

## Appendix A

# **Masturbation And Insanity**

In his scholarly study on “Masturbatory Insanity; The History of an Idea,” (Journal of Mental Science 108:1, Jan., 1962), E. H. Hare refers to a study of 500 patients admitted consecutively to the Iowa state psychopathic hospital. He states that the authors of the study (Malamud, W., and Palmer, G., “The Role Played by Masturbation in the Causation of Mental Disturbances, Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders, 76:220, 1932) found that in twenty-two cases masturbation was "apparently the most important cause of disorder.”

He then continues: “The authors concluded that it was the mental conflict engendered by masturbation rather than the habit itself which led to the illness, and they believed this conclusion to be supported by the efficacy of psychotherapy directed towards readjusting the patient’s ideas

about masturbation. Yet the fact that fifteen of the twenty-two patients suffered from depression must raise doubts about the validity even of this temperate conclusion, for the depressed patient is not only prone to blame himself for neglect of what he believes to be the rules of health, but also tends to recover from his illness whether treated by psychotherapy or not.”—P. 22.

Thus Hare questions the conclusions of Malamud and Palmer, but says, significantly, that their study is “one of the very few attempts (indeed, as far as my reading goes, the only real attempt) at a scientific study of the masturbatory hypothesis [the hypothesis that masturbation can cause insanity].”

After acknowledging that “there is no way of disproving the masturbatory hypothesis,” Hare offers his final conclusion: “All we can say, from the evidence, is that the association between masturbation and mental disorder is weak and inconstant and that therefore, if masturbation is a causal factor, it is probably not a very important

one” (The Ministry of Healing, 19).

So, although this authority minimizes the possibility that masturbation and insanity might be linked, he does not dismiss it altogether. Even more significantly, he has discovered that there has been only one real attempt to test the hypothesis scientifically.

Writing of masturbation in their *Adolescent Development and Adjustment* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), Lester C. and Alice Crow conclude: “The effects of this form of sex perversion are not yet fully known.”

Dr. David Horrobin, an M.D. and Ph.D. from Oxford University, states:

“The amount of zinc in semen is such that one ejaculation may get rid of all the zinc that can be absorbed from the intestines in one day. This has a number of consequences. Unless the amount lost is replaced by an increased dietary intake, repeated ejaculation may lead to a real zinc deficiency with

various problems developing, including impotence. “It is even possible, given the importance of zinc

for the brain, that 19th century moralists were correct when they said that repeated masturbation could make one mad!”—Zinc (Vitabooks: St. Albans, Vermont, 1981), p. 8.

This statement is similar to that made by Carl C. Pfeiffer, Ph.D., M.D., in his book on zinc. He declares:

“We hate to say it, but in a zinc-deficient adolescent, sexual excitement and excessive masturbation might precipitate insanity.”—Zinc and Other Micro-nutrients (Keats: New Canaan, Conn., 1978), p. 45.

Not all medical authorities would agree with these conclusions, yet it is significant that there are some whose study and research have led them to opinions which are compatible with the teachings of Ellen White.

See Child Guidance, pp. 439-456, for further information on this subject.