feels wrong: would this act make them lose their salvation? Probably not; God understands
intractable pain, but carrying the thought of suicide as an ace in one’s pocket is a bad idea because suicidal preoccupation keeps our eyes off God. It can be reassuring to think that if things get too tough, one can go for the exit, but it can also be paralyzing. The ace in the hole is really a joker. Only confronting the inadequacy of suicide as an escape route brings us to seek the true one. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6); claiming His atoning death means knowing one is forgiven, which is the opposite of guilt. I have found that those assured of salvation through grace may become depressed, but do not go into clinical depression.

**Genetics and brain chemistry**

Research shows that depression and other affective disorders have a genetic basis. However, twin studies indicate that, as in the case of schizophrenia, genes alone are not sufficient to produce the disease. The concordance rate of affective disorders among identical twins is still less than fifty percent, and the effects of shared environment, even during prenatal development, cannot be ruled out. Clearly, other factors must play a significant role.

Affective disorders are associated with physiological and chemical changes in the brain. Research shows that the "good mood" neurotransmitters, serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrin, are rapidly depleted in depressed individuals. This is indicated by the tendency towards mood elevation when a person takes drugs blocking the re-uptake (or depletion) of these brain chemicals. It has led to a reliance on medication for the treatment of depression, a remedy which addresses only the symptoms. The underlying guilt remains.

Although the psychiatric profession tends to regard neurotransmitter imbalance as the cause of depression, this cannot be so. If the problem were only physical, it would make no sense that certain types of psychotherapy reduce the symptoms of depression as well as drugs in the short-term, and better in the slightly longer term. There are two recognized modes of depression. The "exogenous" type, which is usually less severe, appears to have an environmental trigger, whereas "endogeneous"
depression seems to have an internal trigger. In reality both stem from a sense of powerlessness over existential reality; the only difference is that the endogeneous type probably has a more direct connection to the unconscious.

Given the widespread rejection or misinterpretation of the Bible in the United States, it is hardly surprising that depression is increasingly common in its population. At bottom, it is a disorder of the spirit, a universal genetic disorder inherited from our ancestors in the Garden of Eden. Satan's role as accuser takes over: "You're no good. You're unforgiveable." The experience of unworthiness is so overpowering that it can feel impossible for depressed people to believe in God's love. The truly existential nature of this disorder is supported by research which shows that an increase in depression is associated with a decline in belief in a higher being and in salvation.\textsuperscript{12}

A biblical hypothesis on what causes depression

What follows is a way to understand depression according to the Bible:

Due to genetic and environmental deficits, the depression sufferer lacks defenses towards existential guilt, which therefore erupts into consciousness. He knows he is doomed and cannot stop being bothered by hopeless, despairing thoughts. These thoughts affect his brain and deplete the "positive mood" neurotransmitter chemicals: serotonin, norepinephrine and others. Once that chemical imbalance gets under way, it maintains or enhances the despairing thoughts and mood of hopelessness.

Environmental events can trigger or exacerbate depression, but this is not just a one-way effect. The depression-prone individual often seeks an unpleasant, punishing environment in an unconscious attempt to expiate guilt.

There is a downward spiral. Depressive thoughts trigger self-punishing behavior and neurotransmitter depletion which, in turn, darken thoughts and increase vegetative symptoms.
What cures depression?

Secular therapy attempts to replace a person’s sense of unworthiness with the belief that they are worthy, when deep down they know this is not true. Much as they might want to, nobody can swallow this schema because everyone has the perception of being unworthy of salvation at some level.

Although the so-called cognitive and interpersonal approaches of therapy have been found to reduce symptoms of depression by superficially changing what people think about themselves and how they interact with each other, there is no evidence for their long-term effectiveness. Only a knowledge of saving grace will produce lasting change. A Bible-based cure takes the "unworthy but forgiven" approach. It emphasizes the undeserved, unearned nature of God's rescue, the payment for the sins that the depressive is only too aware of.

As we saw in Chapter Thirteen, large-scale research does not specifically address the role of the Gospel. It does, however, show religious belief to be associated with less depression.

In her own practice the author has found that individuals with a diagnosis of Major Depression or Bipolar Disorder show improvement over time as the message of the Gospel penetrates. One indication is that several clients who were previously placed in the psychiatric ward twice a year have avoided hospitalization since they began therapy that was Gospel-based. They are happier now they have begun to walk in faith in God and look forward to eternal life in heaven. Depressions may come, but do not reach as deeply as they previously did, nor last nearly as long. The author’s personal experience with depression attests to that. No longer is she immobilized for periods of several days as she was during her agnostic days.

Medication for Bible-believers? The facts are not yet all in, but medication often seems beneficial in the initial stage of illness and possibly in the long term for sufferers of severe depression and bipolar disorders. This is due to what appear to be lasting physical changes in the brain associated with the illness. However, if a person’s sense of grace continues to grow and they display healthy functioning, they can carefully wean off medication.
**Bipolar disorder**

Bipolar Disorder (and its gentler cousin, Cyclothymic disorder) consists of alternating phases of highs and lows, sometimes interspersed with periods of relative normalcy. The wild and crazy euphoria of the manic phase of Bipolar Disorder is a 180 degree turn from depression. The swings from one pole to another appear to be associated with switches in brain chemicals. Sometimes outside stressors precede the onset of mania, sometimes the trigger is clearly internal.

Whereas everything slows down during a depression, mania is life in the fast lane. Thoughts race; ideas in the mind lose focus and fly off at tangents; speech is pressured; energy is superhuman; sleep becomes almost inessential; inhibitions disappear; spending sprees lead to huge debt; irritability is high; and physical violence and sexual promiscuity are common. Communication is sought keenly, and creative bipolar people often have their most productive periods at this time, as long as the swing does not take them too far off balance.\(^{15}\)

In many ways, mania is much farther from reality than its opposite. The mental health profession recognizes that mania functions as massive defense towards depression.\(^{16}\) The grandiose delusions evoke the Satanic theme of supernatural identification. The person acts as if he truly believes he is a god, a law unto himself, delighting in sin. For a while, he has bought Satan's lies in an unconscious attempt to deny existential reality.

Yet until he hears the Gospel, a manic phase is often the only time the person feels excitement or joy. Even previously-manic Bible-believers sometimes describe a sense of mourning for the crazy euphorias of the past.

### 3) Delusional disorders

Delusional disorders generally have no symptoms of psychosis other than one prominent delusion, such as pathological jealousy or paranoia. Several delusional types were discussed in Chapter Seven, and from a biblical point of view, the underlying existential truth in them is striking, but one curious type remains for discussion: erotomania.
Erotomania

The erotomaniac has an obsession with some famous person he has never met. Deluded that the person returns the affection, he attempts to carry on a relationship with them as if that were the case. What true message underlies this? It is that somebody powerful out there loves us. The delusion is a distorted version of the sense that the God we have never met face to face already knows and loves us. Finding the genuine lover of one’s soul can gradually move the erotomaniac focus to the place where it truly satisfies.

B) Neurotic disorders

Neurotic disorders have acute, disturbing symptoms that prevent or hinder social or occupational functioning. The wide variety in the DSM neurotic category includes 1. Anxiety disorders, 2. Somatoform disorders, and 3. Dissociative disorders. These are three different ways that humans run, make walls, and hide from a sense of impending doom.

1) Anxiety disorders

Existential guilt is accompanied by overwhelming terror. It produces a response so intense that our psychological defenses can crack under its pressure. In the anxiety disorders, guilt is more effectively "bound" (kept out of consciousness) than in the case of depression, but there is a failure to bind fear, so that is what manifests up on the surface.

Aaron Beck, a major proponent of secular cognitive therapy, notes that the anxious person's thinking process differs from the depressive's. The depressive hears himself making global criticisms, whereas the anxious type hears himself making specific criticisms which produce fear. Beck says it is "as though the individual were simply warning himself about the dire consequences of his deficiencies." This secular statement is right, but little does its author realize why. Completely against the teaching of the Bible, Beck's treatment aims to reprogram the anxious person with the message that there is no dire consequence
to falling short of perfection. In reality there is one, and deep down humans know it.

In this general category, the fear of eternal punishment is very close to the surface. Anxiety disorders consist of:

a) Phobias;
b) Panic Disorder;
c) Generalized Anxiety Disorder;
d) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; and
e) Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

**a) Phobias**

Phobias are irrational fears of specified areas of human experience. Our deepest fear is displaced and projected onto some facet of this world.

**Simple Phobia**

A Simple Phobia is a seemingly irrational fear attached to just one type of object or event. However, the fearful experience is only a trigger for the existential terror coming from the innate sin/death equation.

As we saw in Chapter Four, this contention is supported by research on snake phobia. The objective facts about the relative dangerousness of this animal are not sufficient to explain why fear of snakes is the most common simple phobia in the United States. Yet the prevalence of this phobia makes perfect sense in the light of God's curse on the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Snakes trigger our sense of Satan and doom.

Fear of flying is another common simple phobia. It triggers a sense of vulnerability to the dark abyss. One man had Christian leanings at the outset of therapy but lacked a personal relationship with God through Christ. Initially terrified of flying, he was able to make several flights in a state of calm as grace became more real to him. The source of his fear had been a sense of eternal damnation. Now he saw he was assured of eternal safety through the shed blood of Christ. One idea he found particularly helpful was that he was in a win/win situation. Whether he arrived safely
Social Phobia

Social phobia is a fear of standing out or even just being present in a group of people, particularly when it involves speaking or performing. The fear goes beyond any likely potential for harm from the human audience. Social phobia sufferers see other humans as condemnatory, out to destroy them. They are paralyzed by an adrenalized fight-flight response and all their attention is on their failure to meet the mark of perfection. The existential fear coming from a realistic sense of Satan's accusing and attacking role has been displaced onto other humans.

