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NEW THOUGHT
Its Lights and Shadows

JOHN BENJAMIN ANDERSON

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to
MY MOTHER

PREFACE

Within recent years a new continent has arisen to take its place, perhaps for a long time to come, in the wide world of human thought and life. The enthusiastic inhabitants of this continent call it New Thought, and to them it is their beloved Fatherland.

It is no wonder that we are beginning to hear on every hand the question, "What is New Thought?" But any intelligent answer to the question is seldom heard. In fact, neither the Christian people nor their leaders realize the magnitude of the new movement, or the momentum it has gained, or the inroads it will surely make into the Christian Church.

Books and papers from the New Thought side are becoming very numerous. This book is an explanation of New Thought by a Christian. It is not for the professional philosopher but rather an elementary exposition for the people. This fact has partly determined the style, the avoidance of technical terms except when necessarily quoted from New Thought, the arrangement of the materials, and the intentional repetitions.

This volume is not an attack upon New Thought. In looking back over his work the author finds expressions that sound rather po-

PREFACE

lemical. And to those who are unacquainted with New Thought books the pictures drawn in this volume will seem to be caricatures because so incredible. The author protests, however, that he has given a fair and faithful portrait of New Thought. The exposition is accompanied by such criticism of New Thought's main ideas and methods as seems likely to be most helpful to the readers the author has in mind. A comparison is also instituted between New Thought and Christianity at those points where it is especially desirable for the reader to be well-informed.

The book begins with the briefest historical sketch, followed by a presentation of the stupendous claims of New Thought. Then, before coming to the exposition of its teachings, New Thought is looked at as a whole from several different points of view. Then, beginning with Chapter IV, its most important ideas are examined, and afterwards the practical applications of these ideas are considered.

The reader, to whom some topics will be of especial interest, will find it not only desirable but quite necessary to read the chapters in the order in which they appear, since the later chapters presuppose for their full understanding a knowledge of the earlier expositions.

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NEW THOUGHT



CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND CLAIMS OF NEW THOUGHT

“New Thought” is a metaphysical and practical movement that has arisen and spread far and wide during the last twenty-five or thirty years. It looks to no one man as its originator. Like Melchizedek, it has no recorded father or mother, and it expects to have, like him, no “end of life.” It sprang into being spontaneously in different minds. It is a phase of the reaction that has set in recently toward a spiritual interpretation of life and toward a practical use of the occult powers of the soul. This reaction has manifested itself conspicuously in Christian Science and in New Thought and in the widespread interest in psychical research.

New Thought, however, is not an isolated phenomenon. All large movements are rooted in the past and New Thought is no exception. It is a direct outgrowth from New England transcendentalism. Emerson is sometimes called “the Master.” It also has been powerfully influenced by Hindu philosophy, especially by the Yoga systems. New Thought received its first great impetus from P. P. Quimby of Portland, Me., and was later advanced by the practice of

mental healing by Julius A. Dresser of Boston and by the writings of Dr. W. F. Evans.

The adherents of the movement are said to be numbered by the million, and are to be found not only in the United States but also in Canada, England, France, Germany and Italy. Its "circles of healing" exist in most of the cities and in every State of the Union. New Thought literature is extensive and rapidly increasing and appears in every imaginable form. Some disciples of New Thought are members of the Christian Church while a multitude of Christians are more or less influenced by it. Yet there is almost universal ignorance among Christians and Christian ministers as to just what New Thought claims to be and to do. It is high time that the leaders of the Christian people bestir themselves and give serious attention to this new cult that is attaining large dimensions and proclaims itself to be the only true Christianity.

As an introduction to the whole subject, it may be well first of all to enumerate the claims of New Thought.

New Thought claims to be a life, a philosophy, a system of healing, and the only power able to reform mankind and perfect the race physically, intellectually, and morally.

It professes to be the finest symptom, the best expression, and the peerless leader of the spiritual tendencies of the twentieth century. It calls

itself a great spiritual revival. It professes to be the only real Christianity and to do what Christianity was intended to do.

In its Hall of Fame the name of Jesus has the most honored place. He is regarded as the wisest teacher and the greatest idealist the world has ever seen. Gautama Buddha, however, and even Emerson are almost as highly esteemed as teachers of the true wisdom and of the real life.

New Thought poses as the herald of a new age, the final and golden age when ignorance, disease, sin, fear, suffering, sorrow, and death shall be no more and when knowledge, health, goodness, peace, happiness, and abounding life shall be the lot of every human being. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." True, it may require centuries to reach the perfect state for all, many of us may have to pass through further incarnations, yet by the path of New Thought (which path all will sooner or later take) the shining goal must and shall be reached in due season. Meanwhile the golden age need not be deferred for any man, who can have it within himself for the seeking and accepting even now.

Those who are unacquainted with the New Thought literature little realize the Himalayan magnitude of its pretensions. It ushers in the last stage in the evolution of man. Up to the present most men have been cave dwellers. New

Thought will bring them out into the clear light of day and reveal reality to them and display to their wondering eyes the great and glorious world of "real" life with its far-reaching vistas, its towering mountain peaks, its peaceful valleys, its broad sunlit plains, its majestic rivers, and the blue sky over-arching all.

New Thought shatters all illusions; it delivers from all delusions. It is the light of the world; as compared with all other lights it is the very sun itself. It is the voice of Truth sounding in the unwilling ears of a crooked and perverse generation, "an unbelieving and faithless era." It is the true interpreter of the Bible, being the modern and occidental phrasing of the ancient and oriental Scriptures. It is the only true science and puts to blush "the vulgar herd of materialistic scientists" whose materialism made the nineteenth century "the darkest age of human history."

New Thought is the secret of power. It gives to each man the complete mastery. It places a man's destiny in his own keeping. It awakens self-confidence, infuses courage, inspires hope. It opens body and mind to the inrushing tides of abounding, almighty life. It is the Proclamation of Emancipation to every slave whether of evil habit or of ignorance or of heredity or of environment. It enables a man to quaff the wine of life with gladness and even with glee from any and all of the goblets of circumstance.

