

## CHAPTER 7

### SCRIPTURE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

The principle of knowledge refers to those means by which knowledge is obtained. Where the knowledge of God is concerned there are two means, natural and revealed. The amount of knowledge obtained from nature and conscience is limited. From nature and conscience we can learn that there is a God, that he is holy, that we are responsible to him, that he is almighty, eternal and so forth. For some pastoral counselors that is enough. But the natural knowledge of God is not sufficient to do biblical and Christian pastoral counseling. Nature and conscience teach us nothing of God's plan and work of salvation. Our definition of Scripture as source establishes Scripture as the only source for a complete and correct knowledge of God and his will for our lives. Our definition of Scripture as norm establishes it as the only adequate judge of what kind of relationship with God, ourselves and others is acceptable to God himself.

As we have seen, we are servants of Scripture, not lords over it. Scripture tells us what to teach, believe and do. Scripture settles every doctrinal matter. Not many denominations maintain such a ministerial position toward Scripture, although they may claim they do. The magisterial attitude toward Scripture is not always a crass magisterial attitude that boldly says, "We are lords over Scripture. Scripture is our servant." The magisterial treatment of Scripture is usually much more subtle. Consequently it is also much more dangerous to the unsuspecting reader.

Our definitions of Scripture as source and norm reflect that we are servants of Scripture alone. With them we can evaluate departures from that position. In general, church bodies and their affiliated writers as well as secular counselors and psychologists fall into three categories. (1) Roman Catholic traditionalism, (2) Reformed rationalism and (3) humanism. Many books on pastoral counseling and psychology contain examples of departures from Scripture as source and norm that fall into all these categories. The examples are evident either in direct statement or in the absence of clear references to Scripture where they should exist. Direct statements that contradict Scripture are much easier to identify than failures to appeal to Scripture. That could make the absence of a clear scriptural foundation as dangerous than blatant statements of false doctrine. We must guard against both.

From a historical perspective, Erasmus provides examples of all three of these departures from the standard of Scripture. For the sake of the history involved, it may be worth the reader's time to consider some of his expressions on Scripture, using his Diatribes on free will as source material. Erasmus and Luther both dealt with the freedom of the will. In doing so, they revealed their respective attitudes toward Scripture clearly. That historical treatment is included in appendix A. This study shows that the problems we have today seeking genuine biblical and Christian material have existed for centuries.

#### SCRIPTURE AND ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITIONALISM

Even a limited association with the works of Martin Luther reveals his battle for Scripture against popes, Councils and the tradi-

tions of the church. In our own day the same authority of tradition appears. The Roman Catholic Church is battling for and against the ordination of women in the clergy. News accounts reveal no appeal to Scripture, only appeal to what the tradition of the church holds.

Christ never intended his church to be at odds with Scripture. It was God's plan that Scripture and the church would always say the same thing because the church was to be the obedient and submissive servant of Christ. Consequently the church is to be the obedient and submissive servant of the Word of God as well. Nevertheless, next to Scripture stand three other authorities, tradition, the Councils and the popes.

As if this were not sufficient to confuse the issue of the authority of Scripture, in 1870 Pope Pius IX proclaimed for the papal office the right to be the sole and final interpreter of Scripture when he speaks ex cathedra on matters of doctrine and morals. This was not a new issue by any means. For centuries before this the authority belonged to the church and its popes and councils together. Pieper quotes the Constitutio dogmatica prima de ecclesia Christi as saying,

We, the sacred Council approving, teach and so define as dogma divinely revealed, that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex cathedra - that is to say, when in the discharge of his office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal Church - is, through the divine assistance promised to the blessed Peter himself, possessed of the infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine concerning faith and morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, unalterable.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the Roman Catholic Church pays homage to Scripture, still on two counts man is placed in authority over Scripture. First, the Church itself along with its human agencies, the popes and Councils

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1. Franz Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, vol. 1 (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), page 206.

has equal authority along with Scripture, if not supremacy over it. Second, the pope has the authority to be the sole interpreter of Scripture whether his other human agencies agree with him or not, and whether Scripture agrees with him or not.

From a counseling standpoint this means that people look to other people, particularly those in the church, as authorities to deal with their problems rather than listening to God speak to them directly through his Word. This is Christian counseling robbed of its power because the counselor becomes the healer instead of God. The counselor's word does the healing, not God's Word. For example, Collins, Dobson, LaHaye, Schweigert and Schuller are not Roman Catholics. They are counseling authorities to varying degrees. In addition to all these numerous AM and FM radio stations provide counseling programs. The same thing is true of television programs, particularly those on cable religious networks. All of this counseling authority has a religious setting. Anyone who reads it, listens to it or watches it expects some kind of religion to be associated with it. To many of our people, these counselors are the only authority they need to believe that they are dealing with their problems in the way God's wants them to deal with their problem. This fact creates a confusion about what is truly biblical and Christian and what is merely human authority.

One man in one of our congregations was convinced that Robert Schuller provided him with all the help he needed to cope with his terminal cancer. He received a great deal of encouragement from Schuller's "possibility thinking." Even though the member was dying of cancer, he had almost concluded that he didn't need his church anymore. He received more comfort from Schuller's encouragement than he did from a scriptural presentation of his Savior's love. Only when he realized

that Schuller's ministry was not a personal ministry to him did he understand that he was not receiving the hope and comfort he needed. The man actually wrote to Schuller's offices to find out whether Schuller's staff would provide a Christian burial. The answer was no. That was the last time the member found any peace in Schuller's messages.

All the people who make extensive use of reading material, the radio or television for counsel and direction in Christian living do not come to the same conclusion this terminal cancer patient did. Many members make no secret of the fact that their authority for settling their marriage relationships, their emotional problems, their problems raising their children, or what have you is not the Bible, but rather one of the people listed above or dozens of others like them. Are our people hearing messages that are truly biblical and Christian? The Bible, in fact, need not fit into the picture. The authority is the person who is speaking, not the Bible. To put it in other terms, would our people be more inclined to say, "Thus saith the Lord" or "Thus saith Dobson"? Add to that the question of whether Dobson says, "Thus saith the Lord." Then who is the authority?

We are expecting too much of our people if we expect them to make all the necessary associations with the Word of God and all the necessary evaluations of a writer's use of the Word of God by themselves. On the other hand, it is virtually impossible to be thoroughly acquainted with all the different writers and speakers available to our people. Perhaps the best we can do is to discourage the need for all of this second-hand authority as we bring the Word of God to them directly where they live whether in sermons or personal counseling. All of us try to do that to the best of our ability. The more material there is available to our people, the harder we need to work with God's help to bring

them nothing but the Word of God.

Bookstore shelves are filled with "how-to" books. It is one thing to use such a book to learn how to do plumbing or electrical work. It is another thing to use such a book in an attempt to learn to do what only repentance worked by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God can do. If, for example, a person wants to learn how to overcome stress in his life, there are dozens of "how-to" books for doing it. Stress may be caused by trying to do too much work in too little time. It may be caused by allowing work or some other factor to dominate a person's life. If that happens, stress has a definite spiritual side to it. We deal with that from the standpoint of personal relationship with God. The only way to deal with that personal relationship is with the Word of God. No one is equipped to do that better than we are. We build relationships with God on the foundation of trust in God's love and power. The authority is the Word of God and the power behind the work comes from God. Human authority cannot do any of that. Human authorities can only keep our people from turning to God to do the work.