Social phobics sense the real danger resulting from their inadequacy: it dooms them forever. They often feel ashamed about being so scared because they have no idea of its unconscious source. The sense of inadequacy, which they may not be consciously aware of at other times, can be overwhelming when they know the eyes of others will be upon them. The cure is knowing that God forgives; he does not demand perfection; he accepts flawed humans if they approach Him figuratively sprinkled with the blood of Christ. He also protects them from Satan. He has provided Jesus to take all the condemnation humans know they deserve. God's assurance to the judges he selected to assist Moses was: "Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man." (Deuteronomy 1:17). This applies to all of us on a basic human level. With God on our side, our inadequacy need not preoccupy us when we are in front of others.

This phobia grows out of social hypersensitivity, or shyness, which has a genetic basis. This means that to some degree, it is likely to continue to be part of the functioning of sufferers. Yet with a sense of God's compete pardon, they can feel comfortable enough to "be themselves" in social situations.

A client with this phobia had only recently perceived the true role of Christ. All his life he had typically been paralyzed in front of even a small group of people. He came for help after being
unable to sleep for two weeks. He was worrying about an upcoming speech in front of five thousand people. As he assimilated following three facts about God, this changed: 1) unearned existential forgiveness, 2) God would carry him through this event, and 3) all credit belongs to God. His paralysis left and he was able to perform well.

**Agoraphobia**

Agoraphobics lose their defenses towards existential terror when away from the safe comfort of their own home. They may be able to go out if accompanied by another person but the fear is still there. As time goes on, they tend to become increasingly housebound.

The author has found that the symptoms disappear when sufferers perceive that they have a continuous connection with God through Christ. For example, a realtor client had become afraid of leaving the house alone and was no longer able to work. She was especially terrified of driving across bridges and on lonely stretches of road. All this changed over the space of six weeks as she perceived the eternal safety she had through Christ. Now she understood how freely she could go to God and knew she could talk to him and be protected while at the steering wheel.

God promised: "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." (Deuteronomy 31:6).

**b) Panic Attack Disorder**

Sometimes agoraphobia grows out of a person's history of having panic attacks. Panic is aptly named after its noted association with terror over the horned "god" Pan, i.e., Satan. A panic attack is a sudden upwelling of archetypical terror from a part of the psyche that is usually unconscious. The agoraphobic may fear having an attack in a place where he feels particularly exposed. In reality, he is in constant danger if he has no relationship with God, but he does not feel that lack of protection all the time.
Although the attack may be triggered by some stressful real life event, nothing that is happening in the person's present environment nor anything that has happened in the past explains the severity of the terror. The adrenalized bodily response can feel like a heart attack, sharp and overwhelming; tachycardia and hyperventilation may cause fainting. This is the panic of being at the brink of falling into the bottomless pit, with no personal means of forestalling it.

Systematic desensitization is the secular treatment of choice for phobia and panic attack sufferers. This is a behavioral technique which requires a person first to picture himself reacting calmly to the feared thing (visual rehearsal or "visualization") and then to act that way in a series of increasingly threatening situations.

However, this approach can only have lasting effectiveness if it addresses the source of the fear. It must be used biblically, building on God's promise of saving grace. God gives us pictures in the Bible that chase fear away, or at least make it manageable. Biblical metaphors for God's eternal protection through Christ are tangible and they reach our hungry spirit, the ultimate influence on all our behavior. Fear diminishes as we hear God's assurances that we can lean on him, that he will shield and put a hedge around us on our journey in the world.

Visualization of images straight from the Bible helped the agoraphobic realtor. Her panic attacks subsided as she pictured herself being in God's hands at all times.

c) Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is a more pervasive form of anxiety dysfunction than the previous ones. In this case, fear permeates every aspect of life.

Many of us are familiar with the feeling that by being hypervigilant on an airplane, we keep it airborne. Although we know this is irrational, we still cannot stop ourselves from being on the alert at all times, as if "helping" the pilot.

Generalized Anxiety is like this, only sufferers do not think their hypervigilance is irrational. In one sense it is not: disaster is ahead. Yet human vigilance will not stop it. Despite this, they are
constantly braced against imminent doom, always adrenalized, expecting the unmentionable to arrive at any moment. Unable to let go, their minds are always racing, preventing them from being able to sleep at night until exhausted by hours of rumination over all the bad things that could happen. Relaxation is too risky because even though they know they do not have the necessary control to stop "it" from happening, they delude themselves into thinking they do.

Peace of mind can only be attained when they see that they are forever in the loving hands of God, who has total control of "it."

d) Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

The defense mode of Generalized Anxiety Disorder involves being braced to fight the enemy at all times. By contrast, the Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) sufferer attempts to eliminate the enemy's power by changing himself or his environment. Whereas Generalized Anxiety is a paralyzing state of unending dread, OCD is an action-oriented mode.

In OCD sufferers, fear is repressed, guilt is closer to the surface \(^{22}\) and the person’s actions display the psychological defense of pseudo-atonement.\(^ {23}\) Freud was right in calling this disorder a "private religion."\(^ {24}\) It is an elaborate set of defense mechanisms, with the goal is atonement for sin to escape the Lake of Fire.

OCD sufferers spend a long time each day literally trying to clean themselves. Their daily routine may begin several hours earlier than necessary so they can follow a compelling purification ritual. Other compulsions concern the safety of the environment. For example, they check numerous times each day to see that the door is locked to keep the enemy out.

They have no idea why they are driven to do this but, at least initially, they do recognize the irrationality of it. The religious performance tends to get longer over time. New rituals are added in pursuit of the unattainable standard of perfection. Afraid to see the big picture, OCD sufferers focus on the minute details they have some hope of controlling. Yet violent, lustful, or other
disturbing obsessive thoughts keep intruding into consciousness, telling them how ineffective the purification ritual is.

All of us have experienced obsessions and compulsions to some degree. Researchers have confirmed the view that guilt lies behind intrusive thoughts in the general population.\(^{25}\) We try to walk between the cracks on the sidewalk, but we sense a far more dire consequence for failing to do so than the breaking of Mother's back, i.e., the Lake of Fire.

The problem is, we know unconsciously that we will always fall short. We have no way out other than to claim God's gift that wipes our slate clean in His eyes. This cures the conflict responsible for OCD. A Jewish client reported that his obsessive thoughts about past sins receded as he recognised that Christ had paid for them. Productive, goal-oriented behavior gradually replaced repetitive compulsive rituals.

e) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has an obvious worldly precursor in the form of some type of acute trauma, like rape, extreme child abuse, witnessing a murder, or watching another die in combat.

The terrifying event exposed PTSD sufferers to their complete powerlessness in the face of the future punishment for which all humans sense they are destined. In a shocking situation from which there seemed to be no escape, PTSD sufferers were closer to the reality of hell than anything they had previously experienced. Flashbacks and nightmares keep reminding them of it. They feel utterly helpless against an unnamed terror.

The pervasive and lasting nature of the pathological response, which often intensifies over time, indicates that the deeper, archetypical guilt has been triggered by the trauma. PTSD sufferers escaped the punishment this time around but know it is still coming; they can feel it hovering. They may even seek punishment as a paradoxical defense. It provides temporary respite from the guilt and its attendant emotions that are so close to the surface. Five types of guilt, insidious and treatment-resistant (by traditional methods), have been identified in combat veterans:
survivor, demonic, moral/spiritual, betrayal/abandonment, and superman/superwoman guilt.26

Perhaps the trauma was an abandonment experience during childhood. This has reinforced existential guilt (they "deserved" this abandonment) and kept them emotionally closed. Consequently, what relationships they do form as adults tend to peter out. This, in turn, justifies and intensifies the constant sense of rejection they feel. Underlying this is the unconscious sense of separation from God and the fear of its consequence.

However, the more sure our connection with God through grace and the more we cling to our rescue from hell, the less we humans fear abandonment or trauma of any kind. We can open up and walk in faith instead of guilt and fear, looking at the future rather than the past.

2) Somatoform and psychosomatic disorders

The body can produce physical symptoms as a distorted manifestation of existential guilt. If the physical symptoms are functional (behavioral) rather than formal (organic), they are categorized among the Somatoform disorders. If they do have a formal basis, they are classed in a DSM category called "psychological factors affecting physical condition," which is another name for psychosomatic illness.

In both cases, the basic conflict and the emotions around it are repressed from consciousness. There are no direct clues as to its root, only the indirect physical manifestation/s.

The physical symptom has one or more of several potential functions: a preoccupation and distraction from the true dilemma; a "reason" for the unending anxiety; a futile self-punishment to reduce guilt; a way to obtain attention, sympathy, and someone to cling to in the absence of God; a means of escaping responsibility; and a means of prohibiting certain "sinful" thoughts and behavior that trigger the threat of eternal disconnection (as if only certain sins were subject to the punishment). This group of disorders express, in a physical way, the existential sense of being "not OK," inferior, and powerless.
Somatoform disorders

Somatoform disorders do not have a physical origin, they are emotional or "functional" disorders that have a physical form. Existential guilt, the sense of deserving eternal separation from God, is kept from consciousness and projected on the body, or soma. Somatic defenses form a barrier to a person’s consciousness of the truth. This category includes a) Hypochondriasis, b) Conversion Disorder, c) Psychogenic Pain Disorder, and d) Somatization Disorder.

a) Hypochondriasis

Like sufferers of anxiety disorders, hypochondriacs have a strong sense of how vulnerable humans are when separated from God. Unlike anxious types, who fear something "out there," their fear for the soul is distorted and projected on the body. They seek constant reassurance that the body is not about to fall apart, their unconscious mind sensing that there is only that flimsy tent of flesh between them and hell.

Every slight symptom of illness, real or imagined, heralds destruction, as does the slightest infringement of the law. No amount of feedback will entirely convince any of us of our soundness because we know that is not true.