It banishes poverty and misery, shields from every harm or rather annihilates every harm, sweetens life, harmonizes all the world's discords, gives the victory over trouble, disease, pain and death. In this world of restlessness, anxiety and trouble it is a paradise with hell all around. As a builder of good character it knows no equal. It crowns love king of the universe and is the champion of social service. It lives the only "real" life, a life simple, wholesome, large, symmetrical, independent, happy, satisfying.

In every respect New Thought claims to be the shining leader of the human race and is prodigal of promises of every imaginable good. Truly "the fruit is good to look upon and desirable for food." Surely here is Pandora's own box. Here is the saturnalia of faith and hope. Such a decoy is sure to lure. In view of such a menu it is not surprising that great numbers sit down to this sumptuous banquet which has a fillip for the most jaded taste. A myriad of dazzled human moths flutter about this arc lamp and are singed or burned, some of them, indeed, being seriously injured.

What should be the Christian's attitude toward these claims and those who make them? Shall we treat New Thought as mere ballooning with the latest newfangled gas-bag inflated with conceit and bombast? Shall we take the position of a friend of the present writer who said,

"It is curious how much ability has found its way into New Thought writers. The only explanation is that they have been given over to believe a lie that they may be damned?" Shall we regard New Thought as just one more tossing in humanity's fitful fever? The Christian and sensible attitude may be stated as follows: Whatever perishable "wood, hay, and stubble" there may be in New Thought, it certainly contains "gold, silver, and precious stones." Whatever of truth and profit there may be in it, we should be open-minded and earnest enough to discern it and receive it, receive it for ourselves individually, and for our churches, and for this weary, sinning, suffering world. We should remember, too, that New Thought is the very bread of life to feed and water of life to refresh according to the view and experience of a multitude of sincere and self-respecting, though in some measure deluded, men and women who are aspiring to a life of peace and love and service.

It would be easy enough to laugh at the crudities, inconsistencies, absurdities, and pomposities of New Thought or to direct the shafts of satire against the weak points in its armor. The more excellent way, however, is to seek to be judicial in temper, kindly in spirit, recognizing and welcoming all good ingredients while indicating and deprecating all elements of error and harm. Even if in loyalty to truth and human welfare one must deal with the error wi

an iron hand, nothing will be lost and much will be gained by wearing the silken glove. In dealing with New Thought this may prove to be "a counsel of perfection." It is certainly a hardy pledge for a critic of extravaganza perhaps unsurpassed in occidental history. Consequently the present writer may fall from grace now and then; but fairness and courtesy and love are his standard.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL SURVEY

However experienced and skilled a mariner one may be on the seven seas of philosophy, he would find it difficult to steer a true course among the islands and rocks and shoals of the uncharted waters of New Thought. It is difficult to understand exactly the New Thought teachings, to discern their mutual relations, and to estimate them at their true worth. In order to help the reader to begin betimes to get his bearings, it may be well to call attention to certain broad, general features of the cult under review before we start on our voyage in waters sometimes sunlit, frequently enveloped in a luminous haze, and too often thick with fog.

In the first place, while the New Thought is a philosophy, it is also and chiefly a life. Its advocates lay great stress upon this fact. They call it "practical idealism," with emphasis upon both words. They hold forth an ideal of character, of conduct, and of mental and physical health, and hold it forth not only to be believed in and admired, but above all to be attained. What this ideal is we shall see later. Suffice it to say here that, however fantastical

and speculative New Thought may be, it is intensely practical in its aim. Its head may rake the clouds or even the stars, but its feet are on the earth. It appeals to actual character, conduct, happiness, and health as convincing evidence of the truth of its ideas.

In the second place, if one would see New Thought in true perspective and right proportions, he must recognize that it is not primarily or chiefly a system of bodily healing. It is a life, a life covering the entire range of human experience. In fact, bodily healing is only incidental; hardly more than a by-product, though, of course, a by-product highly prized. The healing comes in the course of the living; the disease exists first in the mind and therefore is always cured in the invisible realm of the inner life before, sometimes long before, the bodily restoration appears.

Further, some New Thoughtists expressly say and all of them at times imply that the healing of the body waits on the reform of the character, and is the bodily expression of moral goodness, the physical efflorescence of a right inward life. Like the Holy Grail, health, on the whole and in the long run, is only for the pure in heart.

New Thought is therefore far more than a system of bodily healing. It is an ethic; it is an attempted reformation and spiritualization of human life in all phases of its being and of its activity. It sounds not one, nor two, nor sev-

eral notes, but strikes all the chords and sweeps the whole gamut of human life.

In the third place, New Thought claims to be a philosophy. Though it is chiefly a life, yet the life is supposed to be founded upon ideas, or the ideas are the intellectual equivalent of the life. The votaries of the cult plume themselves upon the "scientific" character of New Thought. "Science" is one of their favorite terms. By "science" they mean a body of ideas and facts viewed as related to and unified under universal law. This is just what New Thought claims to be, and to New Thought you must go for the pure milk of science. Of this subject more anon.

This philosophy or science is esoteric. It is understood only by the initiated. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Criticism by an outsider, if not an impertinence, is fatuous and futile, like a blind man matching colors, or a deaf man discriminating tones, or a dead man discussing life. You must live New Thought in order to understand it. Spiritual perception and feeling are the open sesame to that which is forever barred to the intellect. Life has its all-penetrating X-rays, while the clear, dry light of mere intellect is arrested at the very surface and cannot shine into the heart of things. The critic dwells in the outer darkness.

This philosophy, further, is unique. It is peerless and unapproachable. The light that

shines in New Thought is incomparably superior in purity and brilliancy to that which shines in any Christian theology, or in Christian Science, or in Buddhism, while the light of so-called natural science and much of the teaching of psychology is darkness compared with its splendid noonday.

