The Healthy Mind

Its Nature and Formation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since man is not a mind operating in a vacuum, isolated from his body and surroundings, our definition of a Healthy Mind must bring in also the body and the environment. By a Healthy Mind, then, we mean 'The whole personality functioning in harmony with itself, the body and the environment'.

For this to happen, the personality must be adequately endowed with the means to function; the faculties of the personality must be in harmony with one another; the person must be deriving security from his environment; and he must himself live in harmony with it.

2. MENTAL HEALTH WITHIN ONESELF - THE PERSONALITY

Theologians and philosophers tell us that the mind, being 'simple', cannot be divided: psychologists find it valuable, in order to describe the mind, to divide it, like Julius Caesar did Gaul, into three parts: the thinking part (cognition), the feeling part (affect) and the behaving part (conation).

The thinking part makes up that aspect of personality called the intellect; the feeling or emotional part, that called the temperament; and the behaving part, that termed the character. For mental health, nature must endow each part adequately, and each part needs to be in harmony within itself and with the other two.

THE PERSONALITY (a) Endowment

(i) The intellect

The endowment of intelligence, the ability to learn and reason, (Footnote: This definition of intelligence is realized to be crude.) varies naturally in the same way as does height, on a scale of 'normal distribution'; this scale says that the majority of people will possess intelligence around the average while very few will by ordinary nature be extremely bright or extremely dull.

To produce, however, ordinary intelligence nothing must go wrong either with inheritance or with development from the moment of fertilization until the foetus (the growing baby) comes out of the womb.

Certain rare and usually severe forms of defect of intelligence are the result of two inherited factors, both of which do not normally come out, occurring together by chance or inbreeding, and therefore producing the abnormal condition.

A less rare form, unhappily termed mongolism because of the sufferer's superficial resemblance to members of the Mongolian races (and now more often and correctly termed Down's Syndrome),

results from an abnormality, occurring at fertilization of the female egg by the male sperm, in the cord-like structures in the cell which give us our endowment - the structures called the chromosomes. (More can be read about inheritance and chromosomes in such paperbacks as C. O. Carter, Human Heredity, Pelican A523, and C. D. Darlington, Genetics and Man, Pelican A800.)

Yet a third form, cretinism, is caused by insufficient of the products of one of the mother's glands reaching the developing baby in the womb. Science may one day then foster mental health not only by improving our stock but also by finding out how to prevent these causes of defect of intelligence between fertilization and birth.

(ii) Temperament and character

They can most usefully be considered together. Both are inherited on the scale of 'normal distribution' mentioned above {Section 2 (a) (i)}. Extreme variations can occasionally occur, regardless of the way the person is brought up.

The range of variation of factors which make up temperament and character is vast. Two basic factors are thought to be the variation from extreme sociability (called extroversion) to extreme social inhibitedness (called introversion): and that from solidity of personality to volatility, the tendency to be easily knocked off balance.

There is variation between extreme restless drive and placid imperturbability (the typically difficult baby whom one 'can do nothing with' and the 'good baby who never cries'); between the rigidly inflexible and the versatile personality; the sensitive and insensitive; those of 'strong' dominant, and 'weak' dependent, character.

Even in the same family and undergoing broadly similar upbringing, people vary naturally in their energy, their drives, their aims and ambitions; in their creative and artistic sense: in resourcefulness, in charm, in brashness. Some are born with better capacity to control their emotions than others; some are naturally more aggressive or 'highly strung' than others.

Some of these characteristics can be discovered in babyhood: others come out only during development. It would be a mistake, though, to believe that those which emerge as one grows up are all the result of upbringing. The importance of upbringing cannot be overstressed; but neither yet can that of natural variation - including variation in late-developing characteristics.

THE PERSONALITY (b) Maturation

It is, however, not enough that we be adequately endowed: we must also make the best use of our endowments. It is said that two particular characteristics of man have come together to make him 'top animal': the first is his huge brain, relative to that of other animals, giving him exceptional capacity to learn and to adapt to changing circumstances; the second is his unusually long childhood. Compared to other domesticated animals like the horse and chimpanzee, we stay children for far longer, and therefore have a far greater length of time, before our minds 'fossilize', in which to use our exceptional brain-power to mature into wise men (not that at this point of civilization wisdom always radiates among us).

