

IN MEMORIAM - ALFRED ADLER\*

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It is now five years since Alfred Adler has left his work to those whom he instructed to carry it on. Never so vital as today, his contribution is still not fully accepted. Only for those who make a sincere effort to study Individual Psychology does its importance become obvious. Was Adler one of those idealists who found a panacea for all the evils of the world? Or is he just the founder of one of the many theories which bring confusion into the field of psychology? Regarding Adlerian Psychology either as a cure-all or merely as a psychological sect fails to recognize the meaning of Adler's teaching.

It is true that Individual Psychology offers the key to the understanding of human beings and a solution of many of the problems disturbing and pressing mankind today. But the discovery of the social feeling and its opponent, the inferiority feeling, of the need for cooperation and the methods of establishing it is not much different from the convictions and theories of many others who try to establish democratic ways of living and equality between human beings.

It is true, further, that Adlerian Psychology represents only one of many techniques in psychology, and it could well be disputed whether it is more correct or more important than any other procedure. The importance of Adler can be recognized only in the light of the contributions which psychology must make today to the various sciences, to sociology and education, general medicine and social work, economics and politics, to salesmanship and marital life. They all increasingly demand psychological understanding, and everybody expects help and advice from psychology and psychiatry. It is true that Adler's answer to these problems is only one of many. But it seems to be more than an understand-

able prejudice of a loyal disciple to maintain that Adler's answer fits the needs better than the answers other psychological and psychiatric schools provide. Common sense and social significance are the basic principles which make Adler's teaching practicable and useful.

Adler recognized the general importance of his findings for the various fields of human activity. He was not satisfied to be just a physician treating "sick" people. He felt a desire to help wherever help was needed, and this need for help was not restricted to medical patients. He saw the misery and the dire need of children and parents. He went out to teach and to open the eyes of all whom he met so that they could realize the need of their fellowmen and learn how to assist, that is, how to cooperate. Adler's interest in his fellowmen did not always find general approval. Especially America, with its general conception that proper organization demands strict demarcations, regarded with distrust and distaste Adler's neglect to acknowledge any limitation in teaching and helping. Much opposition which he found was based on his refusal to be "just a physician." Adler, as a physician, felt the obligation to prevent suffering by telling the common man what he should know about social life and about his fellowmen. Adler refused to be exclusive and to serve an occult science, only available to the initiated. As he was an humble man capable of talking to everybody, so he wanted to be understood by everybody. His simplicity, however, was not ignorance, but real wisdom. For him, the truth was always simple, and complicated were only the tricks with which men tried to escape the truth and its logic. That was the reason why Adler disliked the high sounding words and the technical phrases which, under the disguise of special knowledge, concealed only lack of understanding. For Adler, actions revealed truth, and actions are always simple

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\*Read in part at the memorial meeting of the New York Group.

facts, clear and unequivocal in their direction and in their consequences. Hardly anyone who heard Adler talk or spoke with him went away without seeing and knowing more than before. But science has not yet kept up with him. His teachings have not yet penetrated tradition and conservatism, although some try to regard them as historical, belonging to the past, as merely one phase in the development of psychology. Adler is quoted in textbooks, but how little is he understood in the citations! He gave with full hands, not cautiously selecting to whom he gave. The "experts" disliked such indiscriminate and tried to get their revenge.

We who had the privilege and good for-

tune to learn from Adler hold a treasure in our hands with which he has entrusted us. Let us be worthy of this responsibility; let us be zealous and modest in our service to a heritage which offers little glory because it does not please those who believe that they must know more than their fellowmen. But let us be aware that Adler's inheritance is bound to prosper because Adler understood the direction of evolution. Discoveries and reports from all fields of science prove the lucid foresight of Adler. He is gone; but what he said will live. Let us be courageous and develop our social interest so that we will keep the flame burning which was kindled by Adler.

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### NEW WAYS?

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Karen Horney's group held its convention in the morning and afternoon of May 19, 1942, in Boston, simultaneously with the convention of the American Psychiatric Association. As is generally known, this group is said to have accepted most of Alfred Adler's teachings and to have given up much of Freud's. After listening to their lectures during the afternoon session, one cannot help being struck by a few peculiarities. Alfred Adler's teaching is cited frequently verbally without reference to his name. The one time it was mentioned, the statement was wrong. In the author's knowledge, Alfred Adler never defined the instinct as based on "sadistic drives," as the speaker, Dr. Marmor said, but rather, in agreement with the speaker, as de-

pending on environmental circumstances. Therefore, one wonders whether this group really does not know whose teachings they are using for their "New Ways" or whether they purposely do not care to say a slight "thank you" to the giver of their "New Ways." It is true that in many instances, particularly when talking to people who have not much training anyway, it is unnecessary to quote sources. It is, however, quite a different thing when a trained audience is to be addressed or when an attempt is made to establish a new line of work. We would expect any group to have cleared concepts and to know more about the source of their knowledge than the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis apparently does.

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### CHICAGO GROUP

At the annual meeting of the Individual Psychology Association of Chicago on June 26, 1942, Dr. Nita Mieth Arnold gave an introductory address, (part of which is given on page 66).

Dr. Harry Sicher read then the address by Dr. Lydia Sicher, "Thanks to Alfred Adler," and Edyth Menser read a paper

by Alfred Adler on "The Meaning of Neurosis," which is the transcript of a lecture given by Dr. Adler at the University of Chicago in November, 1935.

This meeting, at which new officers were elected, was an impressive and dignified conclusion of the Association's activities for the year.