Other philosophies have been wrought out laboriously by the intellectual moil and toil of men who lived on a lower plane than New Thought, and therefore contain much error along with some truth. Each system of philosophy has some truth or aspect of truth or valuable emphasis peculiar to it, but New Thought is *par excellence* the true philosophy, and gathers into itself all these scattered beams and from its burning, glowing orb rays them forth upon mankind. It is the truth as seen and tested by men who are "in tune with the Infinite"; it is a philosophy intuited rather than reasoned out, revealed by the universal Spirit in New Thought prophets rather than reached by mental effort. New Thought is the sun-god Apollo in contrast with the earthborn giant Enceladus; it is the angel standing in the sun in contrast with the evanescent, ever changing wraiths formed by the wreathing, curling mists arising from the soil of theology and philosophy and from the damp, chill lowlands of material science.

New Thought belongs on the "subjective plane," the ordinary man, scientist, philosopher,

and theologian, and of course the critic of New Thought lives on the "objective plane." The subjective plane is the plane of reality. It is the real world and the plane of real experience. New Thought appeals to experience as the test of its ideas just as the scientist does, but it is occult experience.

In the fourth place, the followers of New Thought are largely unorganized. They need not do homage for their intellectual estates to any lord of the doctrinal manor or other suzerain as Christian Scientists must to Mrs. Eddy. They are instead bound together by the invisible ties of a common belief, sentiment, and practice. They think of themselves as leaven, salt, aroma, light; not as a sect, a group separated from their fellow men by organization and by a rigid creed. The sectarian idea is repugnant to them; it conflicts with their fundamental belief in the oneness of Being. Their principles, they feel, are like eagles of the upper air that are not to be cooped up in any denominational cage. The movement naturally has its leaders, the persons who can most effectively represent it by speech and by the printed page and by the practice of mental healing.

After this preliminary and general survey we are now ready to examine New Thought more closely. We shall begin with its fundamental conceptions and afterwards deal with their principal applications.

Let not the hopeful reader, however, in his innocence think that he is about to traverse the king's highway, broad, and level, and straight, and amply marked by guideposts. For we are about to enter a realm of such confusion that the benighted traveller sometimes gives himself up for lost. For him who looks for clear thinking in New Thought, the critic is in honesty compelled to inscribe over its portal, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." This is not said harshly as if in revenge for the New Thought assertion that the critic, being uninitiated, does not know what he is talking about. For New Thought utterances are too often vague, oracular, one-sided, mutually contradictory, marked by unscientific looseness and couched in figurative language that dazzles and striking epigram that dazes until the bewildered hearer or reader hardly knows his own identity. Pyrotechnics is one of the specialties of New Thought.

Moreover, New Thought is not homogeneous. If it were fashioned of a rib taken out of the side of some one philosophy, it might hope to be a self-consistent, intelligible system of thought, but it is constructed out of an assortment of ribs collected from several and differing philosophies. In fact it claims sometimes that it is not a system. Life cannot be compressed into a system. To systematize is to limit. New Thought illumines, not limits the vision of truth. There is truth in this impeachment of system, but after

all it is a dangerous attitude for seekers after truth to take.

Again, there is no authoritative spokesman or standard, and there are many minor and some important differences of view among the New Thought expositors.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to do justice to the advocates of New Thought. In trying for the sake of clearness to define exactly that which is vague one may easily attribute to them that which they would instantly disclaim, and in showing the presuppositions and implications and logical consequences of their statements, one seems to charge them with holding positions they never purposed holding, simply because they never perceived the logic of their positions.

By all this it is not meant that the New Thought exponents do not make plain, unvarnished statements in terms quite precise and unmistakable; for there are plenty of exact propositions. The trouble is that in the next chapter or even in the next sentence one finds another statement just as exact which it puzzles a logical mind to mate with the preceding statement. New Thought is the Proteus among the philosophies, with the exception that, unlike "the old man of the sea," it does not always end by telling the truth.

With this warning of the fog bell let us cautiously proceed and try to keep off the rocks.

CHAPTER III

BEING AND ITS EXPRESSION

Being is spirit. But what is spirit? It is living and unconditioned and impersonal being possessed of infinite power and intelligence and love and perfection existing and acting under its own universal and invariable law. This, however, does not tell us what spirit, so to speak, consists of, what it is in its essence. A good deal of New Thought language, used vaguely and popularly, would fit in with the conception that spirit consists of ideas, feelings, and volitions, that is, of mental states, but on the whole it is certain that this is not held by New Thoughtists. In fact they offer no answer to the problem of the essence of Being.

Only one being exists. There appear to be many beings, such as God, men, trees, rocks, but in reality there is only one being. The one and only being or thing is self-existent. It was not created or made; it never came into existence, for it always existed and always will exist. The only existence there is may be called by any one of many names, such as Being, the All, the All in One and One in All, the Eternal Wholeness, the Universal Spirit of Wholeness, the Infinite

Whole, the Spirit, the Infinite, the Infinite Spirit, the Eternal, the Infinite Life, the Universal Spirit, the Universal Life, the Universal Power, the Universal Intelligence, the Universal Wisdom, the One Intelligence, the Omnipotent Spirit, the Omnipresent Spirit, the Omniscient Spirit, the Oversoul, the All-Good, the Supreme Love, the Divinity, God, the Christ, the Father, the Heavenly Father, the real man, the subjective man, the eternal man, the universal man, the Higher Self.

Now this is nothing but pantheism. It does not come within the scope of this book to discuss pantheism, and all that can be said here, therefore, is that all the philosophical, ethical, and religious objections to pantheism make front against the above teaching of New Thought. Some of these objections will be brought out incidentally in the course of later discussions.

It is now to be especially observed that New Thought does not hold consistently to its pantheism. However gallant it may profess to be in its devotion to the monism that declares that All is One and One is All, it repeatedly surrenders its sword to the pluralism that declares that the All is not one but more than one. New Thought sits comfortably on its All-is-One dogma and trots along easily and blithely until it comes to a gap too wide for the leap, when with perfect nonchalance it slides out of the pantheistic saddle, walks across a pluralistic foot-

bridge, vaults up on a pantheistic relay on the other side of the chasm, and then continues its pleasant canter along the beautiful Eternal Wholeness highway.

