18. HYPNOSIS

I once received a call from the hospital to come quickly to care for a lady who had been water skiing. She had fallen into the water and had been run over by a boat, sustaining severe injury to one leg. Upon reaching the emergency room, I saw the patient had several huge lacerations across her thigh, inflicted by the propeller of the boat. She had lost much blood and looked pale. Bleeding had stopped so there was time to give her blood and fluids intravenously before taking her to the operating room. The injuries were so large and destructive to her leg that I decided to ask a plastic surgeon to join me in caring for her in the operating room.

We were able to save the leg and expected proper healing and the return to normal use. Three days later, I scheduled a change of the bandages on the leg. By that time the bandages had crusted and dried, sticking to the wounds. Changing the dressings was going to be painful.

The plastic surgeon arrived in her room before I did and proceeded to change the dressings. When I entered the room, the patient had her eyes closed; she was not showing any tension or any sign that she was in distress. When I spoke to her, the doctor said that she was sleeping but he would awaken her soon. He finished with the new dressings then told her that he was going to count backward from 5 and when he got to zero she would awake.

He counted, five, four, three, two—she began to move, one and zero—she awoke and was happy and smiling, as well as delighted that the dressings were changed and she knew nothing of the ordeal. It seemed wonderful. Who could object to such a pleasant method of dealing with injuries? I was surprised to learn that the surgeon used hypnosis. I had known him for several years and operated with him many times. I opposed hypnosis and never suggested it to my patients. I was embarrassed to have had this happen to one of my patients without first being able to share with her my concerns about its use.

Why should I object? Was it not wonderful to relieve someone from a painful procedure? Why would I oppose this humane approach? Was it not better than giving a pain medication an hour prior and then removing the bandages? She was wide-awake and pain free and did not remember the procedure.

Some doctors in medical practice have used hypnosis for many years and it is considered an acceptable method of treatment in the medical field. It has been used as an anesthetic in operative procedures, as well as in treatment of psychological ailments. Yet many physicians choose not to use it in their practices.

What is hypnosis? How does it work? Where does it come from? Why does not every doctor use it? These are important questions that deserve answers. Let us first look at a dictionary definition. "Hypnosis" is:

an induced state of mind in which the subject is responsive to the suggestions of the hypnotist. This state may be to the degree of resembling sleep, called a hypnotic trance.¹

This suggests that there are degrees of hypnosis that are below the hypnotic trance. What of its origin? Let us consider the comments made in the *New Age Encyclopedia*:

What is now called hypnosis has existed in almost all societies in the past, though its nature was only rarely understood or appreciated. Hypnotic phenomena began

to be studied in Europe in the sixteenth century, when these occurrences were attributed to magnetism, which was understood to be a subtle influence exerted by every object in the universe on every other object.²

The Bible tells of the serpent (in a tree) that spoke to Eve and "beguiled," or deceived her.³

Satan tempted the first Adam in Eden, and Adam reasoned with the enemy, thus giving him the advantage. Satan exercised his power of *hypnotism* over Adam and Eve, and this power he strove to exercise over Christ. But after the word of Scripture was quoted, Satan knew that he had no chance of triumphing.⁴

Medical history texts record hypnotic phenomena being studied by physicians, such as Paracelsus, in Europe in the mid 16th century. Its power source was explained as a magnetic fluid which connected all substances in the universe and which could not be seen, demonstrated or measured. In the 17th century it again appeared in the writings of several notorious physicians.⁵ The power of suggestion, or hypnosis, was used by these physicians to treat medical conditions.

In the 18th century, Emanuel Swedenburg (1688–1772) studied this "magnetism" credited to hypnotism and tied it in with his interest in the spiritual world. This, in turn, laid the grounds for spiritualism.⁶ Swedenburg and his ideas of spiritualism influenced the world of the occult for nearly two centuries.

If you were to consult an encyclopedia on the word *hypnosis*, you would most likely find that a physician, Franz Anton Mesmer, is referred to as the father of modern hypnosis. He is not truly the father of hypnosis, but he did make it so well known that for nearly a century this phenomenon was known as "Mesmerism." Let us review Dr. Mesmer's history.

