

pastor with a beautiful wife and a fruitful ministry commits adultery, etc., assumes some reason other than self-will and thus offers an excuse for sin. Christian psychology's growing popularity is easy to understand: it protects self from the accusing finger of conscience and God's Word.

### The Correct Diagnosis

One diagnosis fits all cases: SIN. At the root of sin is SELF. Jesus said that we are all the slaves of sin and self until He sets us free (Jn 8:34-36). Unbelief is the root of all sin. There is no greater sin than refusing to believe the promises of God and not allowing Him to mold us to His will. The just live by faith.

"Too harsh!" cries the Christian psychologist. "What about the person who was abused as a child, or who has been traumatized in a hundred other ways?" Could there be a safer refuge for the wounded and fearful than God Himself? Is He not able to bring comfort, courage and deliverance? He promises to do so! The Bible is all about those who were hated, abused, cast out, falsely accused and imprisoned, tortured, slain, and yet who triumphed through faith in God. He has not changed. He will work the same deliverance today for those who trust and obey Him.

Yes, but what about those whose fathers repeatedly lied, cheated and abused their trust? How can they believe in God as a loving Father when they had no earthly example? Away with such folly! Since when was any earthly father a model of the heavenly Father? Can we not believe that God created the universe because our fathers were unable to do so? David said, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up" (Ps 27:10). His confidence was in God in spite of his parents' failings.

A husband would be hurt and frustrated if his wife refused to believe him. What about disbelieving God! He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. Some husbands, of course, have lied and broken promises so often that their wives would be fools to trust them until such men have allowed God to do in them what David prayed for: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps 51:10). God can do that, but therapy cannot. Psychological counseling attempts to develop rather than to deny self. Instead of self-confidence, what we need is trust and confidence in God and obedience to His will.

Christ never promised to keep our cars running or to prosper our businesses or to make Christians greater athletes or scholars than non-Christians. He promised eternal life—not just life that never ends, but a divine

quality of life here and now. "He that believeth on me,...out of his belly [innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn 7:38). Every Christian is indwelt by and led of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; Rom 8:14). "The *fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..." (Gal 5:22-23). No therapy can improve upon that! Ask and believe God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

God made man in His image. This does not refer to a physical image, for "God is a Spirit" (Jn 4:24). Man was intended, in all he said and did, to reflect God's love, patience, holiness, grace, mercy, truth—the very character of God. Of course that was impossible for man on his own. Man could only be what God had intended for him if God expressed Himself through man. God had to be his very life.

Self had its awful birth when Adam and Eve wilfully acted independently of God (Gn 3). That self, said Christ, must be denied (Mt 16:24-26). It is not that man must cease to exist as an individual with emotions, intellect and will. No, he willingly allows God to fulfill through him the purpose for his existence.

Jesus, the perfect Man, said, "I can of mine own self do nothing...I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (Jn 5:30). Only through denying self can we enter into this relationship with the Father which Christ enjoyed and begin to experience the life He has for us. May this be our passion and joy.

—Dave Hunt  
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# God & Self

*Me, Myself & I* is typical of many books being written to defend Christian psychology. Its author, Archibald D. Hart, is dean of Fuller Seminary's Graduate School of Psychology. Advertisements for the book call it "a response to Dave Hunt and John MacArthur, Jr." In fact, Hart's quarrel is with God's Word, which he (like other "Christian psychologists") denies is sufficient to provide counsel for every emotional and spiritual need, even though it claims to be. To say that Christian psychology is *compatible* with Scripture is an admission that it supplements God's Word.

