

Call to Worship
October 12, 2008

I have it on good authority that Sigmund Freud steadfastly refused to do psychotherapy on artists – meaning creative types of every description. He revered their gifts, which he feared would be lost to the world if he cured them of their neuroses.

Freud also expressed the view that a successful psychotherapy would cleanse the recipient of religious conviction – the loss of which to the world he would have been the last to mourn. We see this in his polemic against religion entitled The Future of an Illusion, in which he characterized religion as a “universal neurosis” adopted by devout believers to spare themselves the trouble of constructing personal ones.

I wonder if it ever occurred to Freud that the similar effects he saw psychotherapy having on artistic creativity and religious conviction might be something more than a coincidence. Are psychology and theology enemies or allies? Does the answer depend on whether we’re talking about old-time theology or new? Old-time psychology or new? Is human destiny in play in how these two “ologies” get along?

Come, let us live in the questions again today. Come, let us worship together.