Maturation means more than just growth: something more like useful growth. It depends on two separate but related occurrences:

(i) The faculties with which we are endowed need to grow as completely as possible. For this growth, like plants, they must be nurtured by our parents during upbringing in childhood. Deprivation of love and security stunts our development.

(ii) These faculties, particularly the three major ones of thinking, feeling and behaving, need to grow at approximately the same rate as one another and as that of the body. Even for the best of us, harmonious maturation is difficult, since different faculties mature at different times.

Growth in physical stature may be completed at any age between 14 and 24.

Maturation of the sexual organs and therefore of physical sexual capacity comes to completion at puberty, usually between the ages of 12 and 16 in both sexes in Western civilization.

Intellectual growth, by which is meant the capacity to improve at psychological tests, not to become more learned or wiser (which are lifelong), is over at around the age of 16 in most people.

Emotional maturity is a much less clear-cut and exact thing, with a likely wide span of completion, from as early as 15 to as late as 25: indeed, some very unstable people seem to mature into respectable citizens as late as the middle 30's or even later. Neurotic people may never reach emotional maturity; and of course no one can claim to be, in this sense, perfectly mature: 'Everyone's a bit touched bar you and me, and I'm not too sure about you, either!'

It is not surprising that, under these circumstances, harmonious maturation in adolescence is difficult and that there is dispute about the correct age of majority. It so much depends upon which faculties you especially single out. Upbringing and cultural fashion play a part in some aspects of emotional maturation. It is, for instance, a truism that social sophistication - poise and know-how - seems to occur much earlier today than before the last war in Western Europe in 1945.

The sex-murderer of children, Straffen, is an extreme example of the failure of harmonious maturation. His normal maturation of growth and physical sex drive was offset by gross retardation of intellect and self-control, particularly when angered or frustrated. As the result, his sexual urges went dangerously unbridled.

THE PERSONALITY (c) Harmonization

Our faculties need not only to harmonize in their maturation but also, once fully developed, in their use. It is no good having well-developed potentials unless they work in well with one another, and we are serene within ourselves. If they harmonize badly, psychological conflict results: we are at war with ourselves.

This harmonization, like maturation, has to occur (i) within and between the three major faculties of thinking, feeling and behaving; (ii) with the body.

(i) Harmony within and between our faculties

(a) The use of the Intellectual faculties

It is well-known that, at university level, a good degree rests less on intelligence (provided it is basically adequate for the course) than on how the intelligence is used: with what drive to succeed; with what persistence or, as 'approved' schoolmasters term it, 'stickability'; with how much good judgement and clear-headedness.

At all times a balance of harmony between extremes is needed. Much of human psychology can indeed be understood on the model of 'psychological see-saws'. Here are two relevant to our topic:-

Conscientiousness -> Perfectionism
Happy-go-lucky Attitude -> Laziness

If you are, on the one side of the 'see-saw', too easy-going, you will become idle and unconcerned: but if, on the other side, you are over-conscientious, you will wear yourself out in your search for perfection.

Ambitious Drive -> Overmastering restlessness
Taking Life as it Comes -> Indifference

An excess of ambition can lead to the corruption of power, riding rough-shod over the world to achieve it. On the other side inadequate drive to succeed can end up in cynical indifference, with the buses of achievement all missed.

(b) Insight and judgement

Wise judgement enables one to deploy one's intellectual resources in the best way. Insight into oneself leads to clear-headed assessment of one's capacities and limitations. A wise and stable dullard may well do better than an intellectual will-o'-the-wisp flitting from interest to interest. Social workers know how admirably poorly endowed women can do at housewifery and motherhood if they put cleverly into the 'shop window' of daily use the resources they possess, make full use of all they learn and do not attempt to be ambitious to keep up with better-endowed 'Joneses'.