### Quarreling With God's Word

Hart leaves no doubt concerning Biblical insufficiency. He states repeatedly, "We desperately need a Christian psychology" (pp 11, 21, etc.); "The need for 'integrating' psychology and faith is urgent" (p 247). *If such is indeed the case, then four logical conclusions must follow:*

1. From its very beginning, the Church, including Jesus Christ who founded it and Paul and the other apostles and prophets (to say nothing of Old Testament saints such as Moses and Daniel), desperately needed psychological help. The heroes and heroines of the faith mentioned in Hebrews 11 all would have lived happier, more fulfilling, fruitful and godly lives had psychological counseling been available to them in their day.
2. Because Scripture lacks essential insights into human personality, behavior and treatment which are found only in the recently developed field of psychology, the Church has been incapable of properly dealing with many emotional and spiritual problems for nearly 2,000 years. The Old Testament saints were similarly handicapped for another 4,000 years before that.
3. Essential diagnoses and cures of spiritual and emotional problems which the Holy Spirit, for some strange reason, failed to include in Scripture, have at last been supplied by humanists, many of whom (like Freud) were rabidly anti-Christian. Thanks to these godless prophets of psychology, the Church can at last deal with the full range of emotional and spiritual problems for which Spirit-filled Christians have desperately needed psychological help for 20 centuries.
4. As a result of these new and essential psychological insights

which have been brought into the church by Christian psychologists to supply what is lacking in Scripture, today's Christians live far happier, more fruitful and victorious lives than Peter, John, Paul, Calvin, Wesley, David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor, Spurgeon, Moody, et al. were able to live, relying only upon the Holy Spirit and God's Word.

*Obviously, all four of these conclusions are blasphemously false. No further proof is needed that Christian psychology is a fraud.*

### Ungodly Mergers

Christian psychology tries to merge Christ with Freud and a host of godless theorists. Talk about ecumenism! Psychology deceitfully unites Christian and pagan in a common language and faith. This humanistic religion's priesthood performs rituals known as psychotherapy for the alleged healing of the soul. Whether these priests are atheists, Catholics or evangelicals, whether they quote the Bible or deride it, all have studied similar academic courses, boast similar degrees, and are licensed by the same secular authorities. When will the church wake up!

Hart argues, "The study of the psychology of learning, perception, and personality is just as valid as the study of anatomy or surgery. But I have yet to hear Dave Hunt or anyone else clamoring for a 'Christian theory of surgery.'" Of course not. That's the whole point. There is a vast difference between body and soul, flesh and spirit, brain and mind, glands and morals, germs and will, disease and sin—"between tissues and issues," as the Bobgans put it.

Hart should ask himself, "If it makes no sense to call medicine, chemistry, learning/perception theory, etc. 'Christian', why should psychology be called 'Christian'?" Why indeed! This error stems from psychology's fraudulent claim to deal with the soul (psyche) and to offer solutions to spiritual, moral and emotional problems for which Christianity claims to have the only and sufficient answers. Psychology is, in fact, an illegitimate rival to the promises God makes in His word.

In spite of Pentecostal and charismatic claims that no Christian need ever be sick, the Bible does not offer total and perpetual *physical* healing in this life. ("By [His] stripes ye were healed" refers to sin, not sickness; 1 Pet 2:24.) God's Word does, however, offer total and perpetual *spiritual* healing, and that includes the emotions. The Bible doesn't claim to be a chemistry or physics or auto mechanics handbook. None of these disciplines offers anything that could be called "Christian." Then what is "Christian" about psychology? Nothing. Remember that what psychology offers was never part of the Christianity of Jesus or Paul! In fact, Hart admits, "Dave Hunt is correct"—Christian psychology isn't really "Christian" (p 22).

Scripture declares that God's "divine power hath given unto us ALL THINGS that pertain unto life and godliness,

through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet 1:3-4). In His grace and infinite power, God provides all we need to live holy, happy lives.

The question is whether we believe God, are willing to obey His Word, and are content with what He has given us for "life and godliness." Do we trust His "divine power" as sufficient, or do we think that some psychologist, "Christian" or secular, knows what God doesn't, and can do what God can't? Each Christian is a branch in the true Vine. Is not the life of Christ, the Vine, sufficient to produce a life in us that glorifies God and bears fruit for eternity? Does the "divine nature" of which we are partakers by faith need psychotherapy? Surely not!

