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Love Therapy (Book Review)

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they think no teacher or older person is watching.

There is no difference between throwing stones at the prophets, and throwing stones at the Bible.

Obviously, the style and intent of this book are not pedantic, yet it is the type of book that the Christian scholar sometimes neglects, to his own detriment and to that of his students.

Love Therapy—Paul D. Morris, Tyndale House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1974, 167 pages, \$2.95, Reviewed by K. Bussema.

The major disappointment with traditional therapies, which is the failure to empty the mental institutions, stems from the lack of real commitment of the therapist to become genuinely involved with his patients. Morris contends that the essential ingredient of a helping relationship is that of committing oneself to love the patient. Morris believes that the "new command" given by Christ, to "love one another, as I have loved you" (John 13:34), as illustrated by Christ's becoming involved with men, is the key to unlocking the troubled life. Does this mean that anyone can become an effective counselor merely by loving those who need help? By no means! Love therapy is based on a commitment to the belief that counseling is a gift, "a spiritual, charismatic gift." To be a successful counselor, one must have received this gift and must use it in loving, committing, and involving oneself with the counselee. Morris feels, and rightly so, that a counselor needs more than possessing the gift; he must also be trained in psychology and therapeutic skills. Seminary training would be helpful and perhaps desirable, but it is not, as Adams suggests, all that is necessary to become a

competent counselor.

Love is the core of this spiritual gift, but what is its substance; what must the counselor deal with in loving his client? Morris suggests that the root cause of all ailments lies in one's spiritual maladjustment, that is, irresponsibility in one's relationships with God, fellow men, and oneself. Adams' suggestion that sin is the source of all trouble is thoughtfully resisted, not so much because it isn't so, but because counseling can become accusative and perhaps, more detrimental, too simplistic. To help the person regain his spiritual adjustment, he must work through his responsibilities. Loving the client is essential, for the client needs to know that the counselor can love him because God loves him. The therapeutic technique involves recognizing and accepting God's love and responding to this love by learning to live more responsibly. The process of therapy seems predominantly rational, neglecting to deal with the affective components of the irresponsible behaviors. It is ironic that a therapy based on loving involvement apparently does not deal with feelings such as depression, rejection, guilt, or fear. One wonders how a love therapist would deal with a client who rejected his love?

The quality of loving commitment is essential to all of man's relationships; the command to live responsibly is found throughout the Scriptures. The task of communicating the message to troubled souls is more demanding than just genuine commitment—that is only the beginning. Counselors would do well in noting this beginning; however, God's "gifts," our "talents," must be developed if we are to become effective servants. Furthermore, how does one know if he possesses the gift of counseling? Morris believes that successful counseling is the proof. Traditional therapies have not been successful; the true test of love therapy, then, lies in its use by "gifted" men.