#### SCRIPTURE AND REFORMED RATIONALISM

Our purpose in this chapter is to indicate that considerable historical background exists for the material available for Christian counseling today. Very few, if any, are providing anything new. Here and throughout this paper we are using the term Reformed in a very broad sense. Most modern writers in pastoral counseling and psychology use it broadly too. Variations on the theme of total depravity exist between Calvinism and Arminianism. Whether a Reformed writer is speaking as an

Arminian or as a Calvinist may make an important difference in writings that deal with pastoral counseling and psychology. The main point we are concerned about is the place of reason as it relates to Scripture. When we use the term, Reformed, we are talking primarily about the tendency to put human reason above Scripture.

The Reformed churches do not discount Scripture. Quite the contrary is true. From their earliest writings to their most recent, the attitude toward Scripture is usually high and in some cases seems to duplicate the orthodox Lutheran position. This fact alone is sufficient reason for many Lutherans to feel quite comfortable in the company of Reformed writers.

There are two other important reasons why our people may think they are receiving genuine Scriptural authority in the books they read that come from the Reformed houses. The first is the flood of books they provide. The second is the use of the term Non-denominational, which often means Reformed in the general sense of the term.

When one looks through the average Christian bookstore, the bulk of the material comes from Reformed writers and publishers. This is one area where the Reformed have made some of their deepest inroads. Some of the most popular writers and producers of tapes, videos and the like are Reformed. If that does nothing else, it gives the impression to anyone who reads, listens to the radio or watches television, that these people care about the personal problems our people have.

The term nondenominational was as much as anything a result of the anti-establishment philosophy of the sixties. Without wanting to seem irreligious, many people wanted to disassociate themselves from any particular denomination. Some people seemed to think that within established denominations the denomination comes first and the person second.

The Reformed, that is, Protestantism in general, capitalized on that thought and began speaking about nondenominationalism. The emphasis was clearly on God and you, the Bible and you and not you and your organized church. That's where most people want the emphasis to be. It is no wonder that people making use of nondenominational literature feel that they might be closer to the truth than they would be in a particular denomination. Nevertheless, to a great extent, the material they were reading as nondenominational was in fact Reformed with its inherent rationalism.

The problem with Reformed theology that concerns us is rationalism. From the time of Calvin and Zwingli Scripture has always been subject to reason. Since God is a rational God and man is a rational creature, no conflict should exist between what God says and what man believes. The Scripture is in the hands of rational men who should be able to read them as rationally as God recorded them. Once again man is the authority over Scripture and becomes its interpreter. Scripture cannot interpret itself on those terms. Jay Adams makes the point very clear as he speaks of limited atonement.

As a Reformed Christian, the writer believes that counselors must not tell any unsaved counselee that Christ died for him, for they cannot say that. No man knows except Christ himself who are his elect for whom he died. But the counselor's task is to explain the gospel and to say very plainly that God commands all men to repent of their sin and believe in Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The doctrine of the total depravity of man is also a clear indication of what happens when reason rules over Scripture. Calvinists believe in the total depravity of man and we can agree to some extent with their understanding. Arminians are also Reformed Christians and they do not believe in the total depravity of man. Both the Calvinist

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2. Jay Adams. Competent to Counsel, Nutly, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House, 1970, page 70.



and the Arminian camps came to their conclusions on a rational basis. Reason ruled over Scripture and the Calvinists and Arminians arrived at two different conclusions.

In our pastoral counseling we will have great difficulty at best dealing with writers who do not speak of human nature that it totally depraved. The Bible, reason excluded, says that human nature is totally depraved. People have no ability within themselves to produce a God-pleasing life. God must intervene if genuine healing is to occur. If the human being is not totally depraved, then he has some capabilities for producing God-pleasing actions within himself. A counselor who does not believe in the total depravity of man will depend on what is within the person to change his behavior at least as much as he depends on God. That opens the door to any and all tools that effect change whether they are Scriptural or not. Humanism is at the door of that counseling session.

### SCRIPTURE AND HUMANISM

Humanism had its origin in the Garden of Eden when Eve, her husband agreeing, decided that she wanted to be like God. They attempted to make gods of themselves and they failed. Humanism will always fail no matter how sophisticated, complicated, technologically advanced or popular it becomes. The reason for the failure is simple. Human beings die. Humanism may not want to admit to sin or confront it, but people still die. As long as man attempts to make a god of himself, he will continue to create a dying god. Unfortunately countless millions believe in the dying God of humanism.

Rationalism describes the way the Reformed approach Scripture. In that narrow sense, reason rules and Scripture is subject to it. This point of view accounts for the majority of the Christian and biblical material on the popular market. Humanism or an ego-centered philosophy (it can't really be called a theology) accounts for virtually all psychological schools of thought. At this point the matter becomes extremely confusing. Should we be using anything that psychology has to say? How should we use it? Is the psychologist a Christian? Does it matter? Which school of psychotherapy lends itself to a Scriptural use? These questions show us exactly why we need Scripture as our norm for doctrine and practice in pastoral counseling and psychology.

All these questions lead to some important considerations. First, the fields of psychology and psychiatry are in flux. Second, the philosophy of psychotherapy has changed at least 180 degrees over the past hundred years. Third, the number of new psychotherapies available has increased in the past forty years and even more dramatically in the last ten years. Fourth, the attitude of psychotherapists toward Scripture and the church has changed considerably in the last twenty years. Fifth, important efforts have already been expended to integrate psychology and theology often without consideration for Scriptural authority.

### 1. The State of Flux

The field of psychology and psychiatry are in flux. Psychology has psychotherapy as its tool. Roughly speaking this means that the psychologist talks to his client and uses a particular form of communication to change a behavior or attitude. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who has pharmacotherapy at his disposal in addition to whatever

forms of psychotherapy he may want to use (if any). Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis dominated the first half of this century. Freud was a psychiatrist who used psychoanalysis as his tool.

Under Freud's influence psychiatry virtually lost its allopathic medical connection. Allopathic medicine is the form of medicine that is most familiar to us. When a person goes to the doctor, the doctor prescribes medication to cure or control the ailment. The illness is treated with something else, χάος. The direction psychiatry seems to be taking today involves a return to the allopathic medical roots of psychiatry. The thinking is that since the psychiatrist is a medical doctor he should behave as a medical scientist. He should use the tools at his disposal, primarily drugs, to alter behavior. His results should be measureable and reproduceable. If his results are measureable and reproduceable, they are scientific by definition and the doctor is working as a scientist. He will look for a chemical reason for a problem and work to accomplish cure or control with the means he has available.

If this attitude and philosophy prevails, there isn't much need to be concerned whether a psychiatrist is a Christian or not. It would be nice to have a Christian surgeon, for example, but it isn't necessary. In the same way, it might be nice to have a Christian to dispense medication to alleviate depression, control anxiety, control chronic schizophrenia, relieve a phobia or control a mania, but it isn't necessary for him to be a Christian. His concern is to control or correct behavior when a medical reason seems to exist. Little, if any reason exists to challenge the belief system of the patient.

Psychology and psychotherapy involve different tools. In many mental institutions, little if any use is made of psychotherapy. The

reason is obvious. Medication works faster and more predictably than psychotherapy. In state mental institutions, for example, time is money. If a person is hospitalized at state expense, the state demands that the patient be treated in the most economical way possible. That means the patient will receive medication to control his or her mental illness. Then the patient can be released.