### Willing to Trust

Christ lives in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:17). Need we look anywhere else than to Him? Indeed, Christ "is our life" (Col 3:4). The Christian simply needs to allow and trust Christ to fully express Himself through him or her. It is blasphemy to suggest that Christ living in the Christian needs psychological help! The problem is that self instead of Christ is in control.

*Self* is at the heart of all psychotherapy—secular or Christian. The aim is always *self*-improvement, *self*-actualization, *self*-assertion, *self*-love, *self*-image, *self*-esteem, *self* *ad infinitum*. Therefore, "Christian" psychology is forced to defend the self which Scripture says must be denied. That defense is the theme of Hart's book. His final summation declares, "Christians need help...in reclaiming the promised land called 'self for God'" (p 248). Incredible! This is the *opposite* of what the Bible teaches.

There is a difference between denying self (Christ's requirement), and self-denial (Hart's gospel). The latter involves self giving up its desires in order to achieve self-improvement and pat itself on the back. Christ's "deny self," says Hart, really means self behaving itself by self-control and saying yes to Christ. He tells us that rather than being denied, self must be accepted, affirmed, esteemed, improved—and that in order to develop the self, one must first *understand* it (p 71).

In trying to understand the self, however, Hart becomes bogged down in a hopeless swamp of contradictory statements. For example: "The self is the *totality* of what and who I am as a person" (p 42). "Deep within each of us is a place we call the self...All the skeletons of shame and embarrassment are kept hidden there" (p 69). (How can the self be a *place* deep within me and yet be the totality of what and who I am?) "I have the ability to *transcend my self*" (p 46). (How can I be something different from, and even transcend,

*self* if self is the totality of what I am?) "I can 'know' myself...The self...can be known fully only by God" (p 27). (Which is it?) "No issue is more important for Christian psychology than the proper understanding of the self...The more I probe and search the self, the more elusive and perplexing it becomes" (p 73). (So pursuing the most important issue leads only to increasing perplexity! What an admission!)

Similar contradictions are found on nearly every page, along with even more serious errors such as, "As we learn to graft ourselves onto the true vine [Christ]...self-fulfillment becomes Christ-fulfillment" (pp 71-72). To the contrary, we do not "graft ourselves" onto Christ. That occurs by God's power the moment we are born of the Spirit through faith in Christ as our Savior. As for self-fulfillment being Christ-fulfillment, John the Baptist's declaration that "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn 3:30) and Paul's "Yet not I, but Christ" (Gal 2:20) should settle that question.

### Loyalty to Self or to God?

Hart seems torn between his loyalty to his profession and his desire to be Biblical. Unfortunately, he does not exegete the Bible, but reasons from his psychological training and then imposes that view on Scripture, citing verses for alleged support which fail to do so because there aren't any. Numerous examples could be given. On pages 41-42 under the heading "The Self in Scripture," Hart lists 16 self-concepts, with a supporting verse for each. In 12 of the 16, he totally misrepresents God's Word. Let us take the first and last as examples.

"Ignorance of the self misleads and deceives (Is 44:20)." In fact, the verse he cites states of an idolater, "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside..." Clearly the deception does not pertain to "ignorance of the self" but to superstitious trust in the alleged power of an idol. Isaiah is not decrying a lack of the self-knowledge Hart advocates, but, as the context shows, the folly of trusting an idol to provide help which it cannot give.

"We are never to forget ourselves (Jas 1:24)." Not so. James actually writes that those who hear God's Word but don't practice what it says are like a man "beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." James is not telling us "never to forget ourselves," but to bring our lives into line with God's Word.

Psychology seeks to "understand" how and why we think and act as we do. Such an approach would help repair an engine but not a person. We are not programmed robots. Trying to "understand" *why* a young woman raised in a Christian home becomes a prostitute, *why* a