(c) General and special abilities

The intellect is not just one thing. It consists of many abilities harmonized together; some general to all people, like the basic ability to reason out an idea; some specialized, like ability at mathematics or languages. They do not always harmonize. When parents are confronted with a child with very special capacities and some particular inadequacies, what should they do? Should they encourage the child to develop what he is good at, at the expense of his limitations, and thus keep him happier but make him more and more one-sided; or should they try and bring him back towards the mean, by helping him develop his poor endowments but at the expense of his better ones? There is no cut-and-dried answer; either can be right for a particular child; each child's capacities need to be seen and nurtured on their merits. Sometimes expert advice can help.

(d) Serenity - or else emotional domination

Our emotions seem to have been given us (i) to provide the drive for certain fundamental performances, like the emotion of love driving on the urge to procreate and thus keep going the human race: here they come very close to feelings which accompany basic bodily needs, like those of hunger and thirst driving us to seek necessary food and drink: or (ii) to help us to preserve ourselves against our enemies: the three emotions mainly involved are those going with flight, fright and fight; or (iii) to provide what seems to be necessary 'spice' to everyday living: the two emotions of our mood here come in: happiness and sadness. These emotions are our valuable servants; but servants they must remain, or they become very bad masters.

Flight, fright and fight. The emotions accompanying these three basic acts of self-preservation are in particular need of control by the reason, for otherwise they easily get out of hand and dominate our lives.

That accompanying flight is the emotion of fear. Under rational control it acts as an important guard against assault. Out of control, it readily leads to irrational anxieties and fears.

The emotion going with fright is 'freeze', akin to the freezing of a rabbit when it cannot escape. Psychologists give it in man the elaborate name of 'detachment' or 'dissociation' from reality. Again, the ability to detach oneself from troubles around one is valuable when under the reason's control; but out of hand it leads to the person, ostrich-like, hiding his head in the sand so that others have to take-over responsibility.

Fighting, when there is no escape or means of 'freezing', may provide the last chance of self-preservation: with it goes the emotion of anger or aggressiveness. Everyday, all around us, all over the world, comes evidence of this emotion of aggression taking dictatorial possession: in this atomic age, it could, unbridled, cause total destruction of the human race. No emotion so much needs to be kept our servant as aggression.

Happiness and sadness. These emotions are readily and automatically set in motion by a mechanism still unknown. They are closely allied with energy. Happiness goes with 'jumping for joy': sadness with 'curling up into a corner and doing nothing'. People without them are obviously of impoverished personalities. Unfortunately the mechanism regulating them is rather easily disturbed by illness - particularly that called 'depressive illness'. Relatives of the sufferers, thinking that these emotional changes can be better controlled than is really the case, may make the illness worse by telling the patient to 'pull yourself together'. Of course, we should do what we can by the use of reason to stop joy and misery becoming overmastering - but our limitations under illness need to be understood.

(e) Tolerance of ourselves - Self-image and self-esteem

If we develop normally we form an increasingly clear idea of the sort of person we are and at what in life we are aiming - a self-image and self-ideal. As this idea of ourselves is essential to our functioning with confidence, we cling strongly to it and dislike any attack made on it: we form, in regard to it, a self-esteem, what the Italians call a bella figura, 'beautiful face'. If we lose it, we lose face indeed.

{Footnote: 'Who steals my purse steals trash... But he that filches from me my good name Robs me of that which not enriches him And leaves me poor indeed. (Othello, Act III, Scene 3.)}

Not only do we need to be tolerant of the feelings of others to ensure they do not lose face, but we need equally to be tolerant with ourselves, lest we get into the neurotic state of 'negative self-esteem', always hating or attacking ourselves. Self-criticism is valuable, indeed necessary to growth in personality: but intolerance of oneself leads only to running away from living and becoming as lost as an insecure child. To develop and do better we have to start by accepting ourselves as the poor wretches we are and growing from that point.

Neuroticism, or the inability to live and function comfortably within ourselves, most frequently results from these emotions getting out of rational control or out of harmony with one another. Difficulties in personal relations, especially during upbringing, play also an important role in producing this condition (See Section 3 (a) (i) # below).