New Thought, like its ally, Christian Science, is a vain endeavor to use two different philosophies between which there can be no more concord than between Christ and Belial. This is like attempting the impossible feat of living at the North and South Poles at one and the same time. To see this clearly at the very beginning will aid the reader greatly in threading his way through the mazes of New Thought. If there is any clue to the labyrinth, this is it. New Thought declares that there is only one being or thing in existence—this is monism; New Thought, when nodding, declares or implies that there is more than one being or thing in existence—this is pluralism. These two contradictory ideas are patched together in the crazy quilt of New Thought. So far as my observation extends, it would be possible to take any New Thought book, sort its statements into two groups, and make of them two irreconcilable books, one monistic and the other pluralistic.

New Thought's unfaithfulness to pantheism appears the instant it proceeds beyond the bare affirmation of Being and its nature. Necessarily the next step in the exposition is the expression of the All-One and the relation of the All-One to its expression. This is the crucial point,

and just here New Thought is hopelessly entangled in the toils of inconsistency.

Considering now the expression of the All-One we learn that Universal Life is lived on three "planes," the spiritual, the mental, and the physical. The spiritual plane is the "real home" of universal spirit. On that plane it lives an infinitely intelligent, powerful, loving life. For reasons unknown this infinite mode of existence does not suffice infinite spirit. It seeks a career on another and a limited plane and therefore exists as minds. But even this is not enough. It lives on a still lower plane, existing as matter. One and the same being, the universal, only existent being, exists as spirit, as mind, as matter. Its existence in the material and mental modes is finite; its existence in the spirit mode is infinite.¹

Universal spirit is one and indivisible; minds are many, and matter is divisible. Nothing exists except spirit, yet minds are not parts of it, neither is matter. A mind is an "expression" of spirit, so also is matter. Mind and matter are sometimes spoken of, not as the expression of spirit, but rather as the means of the expression of spirit.

¹ Spirit seems but seldom to be thought of as a mode of existence; yet "plane" is frequently used in connection with spirit and spiritual.

"Mind" is sometimes a synonym for universal spirit. This meaning of mind is not in view in the discussions of mind in this book.

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Now when mind and matter are thought of as the means of expression, they are almost unconsciously thought of and spoken of as real things in themselves, other than spirit, subordinate (at least ideally) to spirit, created by spirit, and used by spirit, though so far as the mind is concerned, it is often a rebellious and unprofitable servant. New Thought literature is saturated with this dualistic view of spirit and mind, and of spirit and matter.

When mind and matter, on the other hand, are thought of, not as the means of spirit's expression, but as the expression itself, the conception seems closer to monism, although it is probably just as truly pluralism, only subtler or vaguer. This conception is that mind and matter are the manifestation of spirit, its appearance as mental and physical states and actions. Mind and matter are entities no more than light or heat or odor.

As to matter, we may regard it as spirit itself materially manifested, or the material manifestation of spirit, or the means of the material manifestation of spirit. This has merit as a lively acrobatic performance but makes the beholder dizzy.

The relation of mind to spirit is analogous with the relation of matter to spirit. Be it observed just here that the view that the mental powers in exercise are nothing more nor less than infinite and perfect spirit in action on the so-

called mental plane raises the problem of moral evil to its highest pitch and leaves it unsolved or even unmitigated. While the view that the mind is the means by which infinite and perfect spirit expresses itself raises, not only the question as to how this instrument can exist if spirit is "the All," but also how mind can be so perverse and contrary in character to spirit when spirit is the All and the All is absolutely good.

We have now reviewed in general the relation of mind and matter to spirit, and have noted that New Thought dallies with three discordant conceptions of this relation, namely, that mind and matter are spirit itself expressing itself, that they are the expression of spirit, and that they are the means of the expression of spirit. This modern Atalanta charmed by these three golden apples has lost the race and has been compelled into wedlock with Error. We shall now proceed in the next chapter to examine more minutely the relation of spirit to mind, and in a subsequent chapter the relation of spirit to matter.

CHAPTER IV

SPIRIT AND MIND

Notwithstanding some confusion in the use of the terms spirit, soul, and mind by New Thought writers, it is fairly sure that in their view the immaterial man as distinguished from his body consists not of three elements or aspects but of two, namely, spirit and mind. "Soul" is sometimes used for spirit and sometimes for mind. What then are spirit and mind and what are their relations to each other?

In the first place, consider the New Thought ideas concerning spirit.

At the beginning of the preceding chapter the New Thought teaching respecting the nature of spirit was set forth and need not be repeated. There is only one spirit existent. This spirit is God, if one pleases to use that name. This spirit is also man. But it is not what in our common speech is meant by a man, an individual man. It is incorrect to speak of human spirits, or to differentiate your spirit from my spirit. The one and only spirit is common to us all. The "real" man is universal spirit. There is only one "real" man. The real man "in" you is identical with the real man in me. Notice that the teaching is not that the

real man in you is akin to, or similar to, or of the same nature as, the real man in me, but the real man in you is absolutely identical with the real man in me. You and I and all of us are, on the spiritual plane, literally and without any qualification whatever one and the same being. This being is man, the real man, the eternal man. And just this is what is meant by the human spirit. This is also the divine spirit. The human spirit and the divine spirit are not two spirits but one, one spirit with these two names. There is only one spirit, and that spirit is universal and infinite and perfect.

The human spirit, the one and only human spirit, is the Universal Spirit. But can any sane person have the hardihood to affirm that the human spirit is self-existent, unconditioned, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, infinite, perfect in love, unblemished in goodness, and has been all this from all eternity? Yes. The New Thoughtist will look you straight in the eye and talk to you about your infinitude of knowledge and power and perfection with the most unblushing assurance. You may flinch, but he never! The human spirit is God. We shall see later what are the consequences for religion, ethics, and therapeutics of this position.