At its best, psychotherapy is a much slower process. Psychoanalysis under a Freudian treatment plan often took twenty years. Current psychotherapies involve weeks or perhaps months of treatment. This may be one reason why the medical profession sometimes tends to view psychology with a certain amount of suspicion about the value of psychotherapeutic treatment. A psychologist can initiate a procedure that will be extremely expensive offering no guarantee of success. The results are difficult to measure and reproduce scientifically.

Psychologists, on the other hand, may think of psychiatrists as doctors who want to treat everything with a pill and make everything an illness. To some extent this suspicion is probably wellfounded because of the major abuse of prescription medications like amphetamines, antidepressants and tranquilizers or other psychotropic agents. The attitude may also exist because of a failure to look for any behavioral causes for various problems.

As Christians with a definite belief structure established by the Word of God, it is important to know how a particular psychologist will deal with that belief structure. One psychologist may agree with our Christian principles, another may challenge them unmercifully. While it is unlikely that this will be a problem with a psychiatrist, a medical doctor, it is more than likely that it will be a problem with a psychologist whose tool is humanistic psychotherapy.

A trend is developing in the professional fields that deal with mental illness. That trend is toward cooperation of efforts rather than antagonism between psychology and psychiatry. For those who suffer from mental illness this trend is beneficial. For the pastoral counselor it may also provide some help. Mental illness often requires that pastors make referrals to other professionals. When a crisis develops relating to a person's mental illness, it is nice to know that the professionals won't be fighting among themselves about what kind of treatment is correct when the pastor refers the patient.

## 2. The 180 Degree Turn

Even a cursory study of psychotherapy with its origins in Freud will indicate a change from the analysis of the subconscious, childhood, dreams and so forth in an attempt to find the reasons for a behavior. The emphasis in psychotherapy today is almost completely directed at responsibility for behavior and the behavior itself. With the appearance of the rational-emotive psychotherapy of Albert Ellis, the jump to the reality therapy of William Glasser was an easy one. Why a person does something doesn't matter nearly as much as what he does. The behavior is the responsibility of the person behaving in a particular way, not the responsibility of those influences that molded him into what he is.

This is not to say by any means that these psychotherapies are less humanistic and more Christian than any that went before. If anything, they are more humanistic than ever. From a biblical perspective all of the therapies that involve personal responsibility for actions involve pure work righteousness. The same can be said of the work of Alcoholics Anonymous. None of them appeal to the strength God alone can

provide to initiate God-pleasing behavior. The best they can provide by themselves is a work righteous form of civic righteousness. Even when Alcoholics Anonymous appeals to a higher being, some god, the appeal is for help, not for forgiveness.

What we can glean from these psychotherapies is an appreciation for the confrontation of personal responsibility. It is difficult to apply the law, as we have seen, when someone else is at fault. Under the Freudian concept someone else or something else was always at fault. The more modern trend is toward personal responsibility. The psychologist is not likely to say that the sufferer is responsible to God. He will probably say the person is responsible to himself or to society. We must be the ones who deal with responsibility to God. Very few secular psychologists will do that for us.

### 3. New Psychotherapies

The number of new psychotherapies has increased dramatically in the last forty years with the introduction of Albert Ellis' rational-emotive therapy. This major change in thinking made reason responsible for emotions rather than the other way around. Since then, multitudes of psychotherapies have entered the secular market. Not all of them have been a credit to the field of psychology. Janov's "Primal Scream," for example, may leave a person wondering whether the healer is crazier than the client. Timothy Leary's LSD therapy of the sixties was in reality a drug cult. The need to say something new has been responsible for the production of a great deal of useless material that only serves to complicate the problems of the serious counselor.

As pastoral counselors we cannot be so naive as to think that our people are not familiar with what is happening in the secular field of

psychology. People in general are probably more sophisticated in this area than ever before in history. Magazines like Psychology Today enjoy wide popular circulation. Many of the modern psychotherapies were written for popular consumption. Transactional analysis was not only intended to be a tool for psychologists. TA material is written in popular form and TA terms like "adult", "parent", "child", "games" and "strokes" have come into popular use whether people realize they are terms of transactional analysis or not. Popular magazines like Newsweek and Time regularly include behavior and psychology sections.

All this means that our people are more likely than ever before to turn to the secular field of psychology and counseling than they have ever been before. People will not only consult a secular counselor because of mental illness. Psychology is no longer a field that treats only the mentally ill. It treats our own sane but troubled members also. Our own people may consult a psychologist instead of consulting us because they consider the psychologist more competent to handle their problems. Many insurance companies pay for such visits, so money is no longer the factor it once was. In the final analysis this means that we must be prepared to deal with the mental health profession, not only with those who claim to do their counseling in a Christian setting.

#### 4. Psychotherapy and the Church

In a purely outward sense the attitude of the fields of psychology and psychiatry toward Scripture and the church have changed. Not long ago the church and a scriptural belief system were considered by mental health professionals to be the culprits for all kinds of mental disorders. Sending a person to a psychologist virtually meant that the church and God would be blamed for all the problems. The person who

wanted healing would have to come out of therapy as a heathen. That attitude has changed. Psychology isn't strong enough to take on the church and win. To be profitable the field of psychology will need to cooperate to some extent with Christians instead of antagonizing them. Within the framework of this writer's ministry (some fifteen years), seeing a psychologist has gone from unmentionable to commonplace.

It was easy for the church to point out humanism when most psychotherapies were telling people to get rid of their Christianity and their emotional problems would go away. Secular psychology no longer says that in so many words. The same humanism is usually present that was always there before. It cannot be otherwise when the psychologist has nowhere to turn but to what is within himself and within his client. Psychologists sadly do not usually come equipped with law and gospel. If we are able to find such a person with a commitment to Scripture who understands the proper application of law and gospel, we have a valuable resource.

Another reason for secular psychology to tolerate Christianity is the recognition of some value and truth to what the church is teaching. In his book Counseling and Confession, Walter Koehler, notes that various secular psychologists have criticized the church for making little use of the tools of confession and absolution.<sup>3</sup> Other examples could be cited where secular psychotherapists find good reason to make use of biblical principles and morals. To the secular counselor, however, confession simply means, katharsis and absolution is his way of saying, "Good, now you have that off your mind." We cannot call this toleration of Christianity and its principles a genuine step closer to Christian and biblical counseling. It is still humanism but in a more veiled form.

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3. Walter J. Koehler, Counseling and Confession, St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 1982, pages 26-27.



## 5. Integrating Theology and Psychotherapy

Attempts have been made to integrate theology and psychotherapy. More will be said about the work of men like Jay Adams, Gary Collins, Lawrence Crabb and others who have worked on the integration of psychology and theology. One who looks at the work of these men sees valiant and important steps toward uniting two fields both of which have the benefit and growth of people as their mutual goal. Emotional and personal growth is usually the primary objective when considering the possibility of integration. If one takes the best that theology has to offer and integrates it with the best that psychology has to offer, the result should be something far better than what either one can do alone.

Unfortunately this important work is jeopardized when a clear theological source and norm do not exist. It is one thing to say that a person's emotional problems are spiritual in nature, for example. It is something else to say that these problems must be viewed under the authority of Scripture and in the light of the law and gospel. No reason exists why the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod should not set those standards in the fields of pastoral counseling and psychology.

### SUMMARY

We have attempted to show that the work of counseling and psychology today is in an extremely confused state both in the Christian community and in the secular community. It is confused because psychology and psychiatry are confused themselves and because it is unclear where theology fits. We have dealt with this matter as part of the principle of knowledge. By this we are saying that the main reason for the confusion is that no real authority has been established. Once that authority is established and is maintained, the road to integration will

become more clear. Unfortunately most of the writing on integration seems to say that man is that authority. If that is and remains the case, none of the work of integrating theology and psychology will ever qualify as biblical and Christian.