For hypochondriacs, preoccupation with the possible seriousness of every little ache and pain consumes increasing amounts of attention; this distracts them from the true dilemma. Similar to depression sufferers, hypochondriacs have a pathological kind of narcissism. Only God's gift of an escape from hell enables them for take their eyes off their physical unsoundness, recognize themselves as sinners and grasp the payment for sin God has provided.

In working with them, the author has found they are highly responsive to the promise of a new, immortal body.

b) Conversion Disorder

Conversion Disorder involves a psychogenic loss of use or alteration of some function of the body. Unlike hypochondriacs, sufferers from this disorder may express no concern about their
physical condition, be it blindness, loss of hearing, fainting spells, paralysis, or some other impairiment. This symptom is called "la belle indifference." Conversion disorder sufferers repress the conflict and simply adapt life to the physical restrictions imposed by the disorder as if this were the most natural thing in the world.

The symptoms are generally more closely tied to a specific guilt-inducing thought or action than in the case of other Somatoform disorders. The loss or alteration generally involves a part of the body that performs an action linked in some way with a guilt-provoking act, a phenomenon called organ language. For example, throat problems may suddenly well up when a person thinks about speaking a guilt-laden statement. The specific guilt triggers the deeper existential guilt and the sense of deserving punishment. To be aware of it would be overwhelming, so repression and somatic displacement are employed instead.

Constriction of the throat is very common among incest victims, often intensifying during therapy as the threat of revelation surfaces. When treating incest victims, I have found that the most deeply repressed memories are the ones revealing some type of transgression of the victim, even a relatively mild one. Common guilt-laden themes in the victim are of two types: 1) hostile feelings and actions towards the abuser; and 2) any sense of responsibility for the incestuous act or enjoyment of it.

Outside of the "sin equals death" paradigm, it makes no sense that a person would have more difficulty dealing with some relatively inoffensive act of retaliation of his/her own than an act of brutal terrorism on the part of the abuser. But this is often the way the victim reacts. The fact is, even a slight awareness of personal transgression stirs the fear of hell.

Existential terror, not the stubborn, irrational fear of the abuser, is what really fuels the continued silence. Even the death of the once-threatening perpetrator is often an insufficient condition to allow the victim to disclose the abuse. What frees the incest victim to fully open up is knowing that he/she has God's complete forgiveness, the freedom from eternal condemnation.
c) Psychogenic Pain Disorder

The symptoms of Psychogenic Pain Disorder can be alleviated by anti-depressant medication\(^ \text{27} \) because the felt pain is a metaphorical statement about the anguish of living a life separated from God. The suffering can be a regressive defense which says “I’m not responsible. I’m a baby.” This allows escape from a threatening event, denial of responsibility for sin, and an excuse for dependency. More importantly, suffering temporarily alleviates existential guilt through unconscious self-punishment.

d) Somatization Disorder

Somatization disorder uses the body to make a broad spiritual statement that outside of the forgiveness of God, humans are sickly, in pain, and incapacitated in many ways, weak and helpless in the face of grave danger. This disorder involves multiple afflictions and incorporates symptoms of all three previous disorders. Uncomfortable as it may be to suffer in this way, facing eternal darkness is even worse. Even though Somatization sufferers whine and complain, it is easier to live the life of an invalid than face reality outside of Christ.

Psychosomatic illness

Repression as a response to stress can cause lowering of the immune threshold\(^ \text{28,29} \). This can lead to physical illness which, in turn, becomes a psychological refuge.

Let us use the example of anger. Adrenalin is released into the bloodstream when we are angry with someone. The anger triggers guilt and fear: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart" (Leviticus 19:17). So the anger might be repressed, meaning it is not used to take the action for which the adrenalin was released. The reaction might have been a communication such as asking someone to turn down a radio or stop some bothersome behavior. When the anger-provoking event recurs or continues, the adrenalized state also recurs, causing the person's system to become exhausted in time by the constant state of fight/flight arousal. This fatigue is accompanied by a lowering of the immune
response and by various other physical symptoms such as muscular tension and gastro-intestinal disturbances.

If physical illness results from this, it may not be unwelcome because it offers secondary gain in the form of a hiding place, the psychological defense of regression. It also temporarily relieves guilt through self-punishment.

However, this mode of defense often backfires. Curling up in the womb of illness can present stresses of its own. One is an intensification of guilt because dependency and inactivity feel sinful. Compounding this is the loss of some of the action-oriented defense mechanisms that enable a person to think he is paying for sin. In other words, self-purification rituals and "good works" are hindered by the sickness.

A more serious backfire happens when illness threatens survival and it is no longer a hiding place, but this is where the survival threat can work to one’s long-term advantage. It can force a person to confront death and what lies beyond it, from which place they either go towards despair or towards God.

Although many Christians maintain that God always removes sickness (and sin) from a believer's life, this is not true. We have the example of Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (II Corinthians 12:7). God is in control of biology, and he often uses illness to achieve his purposes. Sometimes he lets Satan's darts hit us. Often it is the only time we think about death and what might follow.

Yet it is true that adherence to God keeps us healthy. In the last chapter we cited research showing that religiosity is associated with lowered incidence of physical illness. God promised that trusting in him "shall be health to thy navel and marrow to thy bones" (Proverbs 3:8). Rejection of him would result in “the emerods, and with the scab and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed” and “...madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart.” (Deteronomy 28:27-28).

3) Dissociative disorders

Same root conflict, different type of defense yet: the massive use of repression, splitting, and isolation. Whereas the body is the arena for defensive strategizing in the Somatoform disorders,
consciousness and the memory play that role in Dissociative disorders. This category includes a) Simple Amnesia, b) Psychogenic Fugue, c) Depersonalization Disorder, and d) Multiple Personality Disorder.

a) Simple Amnesia
The most common form of dissociation is Simple Amnesia: forgetting. The incest victim "forgets" an entire period of several years when the abuse was occurring. Everything that happened during those years is lost from consciousness so as to avoid triggering any of the painful memories which would, in turn, evoke guilt and a sense of doom.

b) Psychogenic Fugue
Other dissociative disorders involve a different kind of memory loss, a more drastic break from reality. Self-consistency is forfeited in the attempt to flee guilt and its punishment. How creative is the human mind in finding ways to "flee when none pursueth" (Leviticus 26:36)?

The relatively rare Psychogenic Fugue state has often been the subject of movie fiction. One day a person suddenly finds himself in a new geographic location with a completely new identity and no recollection of the past. The new persona is a defensive fabrication. It is an attempt to leave behind the old person with its baggage of guilt and sense of doom.

However, the old self eventually returns. The only way to be permanently born again and free from the consequence of sin is to claim the coverage of Christ.

c) Depersonalization Disorder
Depersonalization is stepping back from the self, as if partially living another reality. We do not find the total memory loss characteristic of some other disorders in this category. Rather, sufferers have a feeling that nothing is real, including themselves. Life is like a movie they are viewing.

The idea that reality is an illusion is, of course, fostered in many false religions. It is a flight from the underlying reality, as if we
can wake up and find it has all been a bad dream. Only through Christ can we fully face reality.

d) Multiple Personality Disorder

How can one person acquire numerous different personalities that speak with different voices fluent in unlearned languages and use different styles of handwriting? How can the personalities perform differently even at the minute level of visual acuity and eye muscle balance? Our theories of human learning cannot explain this.

Past development can explain some of the symptoms of Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD). Many of the personalities seem to be fixated earlier stages linked to trauma in the person's life. They may also be introjects of significant others from the person's world, learned and expressed through a particular talent for mimicry.

However, we had better be careful. The Western mind, with its skepticism towards the notion of evil spirits, tends to psychologize phenomena that are attributed to possession in India, China and other parts of the East. The fact is, many characteristics of MPD do suggest possession. Several interview questions differentiating MPD sufferers from other psychiatric groups suggest a family history of demonization: physical and sexual abuse as children, sleepwalking, childhood imaginary playmates, ESP, and supernatural experiences.

The Bible mentions several instances in which one or more demons inhabit a human, using the person as a channel for speech and action (I Samuel 16:23; Matthew 9:32; 12:22; Mark 7:39; Luke 4:33). In MPD, how do we know when these are possessing demons and when not? Testing the spirits, as described in the first epistle of John, would be one approach (I John 4:1-3). How does the person respond to the message of the Gospel? Is there a vehement repudiation of the name of Jesus?

One client described six different personalities plus one he called "me." Four of the personalities appeared to be earlier versions of himself, a fifth was called "the dog," and a more recent one was called "the stranger." This man had lately joined a
legalistic pseudo-Christian cult. He attended services and Bible study regularly at his church. Nevertheless, he was unable to acknowledge that Jesus Christ was the son of God, the payment for sin. In fact, he refused to discuss Christ and insisted on his own purity according to a set of laws "revealed" to the founder of the cult in the mid 1800s.

It is likely that this man was possessed by at least one demon, because otherwise his repudiation of Jesus made no sense. It could not be explained by ignorance of the Bible. As false as the teachings are within his cult, there is still an acknowledgement of the importance Jesus, even if it is a grossly distorted one. However, none of his "personalities" stopped him from being involved in the cult as long as he did not have to say that Jesus is Lord. As long as this man thought salvation was due to works, Satan's aim was being achieved.

Standard therapy for MPD aims to eventually unify the personalities. If the personalities are really demonic entities, they will not "fuse," integrate or unify. However, if one takes over and eliminates all the others during the process of therapy, it is difficult to discern that this is not unification.

Another client related that one of her former sixteen personalities had been a "very spiritual" girl of sixteen. Desperate and suicidal when her former therapist was away on vacation, she had called a leading expert and author on multiple personality for help. He graciously spoke to her on the phone for over an hour, giving her the advice to "join with the most spiritual member of the group."