And now what is the "mind" and what is its relation to spirit? One needs patience to follow through all the sinuosities of New Thought in this regard. The needle of the New

Thought compass plays some lively tricks, as if the bold ship were passing through a magnetic storm.

Minds are usually spoken of in New Thought precisely as the ordinary man speaks of persons, that is, as beings possessing certain powers and things and sustaining a variety of relationships. A multitude of New Thought statements imply that the mind has intellect, feeling, and will, and exercises these powers of its own initiative, and is distinct from spirit on the one hand and from body and matter in general on the other. This is of course thorough-going pluralism.

But while the implication very often is as just stated, namely, that a mind is a being and has powers of thought, feeling, and volition, yet it is also expressly declared that a mind is not a being, something possessing and exercising powers. It is only the powers themselves or the activities themselves, and since thought, feeling, and volition are immaterial in their nature, their source and user is the only immaterial being existent, in fact the only being existent, even universal spirit. Spirit alone is Being and actor; minds are its energizing. On the mental plane spirit works by thinking, feeling, and willing. This is just as thorough monism.

This confusion as to the nature of what New Thought terms "mind" makes this quasi-philosophy a bog in which unhappily uninitiated mortals like ourselves become inextricably mired. It

is the Slough of Despond out of which by some miracle or other the fainting pilgrim must be pulled (providing, of course, that he is logical) if he is ever to enter through the wicket gate to tread the path that leads to New Thought's Celestial City.

Let us examine more narrowly the knotty problem as to what is the New Thought view concerning the relation of spirit to mind. When these somewhat haphazard writers and speakers happen to be thinking of their fundamental conception of spirit as "the All," they speak of mind as an individuation or mode of spirit, as the mental plane on which spirit works, as spirit itself expressing itself. Spirit alone is. Spirit is the universal man, impersonal man. Universal, impersonal man, which is the only man, has myriad minds. These minds are not entities, things, beings, they are sets of faculties or powers. Each mind is a group of the powers of thinking, feeling, and willing. The one and only being, therefore, has innumerable intellects; that is, it is thinking weakly and powerfully, poorly and well, correctly and incorrectly at one and the same time. It alone was the thinker in Plato, and Aristotle, and Paul, and Kant; it alone has been the thinker in all the stupidest blockheads that ever lived. It alone is the thinker in all grades of mental activity now in process in this world. The universal spirit alone does the thinking of the critic of New

Thought! Let us be thankful for this crumb of comfort.

Minds are what may be described as the universal spirit's organs of individuality. New Thought has not a little to say about individuality. Individuality is one mode in which the universal life exists and acts. It is not the highest mode, and it is often implied and sometimes declared that the individual mode of existence will not last forever. By the law of evolution all that is lower must some day be transcended and must cease. Individuality appertains only to the mental plane. We may speak of individuals only because we may speak of minds.

Since minds are not beings, but only modes of being, individuals or persons are not beings, but only modes of the one being, the universal man or God. Consequently we may not speak of a man, or this man, or each man. There is only one man who lives and acts in countless individual modes. We may not even say a man is a spirit and has a mind. The strictly correct formula is, Man is spirit and has minds. (It is almost superfluous to say that no adherence to strict formulas is to be found in New Thought authors.) Consistently with the above it is taught that universal spirit is alone the real man; for its particular individuation in any given mind is not a being, but only a mode of being.

The term "self" which stands for individuality is indeed applied to the "All-One" but usually with some qualifying word. The universal spirit is said to be the real, or inner, or innermost, or impersonal, or higher self. The individual mind by way of contrast is called the outer, or personal, or lower self. The will of spirit is "impersonal will," while the will of the mind is the "personal will." This contrast between the higher, impersonal, universal self and the lower, personal, individual self is prominent and important in New Thought ethics and therapeutics and offers opportunity for limitless confusion.

Continuing our study of the relation of spirit to mind, we have seen that spirit is the universal, infinite, and solitary being, and that it is absolutely perfect in knowledge, power, ubiquity, and goodness. Whence, then, came all the limitations, ignorance, weakness, vice, malignity, and the whole hellish brood of loathsome, hideous, lamentable imperfections in human life? They all have their source solely in "minds."

Is it any wonder that a man, holding such views as to the nature of spirit on the one hand and of the mind on the other, can hardly write a page without giving the impression that the mind is a genuine being distinct from spirit and in fact contrary to spirit? This impression is inevitable for the careful thinker despite all pantheistic assertions that minds are naught in themselves but only the exercising of its powers by

the one and only being, the All, the Eternal Wholeness, the Universal Life. New Thought really makes man an amalgam of the infinite and the finite.

Minds are endowed with the power of "opening" themselves to the spirit and of closing themselves against the spirit. Their proper attitude is the receptive one. They should always be "negative" to the spirit, never "positive," that is, always open to receive the influence of the spirit, never positive in asserting themselves against it. The spirit is always impinging like an atmosphere or like the sunlight upon the mind, and is lovingly, patiently, wisely, and in strict accordance with law seeking continually to influence the mind. It never obtrudes or forces itself upon the mind. It woos the mind. The mind has a will of its own and responds or not, as it pleases. In proportion as the mind responds, it receives the inflowing of power, peace, joy, wisdom, goodness, and life from the infinite fullness of the "All-Good."

This description shows that in the immaterial man are two distinct sets of powers, the powers of the spirit (which is "man") and the powers of the mind; and that these powers are often and to some extent always arrayed on opposite sides. It is evident also that the powers of the spirit are what may properly be called intellect, feeling, and will. Now these are also manifestly the powers which the mind is represented as pos-

sessing and as exercising in harmony with or in opposition to the spirit.

To be consistent, therefore, we ought to say that a psychological analysis of any given man reveals two intellects, two emotional natures, and two wills. The intellect, feeling, and will of the one set are infinite, universal, impersonal, and perfect, while those of the other set are finite, individual, personal and exceedingly imperfect. This is carrying dualism into psychology with a vengeance; yet New Thought to be consistent with its fundamental tenet should be monistic.