Integration gives the impression that two equals can work together. Scripture is on a plane by itself. No comparable authority exists. In our study so far we have attempted to show that various other authorities exist in the minds of many people. Those authorities existed far back in history. Just as they failed as authorities then, so they fail now. Scripture alone remains the final authority. We can measure what people, tradition, reason or humanistic psychology says against Scripture. We can use what meets the tests Scripture dictates and we must ignore the rest. We must make those evaluations for the sake of the people we serve and we must teach them to make those evaluations to some extent themselves. If we fail, we have no right to call Scripture our source and norm for doctrine and practice.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE DEFINITION OF SCRIPTURE AS SOURCE AND NORM AMONG MODERN WRITERS

#### IN THE FIELD OF PASTORAL COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGY

The definition of Scripture as source and norm varies among modern writers in the field of pastoral counseling and psychology change depending on the theology of the writer. Generally speaking, these writers fall into two categories. First, there are those who write specifically for the purpose of counseling. Among the most popular writers are men like James Dobson, Norman Wright, Tim LaHaye and Robert Schuller. These men address particular counseling problems such as premarital counseling, marriage, marital growth, child raising, self-esteem, stress, depression and so forth. The multitude of these authors and books is astounding. Second, in a much more narrow class, are the integrationists. These are writers who direct their attention to the work of counseling particularly as it integrates with secular psychology. Among the integrationists are writers like Jay Adams, Clyde Narramore, Gary Collins and Lawrence Crabb.

In this chapter we will examine the way some of these counselors use Scripture. On the basis of both their doctrine and practice, we will be able to determine how their definition of Scripture as source and norm varies. By necessity our study will be limited because of the multitude of books available.

Integrationists deal with a more specific area of counseling with a much broader scope. The narrow area is the relationship between secular psychology and Christian theology. The broad scope is the sum

of human emotions and problems, not one particular emotion or problem. Again we will limit the discussion by necessity. We will consider only the relationship between theology and psychology various integrationists suggest.

We can use our definitions of Scripture as source and norm to see what thought is usable and should be developed further. We will also be able to see dangers where they exist.

### SCRIPTURE AND THE CHRISTIAN COUNSELORS

Robert H. Schuller qualifies for the list of Christian counselors because of his writing and his preaching. He addresses the same needs other Christian counselors do. He speaks about happiness, positive mental attitude, self-esteem, peace of mind and other such subjects. The atmosphere of Christianity is projected by his winning smile, his crystal cathedral and his clerical garb. In the minds of thousands of people, perhaps some of our own, this is what Christianity is all about. His "gospel" of possibility thinking is almost as well known and has almost as many followers as his precursor Norman Vincent Peale.

Jesus warned his disciples to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing. This warning applies directly to those who follow Robert Schuller's philosophy, because it is the appearance that is deceptive. Anyone who knows better would have no reason to think there is anything Christian or even theological about Robert Schuller's teaching. The setting only looks theological, churchly and Christian. While he pays lip service to the authority of Scripture, he presumes to know the Lord's will better than the Lord himself. "What is our Lord's greatest

passion for his church today? I believe that he wants his followers to respect themselves as equal children of God and to treat all other human beings with the same respect."<sup>1</sup> If there is anything Christian about this idea, it is well hidden to anyone who has ever taken a spiritual trip to the cross to see what Jesus did there and why.

Schuller's use of Scripture itself leaves a person with no doubt about his position. In his book Peace of Mind through Possibility Thinking, Schuller quotes Romans 8:28 as part of God's plan for establishing peace in the troubled mind. He says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God and keep His Commandments."<sup>2</sup> This is a clear misquotation. Such blatant disregard for the Bible even from the aspect of simple honesty is inexcusable. The theology Schuller sets forth in this quotation is a theology of works. There is nothing Christian about it.

To thousands, however, Robert Schuller is a Christian preacher with a Christian message. Among those who know Christianity when they see it, there is nothing Christian about the message regardless of how many times Christ's name is used. Besides the absence of correct theology, the message is not psychological either. That, too, is hidden by the garb, the smile and the cathedral. What is left is nothing more than a humanistic philosophy with appropriate applications. Obviously, people want to hear this kind of message. Sadly, this empty humanism appears to be Christian to those who only look at the building and the robes.

James Dobson and Timothy LaHaye fall into the category of Christian counselors. Both emphatically assert that they are Christians.

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1. Robert Schuller, Self-Esteem (Waco, Tex.: 1982), Word, page 47.

2. Robert Schuller, Peace of Mind through Possibility Thinking (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday 1977), page 150.

Dr. Dobson, of course, also states clearly that he is a psychologist. The two are placed together here because of the similar subject matter they both treat. Both are concerned with the growth and welfare of the Christian family. LaHaye, while dealing in a variety of subjects, has focused on marriage and the marriage union. Dobson has also focused on child-parent relationships and communication within the family. Both are popular and widely read and heard within the Christian community. The vehicles they use include books, tapes, video and audio cassettes. Both are also well-known radio personalities.

Without doubt, the work of these men has a great impact on Christians seeking advice and direction, encouragement and confidence in their desire to live Christian lives in a Christian family setting. Both of these men present a biblical setting for the things they say and that carries a great deal of weight. It is likely that they have performed worthwhile services for people with different religious backgrounds and affiliations. They present a Scriptural connection with their work. The moral law code of the Bible shows clearly in what they say. To that extent we can be thankful for the work these popular counselors have done.

With all these positive facts in their favor, one might think that we could give complete support to their work and that we could hope for more of the same to follow. Unfortunately we cannot say that. These men are not determined to present the whole counsel of God. Their subject area is extremely limited. Although family living is a major part of our lives and although the Word of God has something definite to say about marriage, families, family living, child raising and the like, that is not all the Bible has to say. In fact, a great deal of what the Bible says on these subjects is law, not gospel. Most of the counsel

these men provide is only a presentation of the law. The motivation for correction is to "go and do what I and the Bible just told you to do." That is moralistic and legalistic motivation. We appreciate their moral standards, but not their motivation to follow them.

When Timothy LaHaye speaks about The Act of Marriage, for example, he reminds us that our bodies are God's creation and that sex is not a sinful invention of man. It is a beautiful creation of God. No Christian would disagree with that in principle. He acknowledges that sex merely expresses the union of a marriage that first exists in trust and love. Consequently, sexual problems in marriage quite often stem from some other deeper problem. Again we can agree with this principle. A secular counselor is likely to arrive at the same conclusion. Even Dr. Ruth Westheimer agrees.

In his books on the spirit-controlled temperament, LaHaye betrays an attitude toward sin that is suspect. After quoting Romans 7:18-20 he says,

The 'sin' that dwelled in him was the natural weakness that he, like all human beings, inherited from his parents."<sup>3</sup>

He goes on to say,

We have inherited a basic temperament from our parents that contains both strengths and weaknesses. This temperament is called several things in the Bible, "the natural man," "the flesh," "the old man," and "corruptible flesh," to name a few.<sup>4</sup>

The Bible does not teach that our old sinful flesh is a temperament that contains both strengths and weaknesses. The Bible teaches us to recognize that we are sinful human beings. Nothing can change that fact other than God's intervention. He intervenes through his Word, both law and gospel. We cannot simply change our temperament. The problem with

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3. Tim LaHaye, Spirit-Controlled Temperament, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1966), page 5.