This led to a resolution not to kill herself and a reduction in the number of personalities. However, without more information we cannot know whether this was fusion of personalities or the work of one demon who evicted all the others while posing as an innocent girl.

There is certainly something extraordinary about MPD whether or not it is a state of multiple possession. If the personalities really are parts of the person instead of possessing spirits, each can function as a refuge from the true self, a way to detach from the conscience. Demon or no demon, operating through a multiplicity
of personalities is like being a ship going around in circles from port to port. The ship is unable to stay anywhere for long; nowhere is safe. The tour can only stop when a resting place is found in the God of the Bible. Much "prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29) may be necessary if the person is truly demonized.

C) Personality Disorders

The long-standing patterns of psychological dysfunction called personality disorders have a wide variety of symptom patterns. One feature they have in common is blindness to the darker side of the self which leads to interpersonal difficulties. The sin nature is heavily defended, along with the shame and guilt associated with it.

Social relationships are always problematic for personality-disordered individuals, often hurl abuse at those around them. Criticisms from others are countered with denial, astonishment and blame of the critic. Interpersonal intimacy requires self-knowledge, and like all of us, these individuals dare not see the human depravity which condemns them. They deal with this in ways that are particularly harmful for themselves and others.

Defense mechanisms in personality disorders

Defenses tend to be the stubborn, primitive type associated with persistently dysfunctional behavior. Massive repression keeps guilt below the surface of consciousness, then deflecting defenses, such as paranoid projection, put the blame on external agents. Other defenses include regression, acting-out, and the more dysfunctional of the compartmentalizers (idealization and devaluation), pseudo-atoners (self-punishment), and analyzers (unsophisticated rationalization).

Under the surface lurks the sense of separation from God, which is translated into a fear of being abandoned by humans. This fear produces either extreme dependency ("I can't live without you") or counter-dependency ("I don't need anyone"). Lacking a sense of God's love, there is no basis for forward movement of any kind. Backward movement is likely; this is why personality
disorders often precede symptoms of other disorders, particularly affective and neurotic ones.

However, if personality-disordered individuals begin to internalize God's compassion, it enables them to gain a sense of grounding, accept their flaws, learn from criticisms, and give and take in a relationship.

This is a broad and general statement about the varied category of personality disorders, and there are, of course, local variations. These disorders tend to form three clusters: emotional withdrawal and odd behavior; anxious and resistive submissiveness; and exaggerated, dramatic emotionality.

**Cluster one: emotional withdrawal and odd behavior**

One cluster involves emotional withdrawal and odd behavior: the a) Schizoid, b) Schizotypal, and c) Paranoid types. These types seem to be outwardly saying: "Since you are so rotten, I can do without you." Avoiding closeness with others protects them from confronting themselves as sinners, and from the experience of being rejected and abandoned, which is truly a sense of being separated from God.

**a) Schizoid Personality Disorder**

Schizoid types are not conscious of needing love, nor consciously distressed about not having it. They have become numb to those feelings. If the Avoidant Personality types (see below) can be said to live inside a shell with their antennae out, Schizoids live inside a shell with their antennae drawn in. They are emotionally unavailable and spiritually dead.

Their work life may not be problematic; they sometimes have highly successful careers but their social life is absent. Out of our fear of abandonment, suffocation, or abuse, Schizoids have accepted the notion that they can function without human companionship.

In Schizoids, we clearly see the general principle that our desire for survival is what opens us to God. The concept of God's love will not cut the Schizoid ice. They only thaw after they perceive the reality of hell and God's gift of a rescue. When they learn to
trust the rescue, they begin to feel the love of God, become capable of love, and come out of the freezer.

b) Schizotypal Personality Disorder

Schizotypals have much in common with schizophrenics, except that the features are less extreme. Symptoms are constant over a period of two or more years, chronic rather than acute.

Like schizophrenics, Schizotypals tend to be preoccupied with the spirit world. They seem to have a particular sensitivity towards it. Their speech and thinking patterns are religiously-oriented, filled with telepathy and other forms of psychic awareness. Ideas of reference are expressed in a digressive verbal style. However, they display none of the extreme aspects of a formal thought disorder. They experience illusions rather than hallucinations, and their paranoid ideation does not have the insistent quality of delusional thinking. Nor are they as lacking in insight as the true schizophrenic.

Their suspiciousness and fears of criticism or rejection lead them to isolate themselves. They present a cold front to humans like a Schizoid, but often seek spirit contact, not realizing that the entities upon whom they depend for companionship belong to the Satanic realm. Until they perceive the true nature of their spiritual contacts and come to know the God of compassion and mercy, they stay in a world of cold isolation, a foretaste of hell.

c) Paranoid Personality Disorder

Paranoid personality types have a pervasive sense that they are being plotted against. Cold and suspicious, they interpret the words, intentions and actions of others in a manner consistent with this fear. They do not have clear-cut delusions like psychotic paranoids, but a general feeling of threat.

Satan is definitely conspiring against us, so this tendency is not without a basis in reality. Their mistake lies in believing that the threat comes primarily from the human world rather than the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2).
Cluster two: anxious and resistive submissiveness

A second group of personality disorders involves anxious, resistive submissiveness: the a) Avoidant, b) Dependant, c) Obsessive-Compulsive, and d) Passive/Aggressive types. In general, they convey: "I don't love you and you don't love me but I can't live without you."

a) Avoidant Personality Disorder

Avoidant types are aware that they want and need love but they avoid meeting new people out of a dread of rejection. They stay within the safe confines of family or one or two close friends, easily manipulated through fear of abandonment.

Avoidants are distressed about their isolation but feel powerless to do anything about it. They are afraid to make moves in any direction, social, educational, or vocational.

This disorder is a reflection of the approach/avoid conflict all humans have in their relationship with God. We desperately need God but we are terrified to approach him. Avoidants need to see the freedom they have to go to God. Under the umbrella of Christ, they are safe forever. It is essential they grasp that God will not abandon or punish them if they approach him through Christ. This knowledge will fill them with confidence and bring them out of their shell.

b) Dependant Personality Disorder

Dependent types cannot face the thought of being alone or functioning without a human crutch. Consequently, they sacrifice whatever needs and wishes of their own might interfere with their attachment to the humans they cling to. They are less afraid of making new human contacts than Avoidants, but this is definitely a problem. Dependents are superficially childlike, often to the point of extreme passivity and submissiveness. Relationships are unhealthy; either they open themselves up for exploitation or parasitically drain their hosts. Added to this is the poisoning, underlying resentment they feel about surrendering their own needs.
The truth is that they cannot make it alone, but Dependant types seek support from the wrong place: human relationships. Since they offer some comfort but cannot truly satisfy, human relationships take on an addictive quality.

However, when Dependents learn to lean on God, they no longer have to surrender their own needs to the needs of the other. They can follow their own unique pathway with God's support, unafraid to express feelings.

d) Passive/Aggressive Personality Disorder (not in recent DSM)

Passive/Aggressives feel too powerless to assert their own needs and stand up for themselves. However, they will not comply with any "external" source of authority, particularly the other/s upon whom they depend, so they unconsciously opt for the power of negation.

To smooth interpersonal relations, they adopt a facade of superficial cooperativeness. Behind this, they passively act out noncompliance. Sins of commission are replaced by sins of omission: procrastination, "forgetfulness," intentional inefficiency, dawdling, and stubbornness.

They resist all forms of authority, including ones they have sought to place themselves under. They establish a plan, then rebel against the feeling of constriction it produces by not following through with it. Sometimes it seems as if they make appointments just to break them. Unconsciously, they are trying to prove they are not doomed, they are above the law, meaning their rebellion is towards God.

The sense of utter dependency on God's rescue from hell is essential to cure this. The Passive/Aggressive is not the immoveable one; death and hell will overcome him. God alone is immoveable in both the best and the worst ways. His mercy makes the human spirit willing.

c) Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD)

Here are the perfectionists, never satisfied with their own performance, nor with anyone else's. Driven by the desperate need
to wipe away their guilt, they are continually finding one more flaw that needs to be corrected. They must be in control and on top of things at all times. Relaxation is not allowed. For one thing, it feels like sin. Even more importantly, it deprives them of a hiding place. It allows them to think and feel...far too dangerous.

Although this is fueled by existential guilt and psychologically defended by pseudo-atonement, the mechanism is sublimation, i.e., good works, rather than the more dysfunctional self-purification of OCD. The compulsive behavior, generally workaholism, and the obsessive thinking process that dwells on trivia are generally effective in binding existential dread.

Human relationships are cold and distant; emotions are kept under check through intellectualization and rationalization. Afraid to make a mistake, OCPD sufferers cannot make a decision alone. This means they depend on outside agents to decide for them. Since they resent the power this gives others over them, they criticize these decisions constantly.

The cure begins with insight about the futility of striving to escape eternal damnation through numb perfectionism. The Gospel's message of God's complete forgiveness will replace the coldness with warmth, give room to make errors, provide freedom to relax, and build a foundation for decision-making.

**Self-sabotaging Personality Disorder**

This category is still under consideration for the DSM. The striking aspect of self-saboteurs is their obvious ability to achieve. They often go nearly all the way towards a major goal, then ruin the whole thing just before finishing. They spend years gaining expertise to do a certain type of work, yet ruin the job interview by wearing outlandish clothes.

Self-sabotage is an atoning defense mechanism, an attempt to pay the penalty for sin. Self-saboteurs know they do not deserve success, they fear that it will make them even more corrupt than they already are, and that there will be a price to pay for it. Failure feels more comfortable; it temporarily reduces existential guilt.

This changes when they learn about the gift of God's atonement and perceive that Christ has taken our punishment on his own
back. There is no need to seek failure when they know God has paid the price, that he will support and guide them every step of the way.