This dualism is its attempted solution of the problem of reconciling human imperfection with its monistic doctrine that all being is unqualifiedly perfect. Duality is its answer to the questions raised by its own doctrine of unity; heterogeneity is its proffered solution of the problem raised by its own dogma of homogeneity. New Thought is the attempted but impossible marriage of monism with pluralism. Monism cannot cleave to pluralism so that the twain will become "one flesh."

In other words, the problem involved in the dogma that All is One and One is All is virtually ignored, and the New Thought devotee tries to live in two different intellectual worlds at one and the same time. This is the case with its metaphysics and its psychology; we shall see later that it is also the fatal flaw in its therapeutics and its ethics. New Thought's per-

petual oscillation between two radically different explanations of the universe, and without being aware of the oscillation, turns it into a fiasco. We could easily wink at many minor inconsistencies but not such as this which wrecks the whole system.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO MINDS

When, in addition to the confusion already described as characterizing the New Thought view of the relation of spirit to mind, we further note that "mind" means two minds, our obfuscation is almost complete. These two minds are the "conscious" and the "subconscious." New Thought here, as elsewhere, lays hold of familiar conceptions and grafts them into its own stem—if it has any stem of its own. It is to be expected that the independent oracles of the cult would differ from one another somewhat in their utterances respecting such a shadowy phenomenon as the subliminal self. Nor is it a marvel that any one of them should fail sometimes to agree with himself in dealing with such a cryptic subject. The following is at least an honest endeavor to do justice to New Thought on the whole.

The subconscious or unconscious or subjective mind is a personal and individual affair like the conscious mind and not universal and impersonal as is spirit. It is the sum total of all past experiences of conscious thinking, feeling, and

willing. This sum total of past conscious experiences is not a heap or a medley, it is organized and unitary. Moreover, it is not a museum but a menagerie, not a well-arranged collection of fossils, but of living things. For all our past thinking, feeling, and willing continues in operation unceasingly though we are not conscious of it. The contents of our subconsciousness are always being increased during our waking hours, and every instant of fresh conscious life modifies the character of the subconscious mind by the inpouring of new elements.

The conscious mind is thus the continuous creator of its subconscious fellow. The quality of the latter is an exact blending of all the qualities of all the thoughts, feelings, and volitions a person has ever consciously experienced.

The influence, however, is not all on one side. It is reciprocal. If it is true that the conscious creates the subconscious, it is just as true that present conscious life is considerably colored by the subconscious self. Indeed we meet in New Thought with sweeping statements on this point, even to the extent of affirming in substance that present thoughts and feelings and volitions are only the welling up into visibility of past thoughts and feelings and volitions from the subterranean lake of the subconscious self. No mental experience is lost. It abides always and may at any moment be called up into consciousness again if the stimulus is of the right sort and degree.

The influence of the two minds upon each other is all under exact, invariable law.

Leaving out of account the activities of our real self, that is, of universal spirit, we see that we are living a double mental life. Individuality is constituted not of one mind but of two. Each of these minds has its own distinctive work and method of work. They virtually are two persons, independent of each other in some respects, though intimately related. The two minds are in certain ways pronouncedly different in character.

The lower or subconscious mind has its own leading tendencies of thought, dominant emotional characteristics, and its own volitions. It is much slower to change its ways than is the upper, nimbler mind. It is a rank conservative, and one would suppose that it would often despise its own father (the conscious mind) when it sees him so quick to accept novelties and must in secret call him weather-cock, turncoat, changeling, traitor, and other pretty names.

The conscious mind, on the other hand, often feels that the subconscious mind is too slow, a drag on the chariot-wheels of progress, a dead-weight, a huge, massive, slow-moving leviathan down there in the deeps of the "lower selfhood."

Consequently these two minds, creators of each other though they are, do not always get along well together. They are inseparably joined to

each other by the laws of the universe, but it is like yoking together the swift zebra and the slow-paced ox.

Now the existence of this lower, lagging, occult subconscious mind figures largely in New Thought and the conception powerfully influences it as a system of ethics and of mental healing. It is held that it is most important that the two minds should harmonize with each other, but that, as a matter of fact, they are always in some degree discordant. For example, the conscious mind, being more active and intelligent, may accept the therapeutical principles of New Thought. Now since the body is the expression of the mind, why not by the power of conscious thought enter the promised land at once and be instantaneously and completely healed? Simply because the body is the expression of the subconscious mind as well as of the conscious. The subconscious Jordan rolls between the sufferer and Canaan, and not even the priests of New Thought can divide its waters and pass over dry-shod.

It does not fall to the lot of this book to discuss the existence and nature of the supposititious "subconscious" or "subjective" mind. But it is pertinent to point out certain things. First, it was stated in the last chapter that, if New Thought were true, correct psychological analysis of a human being would reveal in him at least two complete sets of mental faculties,

two intellects, and so forth. Abundant New Thought language concerning the subconscious mind, we may now state, involves the position that in each human being there are at least three complete sets of mental faculties, each set at odds with the other two; and the problem of happiness, success, peace, joy, power, goodness is really to make these three potentates, spirit, conscious mind, and subconscious mind into a harmonious triumvirate, acting in sweet and loving concord and coöperation.

Secondly, in proportion as the teaching approximates the idea that the subconscious is the sole source of the conscious it is inconsistent to say that the latter differs in character from the former.

Thirdly, in proportion as the conscious mind is the source or creator of the subconscious mind the latter cannot be the source of the conscious mind. And in proportion as the subconscious mind is the source of the conscious mind the latter cannot be the source of the subconscious mind. New Thought declares more or less absolutely that the conscious mind creates the subconscious and just as positively declares that the subconscious is the creator of the conscious. The reader has an uncomfortable feeling that the philosophy is squinting at him and he does not know which eye is looking at him. He feels, as so often in reading New Thought, that it is difficult here to divide the light from the dark-

ness and that he is much nearer to chaos than to cosmos.