4. Loc. cit.

the human temperament, says LaHaye, is that it has weaknesses in it. To change that, the weaknesses must be replaced with God's strengths. God works repentance through the Word. LaHaye is not talking about a change even remotely associated with repentance.

While we can agree with some things LaHaye says, the end result is that the premises sound very biblical and Christian. But LaHaye never really comes close to a biblical understanding of our sinfulness or of Christ as our Savior. According to LaHaye, salvation seems to mean a change in temperament from many sins of the flesh to fewer sins of the flesh and a more positive view on life and self. The whole process is hollow and superficial. Man, God, sin and salvation are all viewed from a very nearsighted perspective.

Dr. James Dobson is an even more famous writer and speaker within Christian circles. His radio program, "Focus on the Family" enjoys a nationwide audience. Dobson himself is an outspoken, professed Christian. Dobson writes as a psychologist with a very narrow field of work. As the title of his program indicates, Dobson focuses on the family. His work includes such things as preparing for adolescence, the discipline of children, a tough love that refuses to accept the misbehaviors of a disrespectful and unloving spouse or child.

In the introduction to his book Dare to Discipline, Dobson states that he is dealing with proven theories; he is presenting them because they work. In his book Love Must Be Tough, he admits that some of the things he says may seem controversial within Christian circles. These two statements alone tell us what is biblical and Christian to Dobson. If nothing else, he agrees with what the Bible says about discipline and he agrees with what the Bible says about showing love.

The concepts of marriage and parenthood were not human inven-



tions. God, in his infinite wisdom, created and ordained the family as the basic unit of procreation and companionship. The solutions to the problems of modern parenthood can be found through the power of prayer and personal appeal to God the Great Creator. Even the principles of discipline which I have summarized in this book can hardly be considered new ideas. Most of the recommendations were first written in Scripture, dating back at least two thousand years to biblical times.<sup>5</sup>

Being Christians is personally important to Dobson and his family. He certainly portrays the kind of relationship with his family and his family responsibilities that any Christian would be happy to say were his too. As a writer and speaker, he is a psychologist writing and speaking on popular subjects in popular styles and formats. It is not his purpose to make Christians of all the people to whom he speaks. He is not interested in theological debates. Rather he acknowledges some simple points of doctrine such as sin and unconditional love and develops his psychology around those points. We could agree with most of the ways he develops his thoughts in a psychological setting. What he is dealing with, however, does not generally qualify as a doctrinal presentation of law and gospel. His work is common sense that agrees with Scripture. Although he speaks occasional words about forgiveness, we may find ourselves reading more into his words than he is actually saying. This may be one of the reasons for Dobson's popularity. It teaches very little doctrinal Christianity in so many words. He leaves a great deal to the individual reader allowing him to supply his own personal theology.

I should acknowledge at the outset that some of the principles I will offer may be controversial within Christian circles. It is my belief that the advice traditionally offered to victims of infidelity and other violations of trust has often been unbiblical and destructive. But obviously, not everyone will agree. To

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5. James Dobson, Dare to Discipline, Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1972, pages 216-217.

those who draw differing conclusions, I can only ask for charity as we seek to resolve the most difficult family problems with our limited knowledge and insight.<sup>6</sup>

In his work on preparing for adolescence, Dobson speaks about the self-worth of the adolescent. The primary thrust of his argument is that God is the Creator of us all and he doesn't make junk. Occasionally he will make reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Seldom is self-worth based on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. When he does make such references, his statements are valuable. Usually that presentation is left to the reader's imagination.

When you return to school tomorrow and find yourself afraid of other students - afraid they're going to laugh at you or leave you out - just remember that you're not by yourself. You have with you the power of the God who created the entire universe. He can make something beautiful of your life, if you allow him to take charge.<sup>7</sup>

A very beautiful exception to the rule exists when Dobson says,

In fact, God loves you and me so much that he actually sent his Son to die for us. Now that's real love at its greatest! I'm convinced that Jesus would have died for me (or you) if you had been the only individual in the world. That's how much he cares for us.<sup>8</sup>

One could only wish that Dobson's pages were literally filled with statements like this. If they were we could genuinely say that this is biblical and Christian counseling at its finest. Unfortunately, more often than not, Dobson's appeal to God's creation to establish our self-esteem and self-worth is much more common than his appeal to redemption, the heart and core of the gospel.

We might find little reason for objection. This is not because of his foundation in both the law and the gospel. The reason lies rather in the limited presentation of anything doctrinal at all. Al-

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6. James Dobson, Love Must Be Tough, Waco, Tex.: Word Publishers, 1983, page 8.

7. James Dobson, Preparing for Adolescence, Santa Ana, Ca.: Vision House, 1978, page 34.

8. Ibid., page 32

though his work has found wide acceptance and popularity, even in our circles, the reason for this popularity is primarily that his work makes sense. His work does not have the complexity of secular psychology. Where his writing touches on moral matters, the Bible supports it. For example:

But I see no difference between heterosexual unfaithfulness and the homosexual variety. They are both condemned in the Bible and should be considered in the same classification, morally. It is difficult to miss the intent of inspired writers who described a time when men would "burn with lust" for one another. Homosexuality is always included in lists of the most heinous sins, as seen in the following Scriptures.<sup>9</sup>

Dobson goes on to quote Romans 1:26-27. We would not disagree with anything Dobson is saying. It is biblical and moral. Dobson does his work well, but his work is different from ours. Ours is to stand on the same moral footing Dobson uses, but always in view of eternal salvation in Jesus Christ. Dobson is not necessarily concerned about that context. The work falls short of what deserves to be called Christian counseling because it is not a complete presentation of law and gospel. It is not intended to be. It is intended to be moral common sense for Christians. Where Dobson's materials are used in our circles we must be ready to provide what is missing.

Dobson might lead a person to think more about spiritual things. The reader may read in original sin, redemption and eternal peace with God, but Dobson's intentions are not to evangelize. Dobson's work is for a broad audience. That leaves us with this primary criticism: What about those who are not capable of reading the proper theology into the words on the page? What will be the definition of Christianity they derive? One would fear that some might think that acting morally responsible and teaching moral responsibility in the family is all there

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9. Dobson, Love Must Be Tough, Op. Cit., page 162.

is to Christianity. As with anything we use from the outside, Dobson's work must be used in our circles under supervision and with caution.

We completely agree that moral actions are part of our lives as Christians. It would be a blessing to be as concerned about them as Dobson is. But, we see these actions as fruits of faith, not as the goals of faith. We also have a justifiable concern if we leave our people with the idea that peaceful family life and clean moral living is the goal of Christianity. If we as counselors give support to this kind of work without caution, our people may begin to believe that this shallow use of Scripture is our source and norm as well.

#### SCRIPTURE AND THE INTEGRATIONISTS

Jay Adams may not seem to be an appropriate person with whom to begin the the study of integrationists. Integration, in terms of counseling and pastoral psychology, is the union of theology and psychology. Jay Adams considers virtually all mental and emotional problems to be spiritual in nature and therapy; he consequently rules out integration with psychology altogether. The reason for considering him among the integrationists is that he has at least considered the possible combination of the two. In his thinking he has eliminated one. He has eliminated psychology and its related psychotherapies. In that sense he falls far on the right wing of integration. The left wing virtually eliminates theology for the sake of psychology.