**Cluster three: exaggerated, dramatic emotionality**

The third cluster involves exaggerated, dramatic emotionality. These types seem to be saying: "I deserve and must have your love but you cheat me of it, so I'll exploit and punish you." It consists of the a) Antisocial, b) Histrionic, c) Narcissistic and d) Borderline personality disorders.

**a) Antisocial Personality Disorder**

There is a male/female difference in punitiveness. Men tend to punish others; women punish themselves. We have already seen this in the discussion of psychological defense armament (Chapter Six) and depression (this chapter). Now we find it in the personality disorders.

The "acting out" Antisocial Personality (also known as "sociopath" or "psychopath") and the new category of Sadistic Personality are rarely found in women. On the other hand, the Histrionic and Self-Sabotaging types are less common in men.\(^{33}\)

In a sociopath, the conscience appears to be completely buried. For this type of personality, the fear of God has to be the beginning of wisdom. Love and blessings can have no effect until his fear is aroused. The only thing that will cut ice with a person whose conscience and ability to love are in the deepest of deep freezes is dire threat. In view of the fact that the sociopath has a numbed sense of the future, this fear will not be readily woken up. Somehow the concept of eternal darkness has to strike a chord with him. It may not happen until he has spent considerable time in jail, particularly in solitary confinement. Then he might start looking at death, hell, and God's rescue. This will make him want to straighten up and give love instead of deceiving and manipulating others.
b) Histrionic Personality Disorder

The female counterpart of the Antisocial is the Histrionic Personality Disorder. She, too, is superficially charming and manipulative. However, she is never far from her basic sense of worthlessness. Her self-dramatization, seductiveness, interpersonal shallowness, and avoidance of blame are all facets of the existential guilt she is running from.

c) Narcissistic Personality Disorder

According to some of our leading secular experts on personality disorders, the Narcissistic type has been on the rise in the last twenty five years. Either we look at God or at ourselves. Increasingly, we are doing the latter. This is the so-called "me" generation phenomenon. Today's popular religions and humanistic philosophies follow Satan in advising us to look to our own power and strength, the "god" inside us. But when we look at ourself realistically all we see is weakness and depravity.

Narcissistic types adopt a persona, a set of lies with which they delude themselves about how absolutely wonderful they are. They need the constant admiring attention of others in order to maintain the persona; they must be worshipped like a god.

Lacking compassion for themselves, they have none for others. Other humans are there simply to gratify their needs. Though deep inside they know they are doomed to everlasting contempt, they try to escape that knowledge by convincing themselves they are too important to be cut off forever...important, and possibly omnipotent and immortal. Layers of false pride cover the fear of seeing the true situation. The pride and fear are a barrier to a relationship with God. The only thing that will cut through those layers is a vivid sense of hell and its only escape.

d) Borderline Personality Disorder

Volatile Borderline types sit on a huge vat of anger that is always ready to burst out. Missing are the ego control and defense mechanisms that could either channel or repress this anger and other painful, destructive emotions. The anger seems to be towards an undefined "them." This is God, upon close inspection.
Borderlines feel everything intensely and personally. They hate themselves and often engage in activity that is self-punishing, even mutilating. They may cover themselves in small cuts, a "blood sacrifice" of pseudo-stigmata unconsciously aimed towards atonement for existential guilt. Typically, there was extreme abuse in their childhood. This led to a failure to internalize "healthy" defense modes or develop the interpersonal trust that might cosset them from the experience of separation from God. Consequently they feel the full impact of that separation but have no conscious understanding of it. There is a continual sense of meaninglessness, emptiness and boredom...a never-ending search for identity.

They cannot tolerate being alone. Like the Dependent type, they experience the need for God as a need for the other person. Yet they fear being suffocated and overwhelmed by that person, so relationships are unstable. Although they are often aggressors, they see themselves as only as victims. They certainly are victims in the sense that they are unable to differentiate where they end and another person begins. This leaves them wide open to another's influence.

Lack of boundaries means they jump into the deep end of a relationship too quickly. They see the other as an extension of themselves, a tool to be used. Failing to realize others are neither gods nor separate individuals, they ask too much of them. They resent others either for not caring enough or for caring too much. Relationships are demandingly stormy, leading to quick burn-out on both sides. Unconsciously provoking a fight to break up the relationship, Borderlines then blame the other person for this.

Borderlines' perception of others, which is truly a perception of themselves, is that they are either wonderful or terrible; there are no shades of grey. The first flaw is fatal. Their sense of the absoluteness of the penalty for the slightest degree of missing the mark shows itself in these extremes of idealization and devaluation. Deep inside they know grey is as condemning as black, and it shows in their behavior.

However, when their deepest fear is quieted and they know they are known to God, Borderlines lose their empty feeling and begin
to see themselves as an "I." As a sense of God's mercy reaches them more and more deeply, they change in many ways. One transformation is the ability to tolerate imperfection in others. And no longer are they angry victims when they know God is on their side.

**D) Substance abuse disorders**

Alcoholism continues to be the biggest substance abuse problem in our nation, with approximately 15 percent of the population over 13 years fulfilling the DSM criteria for alcohol abuse, and another 35 percent regular drinkers in the moderate to light category. Besides the obvious problems with illicit drugs, prescription drugs also present enormous potential for abuse. Twenty percent of the population has at some time used one of the minor tranquilizers, which are highly addictive and can produce dangerous withdrawal symptoms.³⁶

Why is chemical alteration of the brain so appealing to us? It helps us cope with the symptoms of our underlying conflict. Chemical alteration produces a change of mood, jolts us out of dysphoria, relieves boredom, relaxes, turns the channel, provides a preoccupation and distraction...all of which temporarily enable us not to feel the pain of existential guilt and terror. It gives us an excuse for not acting in faith, freeing us to shuck responsibility and give in to our rebelliousness. The chemical escape becomes an integral part of the defense equipment.

But substance abuse requires denial in order to maintain it. Denial and rationalization are common defense mechanisms for the alcoholic.³⁷ Nobody can stand to be aware that the substance is destroying them. Confronting that would mean having to quit. Quitting would mean not having that escape any more. The abuser cannot imagine life without it.

Deceit is also a common defense. It can be partly a function of the illegality of the substance but it is also an end in itself. It offers empowerment, the same kind of pseudo-independence as the drug. It also provides false existential reassurance. If the abuser can break the drug law and get away with it, then perhaps he can beat
the hell rap which really plagues him. It gives a sense of control, the illusion--or delusion--of being above the law.

Certain drugs bolster this feeling of invulnerability. It is particularly true of stimulants like cocaine or alcohol in its early disinhibiting phase. These substances produce or enhance an illusion of omnipotence, a delusion of godhood. Cocaine addicts often refer to their drug as "the devil."

Only a sense of grace will replace the need for chemical escape. The substance abuser has to see his need for salvation from hell along with God's gift of that to him. He needs to experience a sense of God's mercy in a personal way. Then his relationship with God through Christ will enable him to envisage a better life and walk away from chemical dependency. (See a discussion of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement in Chapter Eleven).

E) Impulse control disorders
This category includes several facets of human behavior that involve acting upon an impulse to perform an illegal, illicit, dangerous or highly imprudent activity:

   a) Pathological gambling;
   b) Kleptomania;
   c) Pyromania;
   d) Intermittent Explosive Disorder; and
   e) Eating disorders.

Most of our basic impulses go against God and make us feel guilty. Guilt can exacerbate our propensity for rebellion. We rebel because we are angry about our situation. Deep inside we know the dire consequence of falling short. We are mad at the God who set things up this way. So when we break the law and eat the "forbidden fruit," for one glorious moment we feel above the law. There is temporary relief from the struggle to stay on the righteous path. It thrills us to do something bad and get away with it. That is, until we begin to realize that God sees everything. Every transgression puts us further away from God, steeps us in more guilt.
Transformation occurs when we see the God-given escape clause in the law. The more we know God sees all yet forgives and accepts us as we are, the less we want to rebel. Rebellion will still be in our nature, but we now no longer give ourselves license to act on it. God sends the Holy Spirit to amplify our conscience and help us achieve restraint. Now if we rebel, there is a new dynamic to it. It is followed by shame and remorse, a sense of thankfulness for God's mercy, a desire to repent, and the recognition we can go to God for help in doing so. The change process has begun.

These comments apply to all disorders of impulse control. Now we pay close attention to the last type mentioned: eating disorders.

a) Eating disorders

Two major eating disorders persist into adulthood, Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia. These disorders involve somewhat similar ways of trying to exert control over the uncontrollable existential dilemma. Research has shown shame and guilt to be close to the surface in both disorders. The driving force of these abnormalities is the defensive strategy of pseudo-atonement. Its focus is in the arena of fatness and food.

The illusion of atonement for sin is achieved, especially in Anorexia, by repression of the physical appetite and loss of body fat, which is equated with sin. In Bulimia, "undoing" (purging) following the sin of binge eating is also used. These two disorders may alternate over time in the same person and they, are paradigmatic of the unconscious merciless legalism present in all humans outside of a knowledge of God's saving grace.

Anorexia Nervosa

Anorexia Nervosa involves an extreme form of impulse control. The appetite for food is repressed as a way to resolve the conflict over imperfection as follows: to be perfect means to have no fat. This definition of imperfection is reinforced by today's cultural climate which sees perfection "in the flesh" as being almost without it.
The Anorexic, who is nearly always a female below the age of thirty, constantly strives to lose just a little more fat. Since this truly represents an unconscious need to reach the purity which avoids hell, the goal can never be met; the person will die first. Since body fat is equated with sin, and losing fat is an attempt to eliminate sin and avoid hell, the cause is lost from the start.

Controlling body fat (i.e., sin) becomes the entire focus of the person's life, a distraction from the true state of affairs. All conversation tends to be around control of food/eating/not eating. The person's weight goes far below the ideal body poundage because the perception of being a sinner never goes away. The process of shedding fat even goes way past the point of culturally accepted slimness to dangerous emaciation; loss of hair; drastic loss of muscle, including heart muscle; and even early death if there is no intervention.