Fourthly, New Thought professes to be the supreme optimism. To it evolution is only progress and evolution will work until perfection for all is attained. But it gives a highly important place to the subconscious mind. Its idea of the subconscious mind is that it is the sum of all past mental experiences, the evil as well as of the good. The evil, then, must last as long as the subconscious mind lasts. There is no room here for attaining perfection. All the conscious mind can hope to do is to change the balance of good and evil elements so that the good will increasingly preponderate. New Thoughtists evidently have never thought this matter through. Later on it will be shown how the New Thought adoption and use of the idea of the subconscious mind lands New Thought into inextricable difficulties in ethics and therapeutics.

Finally, if the subconscious or unconscious or subjective mind is a reality, it is at present only on the borderland of scientific knowledge, it is at the furthestmost bound of human thought. It is a very dim region whose light is too dim to be called even twilight. New Thought speaks of the subconscious self and its nature, activities, relation to conscious life and to the body, in the most confident fashion conceivable, and makes these "truths" play an important rôle in its practical ethics and therapeutics. Anyone

who has any respect at all for modern science is repelled by the positive assertions of New Thought in this little known realm and cannot bow submissively to a dogmatism that is dogmatic to the last degree.

CHAPTER VI
RELATION OF SPIRIT AND MIND TO
MATTER

We have seen that the New Thought conception of the relation of spirit to mind is badly blurred. Does it have any self-consistent view as to the relation of spirit to matter?

If there is only one being and it is spirit, then what is matter? Can we say at all that matter *is*? Easily enough, if we identify it with spirit. And this is one representation of the case. "Everything in the universe is God" is flatly affirmed, and God is the universal spirit. The spiritual and the material are identical, the same thing under two names, viewed in two aspects, existing on two different planes. This position is of course consistent with the central idea of New Thought that the universal spirit is "the All."

New Thought, however, does not stop here. It holds that matter is an expression of spirit, or of being. But matter cannot be at once the expression of spirit and spirit itself.

Turning the kaleidoscope again we get another combination. Matter this time is not being, or the expression of being, but the means

of the expression of being. Closely allied to this third view of matter is the conception that matter is the tool or instrument or even abode of spirit. In countless sentences matter is spoken of as if it were a real thing in and of itself, a thing having its own distinctive essence and properties and functions, a thing different from spirit, created and fashioned and controlled and used by spirit. Such language shows that for the time being the writer or speaker has taken a flying leap out of monism and landed squarely in pluralism. The truth is that New Thought is a double-barrelled philosophy that goes off now through one barrel and now through the other and again through both together. A double-barrelled philosophy, however, is hopelessly discredited as a philosophy.

The relation of our bodily matter to spirit and mind will be expounded in a later chapter. We shall consider here the relation only of matter in general to spirit. Matter is related to spirit directly and indirectly.

In the first place, matter is related directly to spirit, universal spirit. It is the creation and manifestation and instrument of spirit. Spirit, remember, is one, and is human. No distinction, indeed, should be made between human and divine, for man is God; man and God are merely two names for one thing, two names for the universal spirit. This neck-or-nothing philosophy does not hesitate to declare that your real self is the

creator of the material universe and the absolute master of it.

This mastery of the spirit over the material universe is exercised in complete accordance with law. For the universal spirit lives in perfect harmony with law and its material universe is completely under law. Since spirit is the "All-Good," the material universe is good and the laws of its operation are good. And since spirit is "the All," it should logically follow that evil, in the sense of physical disorder, abnormality, perversion, is impossible. But notwithstanding isolated statements to this effect, it is frequently taught that there is a great deal of mischief going on in the sphere of matter. Attention will be called to this point again in other connections.

The term "forces of nature" is often employed. "Nature" seems to be the equivalent of universal spirit when the latter is viewed as related to the material universe. The term "forces of nature," as used in New Thought, is one of several instances of unassimilated importations from alien sources. It is not bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh. These forces are beneficent and wise. Evolution is their method. They invariably tend toward the developing and perfecting of material forms and toward their finest possible adjustment to one another. Evolution is a star of the first magnitude in the New Thought firmament. Further, its particular brand of evolution

admits of no retrograde movement whatsoever. Nothing appears unless required for progress. There is no atavism, no backward swirl of the current. Anything that seems to be degeneration is only a hidden preparation for onward movement; it is itself virtually onward movement.

In the second place, spirit is not only in direct relation to matter, controlling and mastering it by immediate touch, it deals with it also indirectly through minds. In the case of Jesus this indirect mastery through a mind was perhaps complete. All his miracles are accepted as historical and are cited as evidence of the truth of New Thought. He, however, possessed no power that is not latent in us all. The real man in him is identical with the real man in us. That real man is the omnipotent spirit, the creator and perfect master of matter. We too could walk on the water or multiply loaves and fishes or raise the dead, if we, as minds, were as open to the universal spirit as he was.

By the method of New Thought this power over matter can be cultivated. The omnipotent spirit can gain increasingly powerful control over matter indirectly through our minds—that is, if our minds will let it. And our minds will let the omnipotent spirit have its way sooner or later. Even the intractable mind is under the law of evolution. Like a stream in a canyon which fumes and frets and foams but is forced

onward by the pressure from behind and by the unyielding side-walls of rock, so the mind is moving onward toward its destined goal of perfect harmony with spirit notwithstanding all its seeming irregularities and wilful tossings and wild rebellions against universal law. (Nevertheless the rebellion is regarded as a present fact and this fact shows that the mind is not under the law of evolution as New Thought conceives of evolution.)

The destiny of each man without exception is complete mastery over matter. Ultimately we all shall be able to summon the invisible material atoms to take shape in such forms as we desire to appear. By the sheer power of thought or will we shall be able thus to create material forms and also to dissolve them into their component particles. Most of us, doubtless, will not have reached this degree of mastery over matter until we have passed through many more incarnations. We must climb the ladder rung by rung, and every rung is a life lived in a body. When at last this power is attained, death itself will be mastered, for a man will be able to dissolve and recombine his body at will. Of course, it should be remembered that the omnipotent spirit gains this complete power over matter indirectly through minds only in conformity to universal law, and the power once gained will not be exercised capriciously but in accordance with the law of the universe. All New Thought

writers are not sponsors for this stupendous conclusion. It is a conclusion, however, which is not incongruous with the premises they all alike advocate.

