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# 1

## CAN PSYCHIATRY SOLVE SOUL PROBLEMS?

An elderly patient once said to me, "Doctor, can we change our thinking when we are old? Can psychiatry change us?"

Psychiatry always finds this a very perplexing question. Not only is it perplexing, but in Christian psychotherapy it is pathetic, because the question almost always comes from an unregenerated heart, which apparently can no longer derive pleasure from "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I John 2:16).

This is an age-old question. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a man of learning and power, asked the Lord Jesus how a man could change when he is old. Jesus answered him, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). In the light of his fleshly nature he could not understand the things of the Spirit, because "they are spiritually discerned." "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him" (I Cor. 2:14).

The natural, unregenerate man cannot change his thinking, because his thinking is unspiritual; and unspiritual people can think only of self. When

we look about us and see the highway of the natural man strewn with neurotic wrecks who cannot change their thinking by their own power, it is apparent that the flesh-nature is not able to find peace through the lusts of the flesh. Being devoid of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the self-nature is a ready prey for satanic culture.

### Emotional Sickness—So-Called Nervousness

Thousands upon thousands of patients have emotional conflicts because they cannot make a satisfactory adjustment to the world. They make up the 60 to 75 per cent of the patients who show up in doctors' offices and receive the diagnosis, "There is nothing wrong physically. You are just nervous." They are seeking help—release from the satanic bondage of fear, anxiety, and worry.

Enslavement is never sudden; it is a subtle beguilement, taking in the individual's whole lifetime. Can patients tear themselves loose from satanic bondage after their meditations have been a lifetime forming a habit pattern? Being in fellowship with Satan, they have learned to look to him and his worldly pleasures and achievements for satisfaction in this life to divert the anxious mind from worry.

A worldly businessman, bent on achieving success in accumulating much of this world's goods, set up a goal for himself, turning all his thoughts and meditations to his own ambition in life, until he had no other interest but self. He lived in constant fear and anxiety that his business venture

might collapse. He developed various gastric disturbances which had no organic basis, and his physicians advised, "You must get away from your work."

He followed a rather typical course, characteristic of "nervous" patients, trying various medicines, hoping to get relief for his gastric distress and his varied bodily tensions. These symptoms made him fearful, and he questioned himself, "What if these symptoms would become so severe that doctors could not help me?" He tried hospital rest, sedatives, shots, and short and long vacations, which only worried him because he was away from his business—his love.

This patient sought psychiatry, expecting relief from his distressing symptoms, but psychiatry could give him only temporary relief; it could not cure. For such patients there is only one cure. When they accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, they have peace in their souls. When there is peace in the soul, there is no fear, no anxiety, no worry.

Many psychiatric patients, like the businessman, may make a physical and mental recovery; yet the vexation in the soul remains to come forth periodically to torture the mind with doubts, anxieties, fears, and bodily tensions.

### **Satanic Bondage**

Christ leads His sheep; when they follow Him, there can be no anxiety, fear, or worry. But Satan

drives his slaves, energizing them with fear and anxiety. The constant worry (nervousness) drives them to seek rest somewhere, somehow. Satan offers countless diversions that make their appeal to the lust of the flesh through sensual sin, which is no longer considered sin since he has modernized the terminology of sins. For example, sodomy has become homosexuality; adultery has been changed to free love; the drunkard is a respected alcoholic; and the murderer is temporarily insane. Furthermore, Satan is successfully indoctrinating the world to believe that sin is no longer sin by using apostate teachers, whom he ensnares for his purposes (Tit. 1:16).

The "prince of the power of the air" is ever on the alert to block any soul that might be tempted to raise a cry to God for deliverance, by quickly coming to his own with a new remedy for "nerves" and suggesting diabolical diversions. But these do not change the thinking pattern; they merely divert the thoughts for the time being. They do not relieve the patient of fear, because "fear hath torment" (I John 4:18).

### Things of the Flesh Do It

Reason and experience tell the unregenerate to change his thoughts by accepting an appeasement through the avenue of "the lust of the eyes," encouraging the careworn to gaze on the screen and bask on a lustful life, which he does not have a license to live out in actual life. Indulging in fan-

tastic sensuality affords temporary diversion for millions.