Adams has done a great service to the field of counseling by his study of counseling work. He has focused the attention of theologians on their theological training and given them a reason for believing they

are competent to counsel. He does insist on a biblical basis for the work he does. Without that tool, he would maintain, no pastor or anyone else, has the equipment to counsel at all. He is Reformed Christian. He states his Calvinistic Reformed connections particularly on the matter of limited atonement. He holds a Reformed theology of sin and grace. Once again, when we listen to his commitment to Scripture and read in our own understanding of Scripture as source and norm, we could probably agree with a great deal of what Adams says.

Two problems arise when considering Adams' work. One is that he is perhaps more psychologically oriented than he would want to admit. Second, he oversimplifies the matter of mental illness. We can agree with Adams' basic mistrust of various psychotherapies. When one considers the date of the writing of his book Competent to Counsel, there is even more reason to do so. The book was written in the mid-sixties when Freud carried more weight among psychologists than his work does now. The country was dealing with the results of the permissiveness set forth by Dr. Benjamin Spock. In addition, the psychotherapies of the sixties were often quite radical with the inclusion of men like Janov and Leary. Psychotherapy had some definite negative overtones. Many of those negative overtones were earned. In some respects those overtones still exist.

In his Christian Counselor's Casebook Adams consistently looks for the spiritual cause behind the problems for which his client seeks help. He then proceeds to deal with them in a spiritual way. What may not always be clear is that many of the techniques he uses are the same techniques psychologists would use. A study of such therapies as Behavior Modification, Rational-Emotive psychotherapy and Reality Therapy would show that Adams' nouthetic method involves many techniques and

processes set forth by these psychotherapies.

A great deal of what psychology has to offer comes in the form of organized common sense. Listening and communicating skills are skills of any psychologist or counselor. With Adams this common sense also appears in the form of listening and questioning skills, understanding the person's background and environment, considering his position in the family, the directions his thought processes take and so forth. Adams then seeks to find spiritual direction for his treatment. Adams must reinvent the wheel when he refuses to consider any value of psychology.

When we remember his Reformed background we can recognize its influence on the application of law and gospel. Again reason is master over Scripture. When Adams tells his client what he must do to correct his unacceptable behavior or relieve his personal pain, Adams simply says, "This is what you must do. Now do it." Adams reflects this attitude when he speaks about guilt in depression and the use of homework to correct the problem.

The format enables him to reflect upon the relationship between his depression and its cause. Sometimes clients will return after the assignment with a list of sins, some of which have been erased or crossed out. because, they disclose, "As a result of this assignment I have already settled the matter." <sup>10</sup>

Adams' second problem is the oversimplification of mental illness. In some cases it may be harmful to spiritualize every problem and completely rule out the possibility of mental illness. Adams does allow for brain damage and deficit and for organic deficiencies. In many other circumstances, however, one needs to consider other biological involvement. A nondirected rage, for example, must be dealt with from a spiritual perspective, but it would be a serious mistake to overlook temporal lobe seizure as a possible cause. Schizophrenia may have both

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10. Jay Adams, Competent to Counsel, Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House, 1970, page 127.

a biological and a spiritual cause or effect. Depression that is clinical in nature may of necessity be controlled to a degree by medication; the way a person eats and sleeps also has an important impact on it. While we should deal with the spiritual elements of such things as psychosomatic or psychogenic illnesses, the biological and organic impact on the body is significant. It would be a mistake to overlook either the spiritual or the organic side of the disorder.

We can thank Jay Adams for forcing us to think in terms of the spiritual aspects of mental illnesses. Perhaps by representing a full swing toward the spiritual he has done a service by swinging the pendulum away from mental illness as an excuse for inappropriate behavior. Perhaps those in the counseling professions have been guilty of ignoring the spiritual. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the medical or the common sense contributions that have been made to the study of mental illnesses, emotional and personality disorders. To do so would amount to denying obvious, available treatment the way a Jehovah's Witness would deny a blood transfusion.

Gary Collins has tried to integrate secular psychology and theology. While making clear statements about the authority of Scripture over psychology, he is none the less somewhat unclear about what Scriptural authority actually is. An example of his writing might help to illustrate this ambiguity.

Actually, Scripture points beyond itself to God. It is canonical, an authoritative rule. But "the new creation" is the rule by which Christians are called to walk (Gal. 6:16). In the Scriptures the Holy Spirit bears witness to the word of God. But this does not mean that we have the right to read the Bible from an a-historical, a-cultural perspective. The anthropologist reminds us that the Bible itself is culturally conditioned. Nothing in it is universal in the sense of being above or outside culture. Only God is the Absolute, the Supracultural, the Ultimate. And he has disclosed himself in Scripture through his mighty acts on behalf of his people. More, he has given intima-

tions of what these acts were meant to disclose of his person and purpose. In so acting and speaking, God accommodated himself to the forms and meanings that made sense to his people in their particular time and culture.

This means that if we would know today the essence of biblical revelation, we must give ourselves to the difficult and demanding task of discovering how God's deeds and words were understood by those to whom they first came. We must then translate this understanding into formulations and explanations that make sense to his people today, within their own cultural frames of reference. Since, at best, we are terribly flawed by the Fall, we desperately need the illumination of the Holy Spirit to guide us as we become involved in this exegesis and translation. Even then, we will only see "as through a glass darkly," and our knowledge will be at best, "in part" (I Cor. 13:12). Whereas we have confidence that the Bible is our infallible rule of faith and conduct, we must not presume to regard ourselves as infallible in our use of the Bible. Indeed, our understanding of the Bible is not unlike the understanding that the psychologist has of the data he has gathered through his empirical research. As he is not infallible in his use of this data, neither are we infallible in our understanding or application of Scripture.

The Bible, therefore, does not seek to convey its authority by texts. The texts are but empirical data, and Christians are called to experience their "true" truth through encounter with God. Only through establishing existential touch with Jesus as he is disclosed in the Bible does the Christian begin to enter into the Bible's authority.<sup>11</sup>

These words are not those of Collins himself. They are the words of H. Newton Malony included in Collins' book. The neoorthodox character represented leaves one in doubt about all of the applications of Scripture that Collins makes himself. One would wish that these words were not included at all because most of Collins' other material would enlist our complete agreement. He speaks, for example, of God as the God who acts, specifically in our redemption. He applies the thoughts of Paul Tournier, who emphasized the importance of building on a solid historical basis of God's acts in the interest of his people. He speaks of psychology submitting itself to the rule of Scripture. All of these things deserve our support and consideration. Malony is quoted to allow

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11. Gary Collins, Psychology and Theology (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1981), pages 93-94.



room for a broader theological audience. That only serves to put the integrity of Collin's true position in question.

There are differences, however, in our views concerning the extent to which psychology should be "brought under the authority of Scripture." While I surely respect those who think otherwise, I am firmly committed to the position that the Bible must be our ultimate source of truth and that conclusions from psychology must be tested against the teachings of Scripture - as we understand these, using the best hermeneutics possible.<sup>12</sup>

If Collins could have seen fit to leave out the words, "As we understand these," he would have gone miles farther than he did in establishing Scripture as the source and norm for doctrine and practice in the integration of theology and psychology. As it stands, however, his words must be carefully evaluated to determine whether he understands hermeneutics in the same single, simple sense that Lutherans would. All of it is suspect from our orthodox Lutheran standpoint. What begins by appearing clear ends up very confusing.