There are secondary gains to emaciation besides creating the unconscious delusion one's sins are being paid for. The reversal of secondary sexual characteristics can reduce guilt over sexual feelings, a plus for sexually-abused women who are more likely to develop this disorder. They feel guilt over the physical response to the abuser that is carried into relations with non-abusers. Breasts shrivel, menses stop, activity is restricted. These morphological changes and the physical weakness associated with them offer the escape of regression back into a second childhood. There is physical debilitation, often requiring entry into the safe structure of a hospital. The unconscious goal of this extreme dependency is to remove responsibility for sin.

Interestingly, a reverse anorexia is found in steroid users. Although they attain huge weight gains, they are never satisfied with their physique. The defensive nature of this perfectionism is proven by the fact that if they stop trying to bigger and better themselves, they often fall into deep depression.40

b) Bulimia

"Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied" (Micah 6:14). This is the condition of the Bulimic. The increasingly prevalent Bulimia is estimated to affect between seven and eight million women in the
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United States. \(^{41}\) It is a disorder involving periods of uncontrolled binge eating often followed by self-induced vomiting or some other means of eliminating the food before it is assimilated.

As much as the Bulimic gives in to the impulse to gorge with food, she never feel full because food does not resolve her unconscious anxiety. As a form of chemical dependency, the food has a numbing, antidepressant effect but becomes addictive. It temporarily "stuffs" down the guilt, shame and depression due to existential reality, but the conflict remains.

**Anorexia versus Bulimia**

Research has shown that dietary restraint, growing out of a cultural value of slenderness for females, is closely associated with eating disorders. \(^{42}\) For both the Anorexic and the Bulimic, eating feels illegal. Both are concerned with the changes in body shape related to food intake. The Anorexic exerts constant control over the entry gate to food. The purging Bulimic has found a way to be able to give in to the impulse to not only indulge, but overindulge, without damage necessarily being done to body shape. Purging damages the inside of the body but this unseen consequence is preferred over being fat.

The Anorexic's behavior implies a total repression of the existential conflict. As a perfect metaphor for her spiritual deadness, she is in a state of starvation but does not consciously feel hungry. Yet there is a tenacious, merciless clinging to perfectionism in the constant restraint of the impulse to eat.

It is not surprising that more psychopathology is associated with Anorexia than Bulimia. Anorexia is like a form of OCD with a prominent delusion about body size. Only a deep conflict of the spirit would explain why fasting to death would be chosen over facing the truth.

For the purging Bulimic, there is the superficial appearance of compliance with the law, a false front of perfection. Underneath this is repeated sin/atonement.

The Bulimic has more contact with reality than the Anorexic. The conflict is closer to the surface; she knows she is hungry. She is also closer to admitting she is a sinner, for the forbidden impulse
to gorge breaks loose every so often. Then the pseudo-atonement mechanism of induced vomiting or some other type of purging can function: the psychological defense of "undoing."

Dietary preoccupations have always been a major element of legalistic religions, both western and eastern. Salvation is to be gained through food restriction or a correct diet. Occasionally members of the Jains in India starve themselves to death in a futile bid for salvation. Jesus cleared this up once and for all when he said "whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;" (Mark 7:18) and "that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man." (Mark 7:20). Only the sense of being a forgiven sinner, safe for eternity, can end this Anorexic/Bulemic bondage.

Other disorders

A number of other disorders listed in the DSM-III-R are relatively temporary or less serious, i.e., the Sexual Disorders, Factitious Disorders, Sleep Disorders, Adjustment Disorders and the so-called "V Code" disorders that can be traced to external stressors such as death of a family member, marital problems, etc. In all cases, the problem comes down to a person’s need for the gospel. Life is hard, and only faith in God enables us to thrive. The surer people are about having escaped eternal separation from God, the easier their life will be; if their deepest fear is addressed and remedied, they can handle the rest. In this world God is our problem-solver, the one to call on for help.

To sum up...

In this chapter we applied our Bible-based diagnosis and cure to most of the mental disorders not already discussed. These included DSM non-schizophrenic, psychotic, neurotic and personality disorders. We also took a broad look at substance abuse and impulse control disorders; while eating disorders received a closer examination.

We saw the way in which all these disorders stem from one root but have different types of defense mechanism shoots or patterns coming from that one source. In each case, the sin/death equation
makes the most fitting or parsimonious explanation. Therefore, only the gospel will cure.

Notes


11. Barber, J. P. and DeRubeis, R. J. (1989). "On second thought: When the action is in cognitive therapy for depression." *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 13*, 5, pp. 441-457. Shows there is little difference between the short-term effects of cognitive therapy and medication. However, due to a hypothesized advantage in its teaching of compensatory skills, cognitive therapy is superior in relapse prevention.


15. Paykel, op. cit.


21. Some Christians believe visualization to be an occult practice to be shunned. This is going too far. God gave us the ability to visualize. We use this ability to make pictures in our mind when we think of, for example, the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea or Christ on the cross. When we visualize the future which God has told us of, it makes it more believable...the many mansions of our heavenly abode versus burning in the Lake of Fire. We also make a spontaneous mental picture when we pray for somebody to be saved. God wants us to use all our faculties in the process of being saved and caring for others.

   Visualization is only an occult practice if accompanied by the
presumption that thoughts have magical power, i.e., the ability to produce
the things the mind imagines. There is a variant of Christianity called
“name it and claim it” which does fall into this occult trap.

related to abortion." American Journal of Psychotherapy, 43, pp. 269-
276. The disorder appeared subsequent to, and was apparently triggered
by guilt feelings about three previous abortions stimulated by a routine
medical procedure.

City, California: Ransom Press, a division of Grace and Sanity Ministries.


dysphoria, anxiety and obsessions in a normal population." Behavior
Research and Therapy, 27, 3, pp. 213-220.

159-165.

27 Reid, op. cit.

H. H. Goldman (Ed.) Review of General Psychiatry. Los Altos, California:


35. Kernberg, op. cit.


Chapter Fifteen

"Feed my sheep"

Three times Jesus made a request to Peter after asking Peter if he loved Him: "Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17). The food is the good news of God's rescue, the only route to mental health. The sheep are those who have "ears to hear" (Deuteronomy 29:4).

What does it mean to have ears to hear? Does this only apply to those who are conscious that they are hungry? How about the many who are hungry but not conscious of it? The fact is that everyone is hungry for the truth but may still refuse it when it is offered. If they are offered only the secular self-oriented junk food that appeals to them, that may enable them to cope better for a while, but not in the long term. They must still be alerted to the truly nutritious food so they can decide if they want to know more. The true food must be offered to all in order to reach the few who will eat it up. And prayer works. The author has found that when she asks God to send her clients with ears to hear, this is what happens.

How do you "integrate" psychological counseling and the Bible? The Christian counseling field disagrees about the appropriateness and the "how" of dealing with the Bible in psychotherapy because it is infected with so-called "liberal" values that actually repress freedom. However, once you see that grace—God’s provision of the payment for sin—is the foundation for mental health, your focus as a counselor or psychologist must always be on God's gift of the payment for sin.

However, it is not unusual for Christian counselors to keep all mention of the Gospel outside the counseling room.
Several clients in my practice have said that their previous Christian counselors made no mention of God at all. Why? Well, here are some of the flawed arguments which have been used for not sharing the Gospel in counseling, and the rebuttals which destroy these arguments.

**Argument 1.**

The domain of psychotherapy is the emotional life, not the spiritual life. A person should go to his pastor for spiritual counseling.

**Rebuttal 1.**

The emotional life is dependent on the spiritual life. We cannot be mentally healthy when our hearts are heavy with the anticipation of hell. Besides, who says that the spirit and the emotions are two separate domains? By what authority? Certainly not the Bible. Do pastors and psychotherapists have exclusive territorial rights to different parts of the psyche, as if the psyche can be split? No.

There is an enormous degree of ambivalence and resistance towards "coming out" in the Christian counseling community. This is typified by two conflicting statements made by Benner, who says "Psychotherapy is not a good place to talk about God, prayer, scriptural interpretation, or theology." He then goes on to say "Psychotherapy is also an excellent place to explore blocks in spiritual growth. Why is my prayer life so dead?" How we can explore such blocks without talking about God, prayer, scriptural interpretation, or theology is certainly mysterious.

There are now several accepted quasi-spiritual approaches in the mainstream of psychotherapy (see Chapter Eleven), so clearly there is a precedent for including the spirit in this work. But as we have seen, all of those other spiritual approaches convey the Satanic theme, just like any form of mental health counseling that is not Bible-based.
Argument 2.

Mental health can be achieved through secular means, so keep religion out of the picture.

Rebuttal 2.

Clinton McLemore is one Christian psychotherapist who believes "It is possible for an individual to be a paragon of mental health as this is traditionally defined, and yet be without faith in God through Christ." Well, much hinges on how mental health is defined. If we define mental health as the short-term ability to bind anxiety and guilt through massive psychological defense, secular therapy is somewhat effective.

However, some of the humanistic mental health definitions we saw in Chapter Nine were: congruence, authenticity, emotional integrity, wholeness, and the ability to give and receive love. Psychodynamic approaches aim towards freedom from debilitating intrapsychic conflict. None of these goals can be met unless there is a sense of reprieve from the consequence of sin.

Argument 3.

Religion should only be a topic in psychotherapy if it is causing problems.

Rebuttal 3.

Absolutely right. It so happens that the root of all problems is a religious one: existential guilt. The fact that this root is not immediately apparent does not mean it is O.K. to ignore it. If a car has engine trouble, a tune-up may help, but not for long. Sooner or later, the engine has to be dealt with.
Argument 4.