Knowledge, success, and power in this present world do not change heart meditations. These feed the self (ego) with a personal satisfaction that "I myself" have accomplished something. Many unregenerate souls are carried through this present world by the energizing power, "the pride of life."

In order to prevent disappointments and frustrations many take tests to determine their aptitude for certain types of endeavor. Then long periods of education may be necessary to reach certain goals, all of which is for power and glory in this world, storing up "wood, hay, and stubble" that will be destroyed in the fire of judgment because the motive was purely psychological, to bring glory to self.

Are these people happy and contented? Psychiatric practice would prove to the contrary when we observe the neurotic wrecks who are unable to satisfy their unregenerate souls by these driving forces. Their entire lives are anchored in this world. They are not seeking "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). All their affections are set on the things of this earth, and they choose to live "after the flesh." The individual whose thoughts are centered on minding the things of the flesh cannot change his thoughts or his ways, because his carnal mind cannot get away from minding the things of the flesh. This is a vicious circle.

### Psychologies of Man

Is it any wonder that anxious and fearful patients become frantic when they find themselves ensnared in their own lusts? They have no hope; their souls are in despair. What can they do? What will they do? Like the great masses of the world, they will continue to look to the world, where the evil spirits, governed by "the prince of the power of the air," will continually offer them diversions, hobbies, and amusements, attempting to alleviate fears and anxieties. When this fails, they turn to psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis.

Just because the world is worshipping at the modern shrine of psyche does not prove that God's program is failing to give peace to the hearts and minds of those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus. It simply shows that Satan is battling for the minds of men through his gigantic psychological propaganda, denying that man has a soul and placing therapeutic emphasis on the mind as the seat of fear, anxiety, worry, maladjustment, and nervousness. Only the born-again Christian can understand the diabolic deception in such treatment. It is a bold attempt to wipe out all need for Christianity and force man to believe in his own power. Even the few who express a desire to find God are channeled into a bloodless religion, where psychology of the mind continues to hold sway.

Of course, the world cannot see either the folly or the deception of this line of reasoning, because it does not believe God's Word, which says that

“thoughts and intents” (Heb. 4:12), “imagination” (Gen. 6:5), “meditation” (Ps. 19:14), and deceit (Acts 5:4) are conceived in the heart.

Without the presence of the Holy Spirit in man’s heart, man formulates a philosophy of life, consistent with the unregenerate heart, which can never give him salvation or peace. When dissatisfied with himself and his philosophy of life, he can only hope to substitute another philosophy, devised by his unregenerate heart, which cannot bring him any nearer to peace than the former. In this state unregenerate patients are helpless to change their thoughts, because Satan controls the meditations of their unregenerated hearts.

### **Christ Is the Answer**

God has given us the remedy for all soul problems. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour, God invites you to accept and believe that the shed blood of His Son was offered on the cross of Calvary to make an atonement for your lost soul. This may seem contrary to what you have believed; nevertheless, we can not be saved by the moral rules made up by ourselves. God has given us the breath of life, and we live on this earth according to His mercy. When He takes away the breath of life, we die and our soul goes to one of two places, according to God’s plan. Those who have not believed in Christ’s atoning work on Calvary go to hell to suffer everlasting punishment—punishment because God made an offer and they refused it. But those who accept His gracious way of salvation, believing

in the shed blood of Christ as an atonement for the soul, are carried to heaven to be with Him for ever and ever.

Some will say, "How can that relieve me of my nervousness? How can that take away my worries about myself?"

After you believe that the shed blood of Christ was made an offering for your soul, God sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in you. He, the Holy Spirit, will teach you to understand the Bible. He will give you a desire to read the Bible. As you study His Word and meditate on it, you will come to see how wonderful He is to make all these provisions for you, so that you are able to fight the evil spirits that come to you to make you doubt God, mistrust Him, and little by little you get to rely on yourself instead of on Him.

Finally you overcome the evil influences of doubt, fear, anxiety, nervousness, and worry by trusting and meditating on God's Word and by walking each day, step by step, in the Spirit, not fulfilling the desires of the flesh. When doubts come—and they will—turn them aside by looking at the cross of Calvary, where Christ overcame Satan and all his hosts who oppress and torment us.