One more way in which Collins' integration of theology and psychology shows up is in his work as editor of the Christian Counselor's Library. This is a collection of twenty-six audio tapes with an accompanying manual. The tapes are resource material and support provided by the counselor for the person being counseled. They are for discussion and learning purposes. Worksheets are also provided. Throughout the work, Collins introduces various speakers on all kinds of subjects from self-esteem to alcoholism to depression. None of these tapes has much theological orientation at all. That supposedly is left to the counselor recommending the tapes.

One wonders how concerned Collins is about integration if he does not insist on a clear theological foundation when counselors use his tapes. The way the tapes are organized and presented, anyone can use

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12. Ibid. page 129.

them with or without a theological and scriptural foundation. The procedure makes it possible for anyone of any religious affiliation to use them without concern doctrinal differences. It also makes it possible to use them without any Scriptural comment at all. Still, this set is called The Christian Counselor's Library. At times the writer has seen these tapes in the hands of our own people with no accompanying comment at all. The counselee will find very little if anything Christian or biblical on the tapes. They were not intended to provide that foundation. Can we expect our own people to supply the necessary foundation of law and gospel by themselves when they are suffering great emotional pain and have come to us for God's help?

Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr. is perhaps the most recent and the most helpful of the modern integrationists. In his books on Christian counseling he consistently maintains a solid foundation in Scripture. He also deals from a spiritual perspective with the problems people face. He does not, like Adams, eliminate the organic side of problems where it might exist. He does not, like Adams, eliminate the possibility that psychology may be helpful in dealing with the emotional problems people have. Rather he is inclined to "spoil the Egyptians" and take what is best in the fields of medicine and psychology and apply it to pastoral counseling. In general we can say that he will insist on a Scriptural basis for counseling that would agree with ours.

Crabb deals with Scripture from more than a "Bible passage" point of view the way most of the modern counselors do. Rather than taking a passage and saying, "This is what the Bible says, now do it," Crabb deals in the actual concepts of Scripture. His foundation is in atonement rather than in passages that can be used in a moralizing way. The concept of unconditional forgiveness is extremely important in the way

he deals with troubled Christians. He knows enough about the limitations of psychology to realize that the concerns of psychology have a strong relationship with the concerns of theology. He does not lose sight of the fact that the salvation of the sinner is the primary concern, not the healing of the troubled.

Dr. Crabb's training is completely psychological. His training was at the University of Illinois. The reputation of the school is centered in research. This training may account for some of Crabb's inquisitive desires to relate theology and psychology. The Christian and biblical concepts he embraces are his own personal convictions. Crabb has received training in what modern psychology has to offer and has found it disappointing. This disappointment helps us to understand that psychology, though helpful, is not the cure-all and end all that many counselors think it is. In fact, this type of training and ultimate disappointment may do more to help us put the benefits of psychology in their proper perspective than Adams does.

If any suggestions could improve on what Crabb has already said, they would come in the doctrines of redemption and the church. Dr. Crabb deals at length with the matter of atonement. The unconditional acceptance of the sinner by God is fundamental to his teaching. This unconditional acceptance is also conveyed by the person doing the counseling and by the church itself. The church, Crabb maintains, is the ideal place to do counseling because the church's work is to convey God's unconditional acceptance. We can accept this premise virtually without condition. We would call it the church's responsibility to declare God's objective justification of the world in Christ.

At this point a word of explanation is in order. Doctrinally speaking, the words redemption and atonement mean the same thing. Both

have to do with the payment Christ made for sin by sacrificing himself on the cross. Both terms speak of the peace of God that results from Christ's substitutionary payment. Unconditional forgiveness, in Crabb's terminology, means that because Christ's work is complete and the redemptive payment has been made. God places no conditions on the full and free objective justification of the human race. Crabb states most emphatically that it is the work of the church to proclaim unconditional forgiveness to the troubled sinner. We would agree completely with the fact that God has declared the world righteous objectively and unconditionally for Jesus' sake. Even faith itself is not a cause or condition for justification. This unconditional forgiveness is the primary emphasis on which Crabb bases his work. By laying this foundation, however, Crabb seems to make an unnatural distinction between redemption and atonement. In Crabb's writing, redemption seems to be Christ's payment. Atonement seems to be the resulting peace with God. If that is the case, Crabb stresses unconditional forgiveness almost to the point of excluding the payment Christ had to make to obtain it.

In Crabb's expressions we might think of redemption as Christ's work to pay for our sins with his perfect life, innocent death and resurrection victory. We might think of atonement as the peace with God that results from Christ's work of redemption. We find our real peace with God in seeing our sins paid for in full on the cross in the person of Jesus Christ. That spiritual journey to the cross has tremendous implications for the guilty and troubled. It is important to know that we are unconditionally forgiven by God and by our fellow human beings, but it is just as important to be reminded time and again why that forgiveness is unconditional and genuine. Jesus paid for it, that's why.

With Crabb's basis of sin and unconditional grace it is easy to read in the facts of our salvation set forth in the historical setting of Calvary. In my opinion the historical act that allows us to see our sins paid for by Jesus Christ has extremely important implications for the troubled Christian. For example, one of the most common causes of psychogenic illnesses is rooted in a person's attempt to pay for his own guilt with his own suffering. While that person needs to know that he is unconditionally forgiven by God for the sake of Jesus Christ, he also needs to see the Son of God making the payment for sin that he is perhaps attempting to pay himself. Then the sufferer will perhaps be able to understand what it means to be unconditionally accepted by God.

As an example of the importance of making the distinction between Christ's payment for sin and the resulting peace he won, we can use the following example.

A young woman lived from childhood with the idea that she was responsible for the behavior of other people, particularly her brother. She was often punished when her brother misbehaved. She learned to think that if she had been properly caring for her brother he would not have misbehaved. As the lady reached adulthood she began to gather a strange collection of illnesses focusing on her digestive system. Eventually she virtually stopped eating because of the intense pain the food caused to her digestive system. She was a candidate for medical treatment, but no medical treatments corrected the problem. She grew worse instead of better.

Finally she was treated by a medical doctor who explained his limitations in helping her. The physical symptoms could be relieved to some degree with diet and regularity in her schedule. Along with that treatment and the assurance that she had no further medical problems,

the young lady was forced to confront her real problem. Within a few weeks she understood that she was still doing what she had learned to do from childhood. She was punishing herself physically for things that she didn't do and couldn't do. She could face the fact that it was a sin to damage her own body that way. She could recognize that her attempts to pay for her own guilt were in reality a refusal to admit that Christ has already made that payment. Most importantly, she was able to take a spiritual journey to the cross of Jesus Christ and see his work for her more clearly than she had ever seen it before. When no further need to pay for her own guilt existed because she understood and trusted Christ's substitutionary payment, the physical symptoms began to disappear as well. Mere assurance of forgiveness had not been sufficient. This young lady needed a new understanding of what happened at Calvary to appreciate how Christ paid for her sins.

The importance of sin and grace, redemption, atonement and unconditional forgiveness within the pale of the church are all important matters in successful Christian counseling, as God counts success. For all of these things we can thank Dr. Crabb for his insight and the strength of his convictions. More than anyone else, he has brought the field of pastoral counseling close to a genuinely Christian and biblical basis. The criticisms we have brought are merely intended to take his process one step further in an attempt to focus more clearly on Christ and less on the counselors who convey God's message to the troubled Christian.

Psychology does have a place in this work. In some ways, to deny that fact makes it necessary for us to reinvent the wheel. Recognizing the limitations of psychology is also important. While many have turned from theology to psychology as something that works better and faster

than sin and grace, Crabb has turned from his psychology to the theology of the cross and found many intelligent ways of using his psychological tools to do work that can actually be called God's work.