APA ethical guideline #2 requires that a psychologist operate within the limits of his competence. A psychotherapist is not trained to deal with religious issues, so he should leave them alone.

Rebuttal 4.

True, preparation for dealing with the religious context of the client is notably absent in clinical training programs, even though it has been shown to be of major importance to a person's outlook on life.

The clear purpose of this book is to show that clinical training without Bible training is useless at best, terribly dangerous at worst. But at the present time, if religion were to be included in standard clinical training, it would be likely to have a strong anti-biblical bias, just as the mental health profession has.

Currently, mental health licensing examinations require familiarity with a wide range of techniques and ideas which run in direct opposition to Bible teachings. Since there are many different and conflicting clinical orientations, examinees are not expected to espouse all these techniques and ideas, but merely display knowledge of them all. However, the Christian counselor can easily be led astray by this unless his training involves a strong emphasis on the Bible.

Should Christian counseling involve a specific training and credentialing process beyond the generic license? Jungians can practice Jungian psychotherapy without necessarily having a specific credential in it. Why should Bible-based therapy be treated any differently? Obviously Bible-based therapists need to be thoroughly grounded in God's Word, but should they have to prove that in a certification process beyond licensing? It might actually be advisable for them to do this. A Bible study requirement
could make Christian counselors less likely to shy away from the truth. Of course, if the Bible were made central to mental health just as it should be, it would not be necessary to ask these questions. Bible training would be the core preparation for all counselors and psychotherapists.

**Argument 5.**

A psychotherapist's training, even if it included the Bible, would not provide as thorough a preparation in it as the training of a minister. To avoid confusing the client, a psychotherapist should refer his client to a trained minister for spiritual concerns.

**Rebuttal 5.**

Although it is clear that counselors do need thorough Bible preparation, the fact is that the message of the Bible is very simple: we are saved from hell by the blood of the sacrifice that God made of his only son, Jesus. How hard is it to communicate that? Besides, God has told us he will put the words in our mouths when we share the Gospel. However, a therapist has the responsibility to encourage his client to search the Scriptures for himself, not rely on what anyone else tells him.

It may help if the client talks to a minister, but many ministers lack time for intensive one-on-one counseling. More importantly, ministers in this age generally have little real help to offer. They have increasingly moved away from emphasizing hell and grace. With some highly notable exceptions, they are either legalistic or liberal (for a discussion of this see Chapter Twelve).

**Argument 6.**

If the minister is doing his job, there should be no need for a member of his flock to have individual counseling.
Rebuttal 6.

Even with good preaching, a person's blind spots can persist. We return to the example of David and the counseling God gave him through Nathan, the prophet. David loved God. He knew God's law but still was in need of individual counsel. The Holy Spirit will work through any means available, and a one-on-one counselor has a prime opportunity.

Argument 7.

This is an argument very common among "Christian" therapists maintaining a secular practise: A psychotherapist has no right to challenge a person's spiritual belief system. To do so would be an ethical violation. He should respect the person's freedom of choice. Evangelizing has no place in psychotherapy.

Rebuttal 7.

Where do we get this crazy notion that a person's spiritual belief system is sacred? The APA ethical guideline 3.c stating that psychologists be "sensitive" to the religious background of their clients is actually wide open to interpretation. We can be sensitive to our clients' religious beliefs without considering them sacred. Did God ever say that Baal worship was sacred? Any spiritual belief system that is not based on the Bible is demonic, leading right into hell, and must be challenged. Sensitivity is involved in the "how" issue, not the "what" one.

With regard to freedom of choice, whatever the psychotherapist tells a person about God, the ultimate choice will always lie with the individual. That is the true purpose of free will, that we come to God willingly.

However, we can only exercise true freedom of choice when we have the full range of available information. Without the truth before us, we can only chose among bad
alternatives. A standard practice in the mental health profession is to challenge the delusions (or false beliefs) of clients. It is of the utmost importance that religious delusions be challenged with the right information. Considering that ignorance or false beliefs about Christ has a terrible eternal consequence, it is unethical not to do so.

Even if the Gospel were not essential to mental health, there is another reason why it should be part of psychotherapy. Saving life is the supreme ethical principle of the mental health profession. No Bible-believer worth his salt can say this applies merely to the prevention of suicide or homicide. The issue at stake is eternal life.

**Argument 8.**

Therapists should be value-free and belief free. They should in no way attempt to foster any spiritual belief system.

**Rebuttal 8.**

As Victor Frankl says: "There is no psychotherapy without a theory of man and a philosophy of life underneath it." Research has shown this to be the case. Psychotherapy is never value free. Any practitioner who believes his work is not absolutely riddled with spiritual values and beliefs is blind to what he is doing. The issue is how to use values in a way that does not abuse the therapist's power or the client's vulnerability.

There is no way to address mental health without also including religion. It is impossible to avoid taking a position vis-a-vis God. If we avoid talking about God, we are taking a position against God. If we talk about God without mentioning Jesus Christ, we are also taking a position against God.

The secular psychotherapeutic community often states that the client must find his own way to a religious position.
Somehow it is ethical to force-feed anti-godly ideas but unethical to even mention God unless the client raises the issue. Even when he does, conversation is usually steered away.

There is a glaring inconsistency here. Obviously, the client is not expected to find his own way to mental health. Although he may not initially realize it, he has come for assistance that extends beyond his behavioral, cognitive, and emotional life into the all-important spiritual terrain. The therapist can be a guide in the client's spiritual investigation. He does not have all the answers. Only the Bible does. Several chapters in this book have shown that only the Bible holds up under scrutiny. It cannot be force-fed. The freeing truth in the Bible, if given a chance, will shine through the merciless legalism and delusionality in every other existential belief system.

Argument 9.

In their guidelines for APA ethical principle #4 on public statements, Spiegel and Koocher state: "Advice should have a scientific basis." Where is the evidence that Bible-based psychotherapy works?

Rebuttal 9.

Obviously it is desirable to have evidence. But the fact of the matter is, there is no hard scientific evidence for the effectiveness of any form of therapy, per se. Personal qualities of the therapist have been shown to be the major determinant of treatment outcome. At this point, other than case studies, there is no modern empirical research demonstrating the effectiveness of Bible-based therapy. Nor is there evidence that it is harmful. The guilt/grace research by Hood, Taylor and associates described in Chapter Thirteen indicates the mitigating effects of grace, but we need substantiation of that in a clinical setting.
However, the Bible itself has several examples of case studies of individuals who become insane when they go into idolatry and are healed when they turn to God. Saul, king of Israel (I Samuel) and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Daniel 1-5), are cases in point.

**Argument 10.**

APA ethical principle 3:c states: "In their professional roles, psychologists avoid any action that will violate or diminish the legal and civil rights of clients or others who may be affected by their actions." Is the promotion of a Biblical perspective any type of legal or civil rights violation? How about separation of church and state?

**Rebuttal 10.**

"Freedom of speech" and "freedom of religion" are constitutional rights of both therapist and client. Is it a violation of religious freedom if religious ideas are explored in therapy? Surely not. If religiously-rooted ideas are excluded from psychotherapy, there is nothing of value to talk about.

Is it a violation if the therapist gives advice that conflicts with a person's religion, or attempts to change it? If so, the entire psychiatric profession is in violation of the constitution. This is the typical situation: the therapist determines a person has a basic Judaeo-Christian affiliation yet advises him to look to himself as a change agent rather than God.

If the client does not wish to hear about God, nothing compels him to listen. The therapist is obliged to take note of this and help him find alternative treatment if the client so wishes.

Interestingly, "separation of church and state" is frequently invoked to stop Bible proponents from speaking about the Bible in public places, even at public meetings in
Christian churches.\textsuperscript{12} This is the commonly used warped interpretation of the establishment clause in the constitution stating that government cannot enforce a religion nor prevent the free exercise thereof.

On the other hand, "freedom of speech" is invoked when a member of an anti-Biblical spiritual discipline wants a public platform. For example, the San Francisco public library speaker program turned down a talk I proposed because the Bible would be brought into it. The grounds of separation of church and state were used. Soon after this, a program on witchcraft was offered at San Jose public library, defended on free speech grounds.

In fact, separation of church and state is not in the constitution. It was a notion devised to differentiate the controlling interests of two different bodies. It was not devised to prevent anyone from talking about God in public places. After all, we declare ourselves a nation under God. Curiously enough, the "separation" clause is never used to prevent clergy from talking leftist politics. It only seems to be used to fight the Bible.

\textbf{Argument 11.}

When a client refuses to listen on a spiritual level, should the Christian therapist deal with him only on that human, secular level? Or if he will hear about a generic god, but not about the God of the Bible, should the therapist not accept this?

\textbf{Rebuttal 11.}

One has to start where the person is, but have the intention of leading them into the truth. The counselor must not be an instrument of Satan by encouraging false knowledge. To lead a person out of unbelief and into the truth is a very sensitive process requiring a lot of prayer and listening to God. The counselor must be well versed in
asking the questions that poke holes in the false beliefs and be ready with reasons for belief when the client is open to them.

**Argument 12.**
If the therapist treats the person with enough love, he will experience Jesus through the therapist, and will be drawn towards him without the therapist having to mention the Gospel.

**Rebuttal 12.**
Many Christian therapists work under this assumption. Although it may lead some clients to the recognition of God's saving grace, it is far more likely to foster a secular humanistic perspective. It centers on fables: how good humans are, how much love they can give one another, and how much healing they can give one another through that love.

**To sum up…**
When Jesus told Peter to feed his sheep, he was speaking to all believers in Christ. He made it clear that this "food" is the spiritual message of the Gospel, the sole means by which people can avoid the Lake of Fire. He wants us to make spreading the Gospel our priority, to disseminate the truth to even our enemies who are sinners just like us.