(ii) Harmony with our bodies

Since we cannot walk out of our bodies, we must live with them. To speak thus of them suggests that they are to us like another person, a person with whom we are in close and intimate relation: a person indeed whom so often we do not trust. The body works best when left alone. Once you are watching out for it misbehaving, it will tend to misbehave; for it will get tense, and a tense body does not work well.

Much of the body functions automatically, and most easily when its functioning is unnoticed. You go best off to sleep when not thinking about sleeping; your bowels open most readily when you are not preoccupied with the possibility - or still more in fear that they will not function. Most times, constipation and insomnia are expressions of fear rather than diseases or even symptoms of disease: most times the best 'cure' for insomnia is to forget how long you slept (or didn't sleep) the night before; for constipation to forget when last you went.

The hypochondriacal, those afraid their bodies are disordered, can wisely think of them like a puppy dog. If you can trust him enough to let him off the lead and give him scope, he will frisk around happily and probably cause you no bother. But if you always hold him tightly in rein, he will become fractious and troublesome.

If this happens, you and your body can get into a state of unassuageable hostility, like antagonistic Siamese twins, in which nothing is of interest to the person except his body, its functions, its needs: valetudinarianism, we call it. You can pick up the valetudinarian in the hotel restaurant scanning warily the menu for what will do least harm to his body and finally turning to the waiter with 'I think I'll take a little of this'. Valetudinarians take but little of life.

3. MENTAL HEALTH AND ONE'S ENVIRONMENT

(a) In Personal Relations - Love the environment (i) The first love - Affection

In virtue of the long helplessness of our babyhood and still longer dependency of our childhood (see Section 2 (b) # above), we can flourish only in a nest of security provided by others. That our very helplessness excites others to make us secure is made evident by the immediate abhorrence, pity, and desire to enfold, evinced by the sight on the pictures or television of a small child separated from, and crying for, its mother. This is because the child inspires in others the basic love of C. S. Lewis' Four Loves, the 'need-love' form of affection, while from the parents affection comes to the child in the form of 'gift-love'. (Footnote: C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves, Fontana Books, 1963. The best anatomy of love known to the author.) It is the mark of the child to be affectionate in 'need-love' form, of the adult to bestow it as 'gift-love'; but, as Lewis points out, if we do not mature in our needs for love, our apparently grown-up gift-love may be tinged with childish needs, so that we need to be needed and become possessive.

Possession and possessiveness. In upbringing, parents act as God's stewards. Like gods, they have full power over their children - but power to use responsibly for the child, or irresponsibly for themselves. They possess but must never be possessive.

Possessiveness is a form of rejection because the child is not being brought up in God's image to be itself and breathe its own air, but in its parents' god-like image to reflect its parents. I knew a possessive mother of twin girls who even dressed them at the age of three to look just like her, with little muffs and fur hats.

Permissiveness and discipline. In revolt from Victorian authoritarianism we are in the age of permissiveness, of avoiding at all costs Freudian 'complexes' which result from over-disciplined repression. The tight-rope balance of the see-saw can easily be lost.

Discipline -> Authoritarianism
Permissiveness -> Laissez-faire

While children need room to 'find' themselves, experiment through play, need mess, dirt, even slight danger of hurting themselves while experimenting, they need also regularity, routine and firm guidance. They need wise balance between being told everything, finding out nothing; and being left to their unaided devices. Life is too short and dangerous - the more so as it becomes more complex - to learn everything by trial and error: indeed psychologists recognize as one of the fastest ways of learning what they call 'operational conditioning', which means active teaching by reward and (we hope restrained and sensible) punishment.

Understanding. The virtue most essential in parents after love itself is not sympathy or even compassion but understanding: seeing each child as individual, as unique and as whole. Understanding keeps the parent always the one move ahead, and militates towards justice and fairness, particularly when the relationship is a family one, to several children in competition. To be loved and to be understood is for the child to be secure: their absence means deprivation, their severe absence rejection. Deprivation and rejection breed disturbance, because the child's personality, instead of blossoming, stunts and sometimes withers.