He graduated from medical school in Vienna in 1766. That same year he published a book, *On the Influence of the Planets*, in which he proposed stroking diseased patients with magnets to effect a cure. In 1773, he claimed his first cure by the use of magnets. Mesmer was a believer in astrology and felt the body of man was a microcosm of the macrocosm (universe). He felt that man, earth and the universe were tied together with a universal magnetic fluid. Mesmer continued his medical practice using magnets to cure disease.⁷

Mesmer heard of a Swabian priest, John Gassner, who was simply passing his hands across diseased bodies and effecting "cures:

Mesmer observed Gassner and thought it was done by the power of the same magnetic fluid that he felt explained his activities with magnets. He then dispensed with the magnets and achieved equal results by use of his hands. Eventually he dispensed with the hand technique and used the mind only as the modality of influencing animal magnetism (power believed to effect hypnotism).⁸

In 1784, a book written by French doctor and spiritualist, Jean Philippe Francois Deleuze, referred to this same phenomena (hypnotism) as "animal magnetism." Deleuze seemed to want to separate the name "Mesmer" from the method.⁹

For much of the nineteenth century, the term 'animal magnetism' also encompassed clairvoyance, empathy, mediumistic trances, and many other psychic abilities and psychological phenomena, the relationships between which were far from clear.¹⁰

Let us briefly review the influence of Dr. Mesmer and the different methods he used in his medical therapy. First, he started by passing magnets across the bodies of his patients. He would make large tubs and fill them with chemicals to produce an electrical charge, placed on the tubs were iron knobs. People would stand around the tubs holding on to the iron knobs in order to receive *magnetic* therapy. He treatments progressed to simply passing of hands over the body.

Eventually, he used only the mind to accomplish the desired effect. The hypnotic state could be so deep that surgical procedures could be performed during the trance. To accomplish this involved not only an expert "mesmerist," but also a willing, submissive person. A British surgeon, James Esdaile (1805–1859), practiced in India and used the trance state for anesthesia during surgery. He performed 261 painless operations with mesmerism as the only anesthetic. When he returned to Scotland, he found that mesmerism used as an anesthetic did not work well there.¹¹

The inducement of the hypnotic state by suggestion was used in many ways by the various practitioners who became skilled in its use. ¹² The British Medical Society, in 1893, concluded that hypnosis was a true science even though they were not able to perfectly explain it. There could be no doubt that it was much more than a sham or fake act. Great influence and results did indeed occur with its use and it appeared as though its action was only positive with little to no adverse side effects.

The American Medical Association was much slower in embracing this form of treatment. Physicians at large were not fully convinced of its value, though there was no denying that it had great power to affect a person. There was no real lasting effect on disease. It seemed to be more related to the treatment of the mind and so has not been widely used by all physicians. Hypnosis was given official sanction by the American Medical Association in 1958.

We are warned that it will be in the area of *science* that Satan will exert such deceptive practices in the last days. In the days of Paul and Timothy, there also existed false sciences and Paul gives us warnings concerning them:

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called. (I Timothy 6:20).

Dr. Franz Joseph Gall (1757-1828) was an anatomy instructor. He was the first to show that different parts of the brain had specific functions.¹³ He carried this too far, however, and felt that the character and personality could be recognized by observing the bumps and ridges on the skull. This idea he carried even further, suggesting that the mind, character and personality could be altered by massage to the head, or pressure applied to specific areas of the skull. This concept was named *phrenology*.

Phrenology was a pseudo-science and was adopted by those practicing mesmerism and other occult therapies. The spiritualist movement was attracted to phrenology and mesmerism. E.G. White had much to say concerning the practice.

Satan uses these very things to destroy virtue and lay the foundation for spiritualism.¹⁴

The sciences of phrenology, psychology and mesmerism have been the channel through which Satan has come more directly to this generation, and wrought with that power which was to characterize his work near the close of probation.¹⁵

In a private letter to someone in 1901, Ellen White made it clear that the false sciences of phrenology and mesmerism (hypnotism) is *Satan's own science*. (Letter 130, 1901). 2 SM 349-50

A perilous Science: We do not ask you to place yourself under the control of any man's mind. The *mind cure* is the most awful science which has ever been advocated. Every wicked being can use it in carrying through his own evil designs. We have no business with any such science. We should be afraid of it. Never should the first principles of it be brought into any institution.¹⁶ (Written in 1901). (emphasis added)

The theory of mind controlling mind was originated by Satan to introduce himself as the chief worker, to put human philosophy where divine philosophy should be. Of all the errors that are finding acceptance among professedly Christian people, none is a more dangerous deception, none more certain to separate man from God, than is this. Innocent though it may appear, if exercised upon patients, it will tend to their destruction, not to their restoration. It opens a door through which Satan will enter to take possession both of the mind that is given up to be controlled by another and of the mind that controls.¹⁷

The business world is offered commercial mind-training courses by a variety of teachers. Some of these courses teach hypnotism even though the title of the course will not suggest so. Course titles such as "conditioning," "programming," "brain-wave training," "Alpha training," etc., may actually be hypnosis. There can be consequential adverse affects to the student taking part in such a course. Elmer and Alyce Green (researchers in psychology), in their book, Beyond Biofeedback, state that thousands of students in these courses will sooner or later experience serious mental changes such as neurosis or even psychosis. They warn that the greatest danger, however, is obtaining psychic advisers who are assistants in the course. The Greens warn that there is the possibility of mediumistic "possession" via the influence of the advisers. 18

The point brought out by the Greens that there is great danger in allowing another individual to control or even strongly influence us in the science of *mind control* brings to mind advice given long ago on the same point.