This contradicts the stance taken not only by the traditional mental health profession but also the Christian counseling one. The present chapter has presented rebuttals of arguments used for omitting mention of the Gospel in the counseling room.

Christian counselors and psychotherapists are in a privileged position, assigned the task of sheep dogs serving good shepherd. However, either due to false teaching or rebellion they have gone to sleep on the job. They have
become like the greedy, selfish dogs described by Isaiah, "every one for his gain" (Isaiah 56:10-11). Maybe they think they can get away with working for two masters. We know what Christ had to say about that: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

Since acceptance of the Gospel is the precondition for mental health, there is a dire need to bring it into the counseling room. We will feel a sense of urgency about doing the feeding only if we love Jesus--and His Father. What makes us love Jesus? We love Jesus when we experience the enormity of His sacrifice in the face of our utter undeservingness of it. This thing is beyond our comprehension, this God-given escape from the Lake of Fire into eternal fellowship with Him in heaven.

Notes


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Research and Practice, 14, pp. 170-184.


12. The author was asked not to bring God into a discussion of ways a neighborhood can become safer at a meeting held in a Congregational church in South Berkeley, California in September, 1989. "Separation of church and state" was the rationale.
Chapter Sixteen

What This Book Was About

This book was about the universal, inborn $sin=\text{death/hell equation}$. In a nutshell, this book said that mental illness is due to human awareness of being destined for the Lake of Fire, incapable of avoiding it through personal means. Sanity, on the other hand, derives from claiming the God-given rescue from that fire. Obviously, though, the issue is much bigger than gaining mental health during our brief lives here. This is about eternity.

Death awareness: Plenty of philosophers and psychologists have looked at the psychological effect of death awareness but we know of no others who explain the situation in terms of hell awareness, incorporating the law and the prophets with the Gospel. The philosopher Heidegger said it is only when humans accept the inevitability of death that they are fully alive. The problem lies in the impossibility of accepting death when people sense they are destined for the Lake of Fire; every moment is foreshadowed.

Party killer: A friend of mine, never big on small talk, had an interesting response to people who enquired at parties: "How are you?" He would ask in reply: "How can I acquire the awareness of death and retain the will to live?" After several gatherings were broken up by this question, hosts began to forewarn guests that they should not ask how my friend was because he would tell them. So he stopped going to parties and stayed home reading his Bible. There, of course, he found the answer to his question. Only through Christ can we embrace both life and death.
Avoidance of suffering: Jung considered neurosis "the avoidance of legitimate suffering." There is truth to this. Undeniably, mental illness, neurosis, or whatever it is called, grows out of the avoidance of pain. But suffering is only legitimate if it leads to a cure, to the Gospel. Certainly Jung could offer no true remedy. He offered a form of the Satanic lie with his notion that the cure came from the divinity existing within humans. He believed that if we would confront the pain instead of avoiding it, our divine nature would heal us. However, humans are not gods; we are separated from divinity in our natural state of imperfection. We do need to confront the pain, but until one is sure of a connection to God through the imputed perfection of Christ, that is impossible. Solomon told us that "fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). The knowledge is the Gospel.

Regardless of the variety of mental illnesses, our basic diagnosis is found in the Bible; so is its cure. The Gospel, or good news of God's gift of a rescue from eternal darkness, is the only source of mental health, that is, true peace of mind. Though clear from the Bible, this connection has not previously been made in the mental health literature.

At this point, there is no way it can be proven conclusively. Yet this is the most parsimonious explanation of the phenomena found in psychopathology, mythology, "normal" patterns of behavior, and the structure of religious belief systems. The presence of a profound fear about eternal survival in the spirit-thirsty human psyche...this is the missing piece to so many puzzles.

Chapter summary

Part One of the book was called "Hell and Madness." Its eight chapters presented the evidence that our universal fear of hell is the one root cause of all psychopathology. Chapter One showed how knowledge of a terrifying death sentence
entered the human psyche when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. The chapter went on to define the God-given reprieve of this death sentence as the only source of mental health.

Chapters Two and Three looked at the way science, often unwittingly, validates the Bible. The fact is, all psychological research and theory can and must be reinterpreted from the perspective of our innate existential dilemma.

How could inborn knowledge of facing the Lake of Fire not profoundly affect us? The fact that we may not be conscious of it does not mean it is not there. It influences us in an unseen, deadly way until we know of our rescuer.

This is where Freud and Jung come in. Chapters Four to Six focused on the biblically-supporting aspects of Jungian and Freudian theories concerning the structure and workings of the psyche. The Jungian concept of inherent archetypes in a collective unconscious gives us a way to see how God's law, prophesies, blessings and curses are written in our genes. Freud's concept of a dynamic unconscious shows how this material creates an internal battle. His elaboration of psychological defense mechanisms describes what we do to try to both resolve the war and flee from it. Freud helps us understand how we humans are capable of hiding our heads in the sand for a lifetime.

Chapters Seven and Eight showed psychosis to be a showcase for our sense of doom. The inherent time-bomb is detectable in the phenomenology of all psychotic disorders, particularly the most severe one, schizophrenia.

Humans go crazy trying to escape hell. Only grace will cure this. Part Two, entitled "Grace and Sanity," showed grace to be absent from the non-biblical religions and traditional treatments for mental illness. Chapters Nine to Twelve journeyed on the sinking ships of secular psychotherapy, religions based on the misleading doctrine of
perfection, counterfeit spiritual therapeutic approaches, and some Christian approaches that miss the mark. Finally we reached a discussion of the literature on religion and mental health. It is clear that researchers in the area are coming closer to finding grace to be the determinant of mental health. There is still a long way to go.

Part Three focused on application. Chapter Fourteen showed how our Biblical diagnosis and cure apply to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Our conflict with Satan is variously manifested in the different types of mental illness classified by the DSM. Chapter Fifteen demolished the arguments typically made against bringing the Bible into mental health.

To sum up...

Jerome Frank states that "Great evangelists of previous eras, like Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, dwelt on the horrors of damnation..." He goes on to say that Wesley made a much higher percentage of converts than today's evangelistic revivals because God's wrath was more vivid to man in the eighteenth century than it is in the twentieth.

Why? Not because the Bible has changed, clearly, but because preaching has changed. Today's lovey-dovey preaching does not address our sense of deserving eternal damnation, so it cannot lead to the joy of salvation. It misrepresents salvation as applying only to this lifetime, viewing it only as a rescue from committing certain kinds of sin. But if a horrible eternity is not at stake, many would just as soon forget God.

Mental health is attained only when humans recognize that the Lake of Fire is real, that they are headed there, and that God has gone to great pains to provide an undeserved ransom. Peace of mind involves a fundamental change in belief from negative to positive at the existential level: from doomed to rescued.
There is no peace of mind without reconciliation with God. It is the cornerstone and source of inspiration for all other changes in the human psyche, including the aims of secular psychotherapy and non-Biblical religions mentioned Chapters Nine to Eleven. These changes include: the experience of unconditional love, wholeness, relationship, congruence, individuation, ego control, self-acceptance, positive coping, optimism, actualization, meaningfulness, and enlightenment.

Without factoring in Satan's ability to blind us not only to the true reason for all our guilt and fear, but also to the conscious experience of these emotions, it makes no sense that we would not recognize our dilemma. Also, only the influence of Satan explains the obtuseness of the psychological profession. For example, Victor Frankl is not only concerned with the broad existential perspective; he is also knowledgeable about the Bible. Yet he is able to make the statement: "A religious psychotherapy in the proper sense is inconceivable because of the essential difference between psychotherapy and religion, which is a dimensional difference. To begin with, the aims of the two are different. Psychotherapy aims at mental health. Religion aims at salvation."4

He is wrong. Mental health is only possible when salvation is assured. Outside of the act of atonement accomplished on our behalf by the Lord God of the Bible, there is nothing to hope for and everything to fear.

Grace is unmerited favor, salvation for free, God's gift of the shed blood of Christ that pays the price for human sin, so buying us out of hell. Only this unconditional love from God melts the human heart of stone. It inspires us to love God and desire to please him.

In conflict with what God says, psychology tells us to love ourselves. It is more complicated than that. With our egotistic sin nature, we humans are already in love with
ourselves, but the feeling is not reciprocated. There is no valid reason for self-admiration. We can, however, become unafraid to face our depravity and transgression, accepting the beast that we are because we know God loves us. The "guilt-based" self-loathing called "low self-esteem" is replaced by an internalized sense of God's forgiveness.

Seeing our shortcomings with the sureness of God's unending mercy leads to repentance from sins. This is the true basis for what Freud called "ego control." Knowing God loves us melts our hearts and leads us to feel ashamed of our wrongdoing. We want to change. Confession and repentance are outgrowths of salvation from hell, two sides of the same coin. The paradox is: we have the responsibility but not the control. We have the responsibility for confession about our law-breaking but none of the control to stop it. Only God can change us, and the only way to connect with God and the Holy Spirit is through Christ.

As we perceive God's unconditional love for us, the basis for all our relationships changes. Security with God makes our dependency on others lose its death grip. We can love our neighbors, not expecting them to be any less than the very imperfect human beings that we are. Realizing we do not deserve salvation any more than the next person, we are inspired to share the Gospel.

No longer held back by the guilt and uncertainty which cause inaction and self-sabotage, we are freed to develop to our God-given potential. Our lives take on meaning, not the faltering so-called meaning that existentialists tell us we can determine ourselves, but the solid knowledge that we are part of God's family and plan.

Do we really need scientific proof to support this? It is impossible to say. First person testimonials abound in the literature, but we do not yet have the large scale research that would prove grace to be the only genuine and lasting source of sanity.
If God wants us to have scientific proof, he will give it to us, but it seems that he wants us to go to the Bible. Our friend Paul said: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). Perhaps those who do not accept the Bible will not be convinced by scientific evidence, either.

Notes


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