(ii) The second love - Friendship

As the child develops, so his basic contact with his parents becomes extended: first to others in the family, then to outside of it. Natural gravitation is especially towards people of about one's own age, one's nearest brother or sister, one's widening and deepening circle of friends. Lewis' second love, friendship, is the love of equal sharing, partly intellectual - the sharing of two minds; partly emotional - aesthetic for instance, the sharing of likes and dislikes; partly behavioural - working together. It is rarely an exactly equal relation as one so often dominates the other. Competition in the midst of friendship is liable to engender aggression: 'King of the Castling' results. 'I'm right, you're wrong; I'm quicker, you're slower; I'm cleaner, you're dirtier; I'm good, you're bad; I'm King of the Castle (in summary), you're the dirty rascal.' 'Let each of us weigh and measure with the balance of love and be in his own eyes the worst offender', says the prayer: otherwise friendship is vitiated by competitive intolerance.

(iii) Adolescence

'Need love' is the affection of children: 'gift-love' of adults. It follows that a time must come when the two are in equal balance - and because the balance is equal, it is like another see-saw, easily disturbed. This is the see-saw of adolescence, the breaking away from dependence on parents, the forming of new affiliations.

Self-Reliance:Dependence on Parents

Swinging down on the self-reliant side, we have arrogance, know-all, non-conformity, rebelliousness, self-assertion: parents can no longer 'tell', they must ask - and probably get nothing but abuse in reply. The adolescent is dependent only to demand - the allowance, the best room for parties, the whole night for noise. Yet what is more difficult than swing-down the other way: the over-dependent adolescent tied to Mum's apron-strings, who knows nobody and goes nowhere?

Whichever way the parents try to balance back the see-saw they are wrong: in this phase, they cannot win.

Yet in their own groups adolescents can be idealistic, loyal, supportive, understanding, labouring for causes (however misguided).

(iv) The third love - Eros

Falling in love, Lewis' third love, is the love that blossoms most radiantly in adolescence. As Lewis describes it, it is all embracing and tyrannous. Far more than mere physical lust, which may or may not go with it, it involves the all-powerful emotion of passion. The loved one is all the world for the lover. In its glow all else withers into unimportance. It is a valuable ingredient of marriage, but woe the marriage of which it is the sole ingredient; for as the ardour cools, the fire, far from expanding into the rich and long-enduring warmth of married life, will die out.

(v) Sex and commitment

The human sex act is far from merely physical. 'We are', says Lewis, 'akin on one side to the angels, on the other to tom-cats'. (The Four Loves, p. 93.) But a sex act which is purely tom-cat is degraded below even animal love to no more than the satisfaction of the lavatory, with another person used as the lavatory.

There is no physical act of union more intimate than that of sex. The very closeness of the union participates each in the depths of the other. It commits the body of each in offering to the other. The woman in particular, offering the sacrifice of her virginity, loses in dignity if she offers lightly and casually. Often she just cannot: unwittingly she ties herself psychologically to the man who has taken her - to the 'tom-cat' who may care scarcely a jot for what he has taken.

This divorce of physical from psychological commitment is the heresy of our age. It makes us 'unwhole' as persons and, in disharmonizing us, it weakens the family and society.

(vi) Marriage

A committed, whole marriage subsumes into itself all earlier loves. The husband brings the 'need-love' of the child to be cared for and fed to the matured 'gift-love' of the wife. She brings her 'need-love' and need for strength and protection to his 'gift-love' and his firmness, loyalty, fidelity, constancy. Each brings the offering of their bodies. Each has a sphere of responsibility: he for the livelihood, she for the home. (Footnote: This is not meant to imply that he cannot help in the house nor she earn a living.) Together they can unite their responsible commitment to one another in the procreation of new life, the supreme stewardship, which leads to the shared responsibility of upbringing and education, and to the unifying of the family.

Otherwise, what will happen? A collection of warring, demanding individuals; jealousies, rivalries; Kings of the Castle; noses out of joint: playing-off of parent against parent - that grim power which grips the child compulsively while making him ever more insecure; disunion; 'going our own ways'; divorce.

(vii) Old age

The elderly tend to turn back inwards from the full flower of personal relations into a philosophical gather-back of life's experiences into oneself: in preparation. one might think, for the journey

beyond. Yet younger members of the family can join in the wholeness and serenity of a healthy and well-found old age.