### CONCLUSION AND DEFINITION

Our study of counselors and integrationists, limited though it might be, has revealed a wide diversity of thought on the relationship between pastoral counseling and psychology. We have examples of those who use virtually either no theology or no psychology at all while claiming they do. We have seen examples of those who lean heavily on reason and place it over Scripture both theologically and psychologically. We have seen a wide variety of subjects and human difficulties dealt with from varying theological points of view. At this point we can compare the definitions for Scripture as source and norm that we reached in Chapter 5 with the definition we are led to in the study of modern writers in the field.

Our definitions are first that,

HOLY SCRIPTURE IS THE SOURCE OF ALL CORRECT TEACHING ABOUT OUR SINFULNESS AND GOD'S MERCIFUL ACT TO JUSTIFY US FOR JESUS' SAKE SO THAT WE LIVE ACCORDING TO HIS WILL.

Second we have said that

HOLY SCRIPTURE IS THE STANDARD BY WHICH ALL EFFORTS MUST BE JUDGED THAT ADDRESS OUR SINFULNESS AND A PEACEFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, OURSELVES AND OTHERS SO THAT WE LIVE ACCORDING TO HIS WILL.

Our study of various writers reveals that Scripture is not the only source and norm in modern Christian counseling. The rationalistic and humanistic influence in much of the writing, places reason in a position superior to Scripture.

The second matter our definitions addressed is human sinfulness. The Bible clearly defines sinfulness as disobedience to God's law that stems from a sinful nature that exists in every human being. Sin means that people have completely corrupted human natures that are always inclined toward evil. Among modern writers, sins of the flesh are generally the only sins under consideration. When original sin is discussed, it is often considered a mere weakness in human nature that must be repaired by some change in a person's behavior.

Our third consideration is God's redemptive work in Christ. This central act of God on behalf of man is what marks anything as biblical and Christian. Most modern writers treat God's merciful act to justify us in Christ with nothing more than the mention of forgiveness. When Christ's redemptive work is not discussed and does not serve as the basis for the counseling that follows, nothing deserves the label Christian or biblical in the sense that God would have us use the terms.

Living according to God's will involves both a temporal and eternal point of view. Jesus made that clear when he told us to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first and all other things would be added as well. Nothing can be called Christian that ignores the eternal relationship with God that is at the heart of discipleship. Nearly all modern writers leave us disappointed on this essential matter. Even references to a closer walk with God lack depth if they mean walking with God as long as we are on earth. To put it another way, we might say that the goal of most Christian counseling among modern writers is simply to enjoy life more without concern for our eternal relationship with God. In that sense this Christian counseling has goals that are no different from those of any secular counselors.

If counseling is biblical, we expect to see the application of



both law and gospel. A counselor will use any means or method he has available to confront the reality of the sinful nature and the sinful act. We can illustrate this with the example of a woman deserted by her husband.

When a woman was deserted by her husband she not only felt remorse, but guilt as well. This might seem strange since she could do nothing to change her husband's mind or actions. Still she was troubled by guilt. Counseling went on for an extended period of time usually for the purpose of providing support for the deserted woman. At one point, however, she wanted to evaluate her part in the problem in more depth. To that point no evidence existed that she had done anything to cause the breakup of the marriage.

When she evaluated her situation, however, the lady realized that she had always considered it her responsibility to do everything she could to make her husband happy. Her acts of kindness, in reality, were messages to her husband that she would give him anything he wanted. In a way, she had made him into a false god and herself as well. She had encouraged his childish notion that he was not expected to offer anything in the marriage. Her guilt stemmed from the realization that she had exhausted the supply of things that he wanted. She was forced to confront her own limitations as a human being and her failure to demand responsible behavior from her husband. She was finally able to confront the fact that only God, not she, could do all things well. She was not God even though she had tried to be. Her husband was not God even though he expected to be treated like a god. With relief she could finally understand that God could forgive her and had forgiven her attempt to play God herself. Consequently, her love for her husband took on a different form. What her husband wanted from her was no

longer the primary consideration. What mattered was what God wanted for them. She began to learn to say no in love as well as yes.

In most cases, however, sin is not really the problem for modern writers, and so the law is not an effective tool. The gospel will not be considered an effective tool if sin is not the problem that needs healing. Generally speaking, we will not see these two basic doctrines in use at all. The Bible will rather be used to provide directions for a more moral or more peaceful existence. The whole counsel of God is usually not to be found.

A peaceful relationship with ourselves and others cannot and should not exist where no real peace with God exists. Peace with God is out of the question without an application of the law and gospel.

Terminal cancer patients and their families experience serious challenges both to their emotions and the individual faith of each family member. Tension and anxiety are the rule when a battle is being waged for life. Quite often the members of the family are more ready to fight than the dying person himself. He is perhaps too ill and tired to fight any longer. The surroundings are often anything but peaceful. The war in progress is not only a war with disease, it is a war with God. Human nature fears death. Death is the loudest preaching of the law. Death proves that this person is a sinner. No wonder that is the time when we frequently hear people ask, "What did I do to deserve this? What did I do wrong? Why is this happening to me?" While we can sympathize with the difficulty of the battle and the stress on the emotions, all of these questions are expressions of self-righteousness. They say, in essence, "God is wrong and I'm right."

When a person confronts his own sinfulness (how much more clearly can you see it than when you face death?), the reality is something any

of us would want to avoid by nature. Nevertheless, the law says that all of us are sinners and deserve the wages of our sin. Death occurs because the person is a sinner, no matter how nice he might be, no matter how much he might suffer. To most counselors that confrontation with sin seems like cruel and unusual punishment for the circumstances. Most counselors would rather encourage a continuing fight than face a confrontation with sin and death. But with the confrontation with sin also comes the confrontation with the reality of what Christ did when he experienced death on the cross as the Substitute for the dying sinner. Christ is all any sinner needs. The victory over sin that makes death worth dying and makes life worth living was won by Christ. Hundreds of pastors have had the privilege of seeing that confrontation with sin and grace produce a peace that cannot be duplicated by any other means than the law and gospel.

Where one obtains peace with God without the gospel, no real peace exists at all. This deceptive kind of peace only leaves a person imagining that everything is all right between himself and God. Peace with God without Christ has no basis in fact. In this sense, what is called Christian counseling can do eternal damage while it appears to be doing a good job.

The words, for Jesus' sake, occur in our definition for Scripture as our source. These words convey the fact that only God in Christ and his redemptive work to justify us and all sinners can do real spiritual healing. Jesus cannot be replaced with psychology, reason, good intentions, an accepting and friendly counselor or anything else.

With these things in mind I would submit the following definition for Scripture as source and norm in pastoral counseling and psychology among modern writers.

SCRIPTURE IS A USEFUL TOOL THAT CAN BE USED IN DIFFERENT WAYS TO HELP PEOPLE IMPROVE THEIR EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION AND THEIR PERSONAL AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS.

This definition falls far short of the ones we have used to express our own convictions about Scripture as our source and norm. The definition purposely conveys the impression that Scripture is not nearly as important to modern writers in the area of pastoral counseling and psychology as it is to the members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. We cannot say that Scripture has no place among them. It does. That position is not the same authoritative position we would give Scripture. The authority and value of Scripture changes from writer to writer. The importance of law and gospel, sin and grace varies from unimportant to very important. Generally speaking, none of the writers in this area of pastoral work convey the same convictions about Scripture as source and norm that we hold in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Our definition of Scripture as source and norm among modern writers is intended to express our disappointment.