In April 2011, I received a copy of an article that appeared in a Colorado town's newspaper, *Highlands Ranch Herald*, April 4, 2011. This article was lauding and promoting the value of using hypnotism in childbirth. I share with you some comments found in this article.

HypnoBirthing, which is a registered trademark, has been found to significantly reduce stress and improve the well-being of newborns, and classes are now being offered at Westridge Recreation Center. Even the family education center at Littleton Adventist Hospital is planning on training nurses and physicians on how to assist mothers who use HypnoBirthing,HynoBirthing classes teach expecting parents how to wipe away anxiety through positive thoughts and reassurance. Hypnosis CDs containing messages directed at *imaging* a healthy birth; *visualization* of good outcomes and pain-free childbirth are also part of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ hour class sessions. (emphasis added)

Reading this article brought to me a feeling of sadness as I remembered the many warnings given through the years by the author E.G. White regarding Christians using hypnotism as individuals or of its practice being brought into Adventist hospitals. Note these quotations:

Warning to a Physician Who Favored Hypnosis.-- I am so weighed down in your case that I must continue to write to you, lest in your blindness you will not see where you need to reform. I am instructed that you are entertaining ideas with which God has forbidden you to deal. I will name these as a species of *mind cure*. You suppose that you can use this *mind cure* in your professional work as a physician. In tones of earnest warning the words were spoken: Beware, beware where your feet are placed and your mind is carried. God has not appointed you this work. The theory of mind controlling mind is originated by Satan to introduce himself as the chief worker, *to put human philosophy where divine philosophy should be.* {2MCP 713.3}

No man or woman should exercise his or her will to control the senses or reason of another so that the mind of the person is rendered passively subject to the will of the one who is exercising the control. This science may appear to be something beautiful, but it is a science which you are in no case to handle.... There is something better for you to engage in than the control of human nature over human nature. {2MCP 713.4}

I lift the danger signal. The only safe and true mind cure covers much. The physician must educate the people to look from the human to the divine. He

A great danger occurs when we seek counseling from professional or lay counselors. The education and source of knowledge of so many of these individuals is from the cistern of modern psychology. The counselor may be a Christian, but if his education and mind are fixed in the philosophy of modern world psychological principles, his very influence on you to accept his advice has danger. The principles of counseling must come from the scriptures; our Creator is the Great Counselor.

Appears Valuable and Wonderful.—In taking up the science you have begun to advocate, you are giving an education which is not safe for you or for those you teach. It is dangerous to tinge minds with the science of *mind cure*. {2MCP 714.2}

This science may appear to you to be very valuable, but to you and to others it is a fallacy prepared by Satan. It is the charm of the serpent which stings to spiritual death. It covers much that seems wonderful, but it is foreign to the nature and spirit of Christ. *This science does not lead to Him who is life and salvation...*²⁰. (2MCP 714.3)

An experienced mesmerist attempted to hypnotize Mrs. White sometime around 1845. He had proclaimed that he could do so and cause her to have a vision. She allowed him to try for 30 minutes and yet he could in no way influence her state of mind.

I told him that the Lord had shown me in vision that mesmerism was from the devil, from the bottomless pit, and that it would soon go there, with those who continued to use it.²¹

The methods used today by Satan started in the courts of heaven and were taken to the Garden in Eden. They worked in heaven, in the garden, and they work now. We have been warned.

There are doctors and ministers who have been influenced by the hypnotism exercised by the father of lies. Notwithstanding the warnings given, Satan's sophistries are being accepted now just as they were accepted in the heavenly courts. The science by which our first parents were deceived is deceiving men today. Ministers and physicians are being drawn into the snare.²²

There are people who feel they are wise enough to take parts of these false sciences and use them to their advantage; but the warning is given to have nothing to do with them. Even to investigate the theories can expose us to Satan's power. Our duty is to direct the mind of man to God, the true Mind Therapist.

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