(b) In Social Relations - The Environment

From around the age of two the child begins to deal with others in the group. At first it is brothers and sisters with whom the child makes contact, then play-mates, then schoolmasters and teachers. As the ability to 'handle' several people at a time develops, loose gangs of children start to form, to become closer and coherent in adolescence.

These gangs, first of the one sex only, then mixed, then leading to 'pairings-off', form the microcosm of society, that wider, larger and often poorly-knit-together group which makes up a neighbourhood, a province, a county, a country, a continent, even today a world.

Dominance and dependency within the gang lead to the formation of a 'pecking order'. The leader is he (or she) who can best 'man-manage' rather than just the brightest or most forceful (though both these are useful to the leader). The leader may indeed vary from time to time, from activity to activity.

Just as affinities and tensions form between individuals, so do they in groups. Emotions are prone to be expressed more primitively and forcefully in a group. They can be worked up into 'mass hypnosis' or even, as Hitler showed only too well 'mass hysteria'.

Society can itself act as a daddy-like figure, more or less dictatorial, with, as Lawlor has shown, its set of 'expectancies' - how it expects its members to behave. (Monica Lawlor, Personal Responsibility: Growth and Limits. Faith and Fact Books, No. 33, pp. 60-61.) Its health, like that of an individual, depends on its flexibility, its permissiveness for diverse groups to flourish within it without anarchy, its ability to provide a framework for living that does not fossilize into an end in itself. Law, in healthy societies, allows for regularity and security without becoming harsh or oppressive.

A balance seems necessary for the individual in relation to society

Conformity:Rebelliousness

The over-conforming person becomes obsequious: the Uriah Heep, the toady. The over-rebellious goes beyond reasonable criticism and undermines the stability of society.

Another see-saw easily upset in relation to society is

Vigilance -> Suspiciousness
Acceptance -> Complacency

We need to accept the society we live in just as we have to accept ourselves; but we must always watch lest it subtly destroy our ideals and aims.

4. MENTAL AND MORAL HEALTH - CONSCIENCE

(i) Its nature

We know that conscience is based on a constitutional factor or cluster of factors mainly from what happens when it is absent. The essential ingredient seems to be the ability to put oneself in another person's shoes, to feel compunction for him. It is unlikely to be a single factor but an amalgam of several, including the ability to relate to other people and natural sensitivity.

(ii) Its development

The way conscience develops is one of the more interesting - and valuable - ideas of the school of psychology of Sigmund Freud. Provided the child has the capacity for conscience and provided the parents have a conscience, they will automatically instil conscience in the child in the first three years of his life.

What is instilled ('introjected' is the technical word when looked at from the parents', and 'incorporated' when looked at from the child's viewpoint) is a psychological finger: a finger wagging at the child and saying (a speaking finger, you see) 'you ought' - or, even more often, 'you ought not'.

The parents have in fact conditioned the child to be sensitive to their slightest disapproval of his behaviour and to feel 'punished' by the withdrawal of their love in their disapproval. A little image of the disapproving parents' wagging finger sits then permanently over (super, in Latin) the developing personality (ego) of the child: the super-ego.

The naturally introverted child will condition more readily, therefore develop more readily a super-ego, than the extrovert.

(iii) Its maturation

The super-ego is a child's and childish conscience, and often far from rational. If the child's sensitivity to this finger-wag is naturally strong, an overmastering conscience may result, bringing with it scruples and continuous self-punishing: the 'ought-ridden' personality, unable to escape from his continuous finger-wag.

The super-ego is not then an adult moral sense of right and wrong. and will only become so if the child's upbringing as he attains the 'age of reason' is secure enough to mature it into a reasoned and reasonable working-out of what behaviour each situation needs: into keen yet sound but above all rational moral judgement.

The other danger of a super-ego over-eagerly instilled by parents, themselves fearful of disapproval, is that beneath it will be pressed back a volcano of resentment, which at any moment may be provoked to erupt into an explosion of aggression - which in its turn will excite the conscience into remorse and cause the whole process to repeat itself in a vicious circle.

Two general rules then for parents, for the best moral upbringing of children in the setting, let us hope, of firm parental moral standards, are:

- In the first three years of the child's life, try not to be punitive in attitude, raise your voice to the child as little as possible, anticipate its needs and problems, so that you can show as much approval as possible and as little disapproval.
- Develop from the start free and easy communication with the child so that he will readily appreciate your reasons for what you do and can learn equally readily to explain what he does, first to you and then to himself.

(iv) Its absence - Psychopathy

The absence of the basic ingredients of conscience or the stunting of its development through severe emotional deprivation, leads to one of the worst forms of mental disturbance, called psychopathy, in which compunctionlessness or cold-heartedness towards others and, secondarily, towards society is

a main component. It frequently goes with the liability to act without proper reflection, on impulse. Impulsive cold-heartedness is always unpleasant in society, may well cause delinquency, indeed violent delinquency, and can only be treated with lengthy supervision and training, often with poor reward.

5. MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH

(i) The need for faith

'...Without a supportive faith of some sort or another few people can live constructive or happy lives... without some faith or another the problem of living becomes one of extraordinary difficulty for every one of us. We have to believe in something, to have some purpose in life, however bizarre the life of faith may turn out to be, now or later.' What my renowned colleague, William Sargant, seems to be saying in these passages I have collated from his 1968 Maudsley Lecture, The Physiology of Faith, (British Journal of Psychiatry, May 1969, p. 565.) is that some sort of faith is for most people a psychological necessity if mental health is to be nourished.

There seems to be a threefold psychological explanation.

Firstly, we cannot but recognize that nothing in this life is wholly satisfying and much far from satisfactory. We cannot be entirely happy, free of problems, immune to accidents, miseries and bereavements. Indeed. the world at present often seems more in the power of evil than of good. Here, indeed, we have 'no abiding city': We must seek it elsewhere.

Secondly, psychology and religion are absolutely at one on one point with the lyricist who wrote, 'Love is what makes the world go round'. We need to love, we need to admire. Yet the finest person we can meet, the most saintly, will have weaknesses which, if we expect too much of him, will make him let us down. In our disillusionment with other men, our need to love and admire - to worship - must either turn outwards into faith or inwards onto ourselves. In practice those who have no faith outside themselves come increasingly to worship themselves or what they can get for themselves. Humanity's existence rests on its ability to love - but how can it without any ideal of that perfect love which is expressed most wonderfully in the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, in which Love is shown itself to be a Person of the Godhead?

Thirdly, we develop and thrive only because we are endowed with drives that of necessity seek goals. By the very most essential nature of our mental make-up we need to find meanings and explanations. We are made to seek answers; 'What does it all mean? What is it all for?' Clearly we cannot know the answers; but if there are no answers, if the questions are meaningless, this fundamental part of our make-up is also meaningless, this part of ourselves - the most uniquely human, the furthest from the animal which drives us to ask fundamental questions and seek meaning to life: not, mark you, just to our life but to life itself - even a million generations hence.

If this life were all, we had better never have been: if human love were all, it had better never have drawn us to itself. The psychiatrist is in a peculiarly good position to make these points, for to him come those inadequate for living and for loving; those who never have had the love they need.

(ii) The fourth love - Charity

Indeed Lewis, in describing his fourth love, charity, divine love, presents us with a paradox: on the one hand it can demand that we forsake all other loves, even '. . . hate... his father and mother and wife... and his own life also' (Lk. 14:26.) for Christ's sake. On the other hand, love of God enables

us to share in God's love for us so that we can love not what is loveable in the other but what is unlovable; so that we can offer him and our fellow-men for love our own unlovability and be able humbly and willingly to receive.

Then, says Lewis, our fundamental psychological need for an object of Faith changes into a 'need-love' and all our needs and all our loves in this world are transferred to a focus which makes them eternally satisfying and meaningful.

Has not, then, the psychologist good reason to assert that, without this transformation, without this ultimate yet intimate focus of all we seek, there can be no Mental Health?

Dedicated to my friend and mentor, lan Skottowe, whose book on this subject remains an inspiration.