Closely connected with the circle of ideas just described is the "law of attraction." The homely old proverb is, "Birds of a feather flock together." New Thought makes a "scientific" application of this maxim. By the power of thought we create our environment. This proposition is repeatedly stated without any qualification. Our material environment is expressly said to be our own creation. The *modus operandi* is as follows: Each thought is a force. This thought-force emanates from your mind into the atmosphere, and lives and works incessantly. It draws to itself or to its thinker (some confusion here) that which is like unto itself. It cannot help doing so, for both this thought-force and its affinities are under the invariable and inescapable law of attraction. Thoughts, then, are magnets, and the things you desire are the steel filings drawn to the magnet. Thoughts are often spoken of in a grossly materialistic fashion, just as if they were things, and floated off from the mind into the circumambient air and went sailing and searching through the world to find their affinities and draw them to the thinker.

In harmony with this conception, think opulence and you will become opulent. If out of

employment, think you are getting a position and the thought will get you the position. Think thoughts of business success and success is sure.

Other and saner New Thought writers dilute this invariable and unerring law of attraction so that it means: If you wish success in any enterprise, center your thought upon the enterprise. If you do this, you will be more alert to observe and seize any opportunity or any means tending toward the desired end. Concentration of thought, desire, will, plan, effort brings success. A man who is bent on accomplishing something will get in touch with persons, things, sources of information, openings, and so forth, which the man would not get in touch with if he were indifferent, careless, inattentive, and neither thought or wished anything steadily and intensely. To this common sense position anyone would subscribe with the qualification, however, that many men who do their best nevertheless fail in business. Even this contingency is occasionally recognized as possible by some New Thought teachers, who proceed to make what place they can for it in their moralizings.

The New Thought method of gaining material things is explained by its advocates from another standpoint, altogether distinct from that of the law of attraction. It is an absolutely exact and invariable law that the inner expresses itself by the outer. A thought or a wish or a volition

is invisible. It is bound to become visible. It cannot help having concrete expression. Thoughts of poverty necessarily become externalized in actual poverty. Imaginings of wealth must result in the possession of wealth. Castles in the air of necessity become castles on the ground. We are all creators, and we create the conditions under which we live. We are unqualifiedly the architects of our own fortunes.

It is not surprising that New Thought insists emphatically on "faith" as essential to success. A man needs to have egregious confidence and credulity also thus to fly in the face of experience. It is no wonder too that New Thought has its full share of backsliders, when such mastery over gold and silver and material conditions is proclaimed as scientific, infallible, and therefore realizable.

It is strange that the New Thoughtist does not perceive that the law of correspondence between inner and outer is a two-edged sword that cuts both ways. Mine are not the only thoughts and desires in this human world. The desires of two men may clash. In that case whose "inner" will find expression in the "outer." What is to prevent my business rival from ruining me simply by thinking my ruin? It is evident that I am not the only one to determine what my bank-account shall be or what shall be the material conditions of my life. "Too many cooks spoil the broth" is an old adage and a true one. The

difficulty is there are too many "creators" working on the same job and too great a chance of their coming to blows.

Notwithstanding this just criticism, the inculcation of these ideas about attraction and expression has been of untold value to many followers of New Thought. This emphasis upon the inner life is wholesome, and there is a solid core of truth in the so-called law of attraction. The reception of these ideas tends to the development of the power of concentration and of application; belief in them leads a man to gird up the loins of his mind and run an unfaltering race and focus his powers steadily upon the accomplishment of his purposes. So far forth New Thought, even by a whimsical insistence upon these notions, may do a man a royal service. But, as in other respects, so in this case New Thought is top-heavy with its tapering masts and enormous bellied sails counterbalanced by little ballast within its hull or by little metal on its keel.

CHAPTER VII

THE BODY AS RELATED TO MIND AND SPIRIT

New Thought teaches that the human body is directly related to universal spirit, to conscious mind, and to the subconscious mind. How New Thought coördinates these three relations is a baffling riddle. And when the "forces of Nature" and "invariable law" and "evolution" and sundry other ingredients are all thrown into this witches' caldron we have a wondrous mixture.

Spirit lives on several "planes," one of which is the physical plane. Physical life is a mode of the universal life. The physical powers are the forces of nature. By "forces of nature" is probably meant forces of spirit that create and animate nature. (If "spirit" is "the All," what is "Nature?") The forces of spirit, when unobstructed, maintain perfect bodily health. When they are obstructed and therefore unable to preserve health, they nevertheless are able to rush in as recuperative powers, and by the laws of the universe always do this. They are unceasingly at work seeking to strengthen and invigorate and perfect the body. This is necessarily the case, for spirit is good and seeks to impart only that

which is good and, acting in accordance with invariable law, always seeks to impart good as invariably and exactly as water seeks its level or as the elastic air adjusts itself with scientific exactness to the changing position of a moving object. Spirit, then, is the All; it expresses itself on the physical plane; the body is its expression, or is one mode of its existence; spirit works on the body by means of "the forces of nature" for the preservation and restoration of health. Perfect and omnipotent spirit ought, one would think, to have its own way with body which is its own mode of being, its own expression; but the fact is otherwise. Alas! there is a skeleton in the closet; and a very grim and potent skeleton it is.

Exit spirit. Enter mind. "The mind" (which of the two minds?) creates, moulds, and controls the body. It can help or hinder bodily functions at will. The conscious mind, through its thoughts, emotions, and volitions has a tremendous influence over the body. Again, the subconscious mind has such complete control of the body that the physical organism in its every fiber, blood drop, cell, and atom responds automatically and precisely to the mental occurrences in this nether mind. There is an absolutely exact correspondence between the subconscious mind and the body. The two are exact duplicates, except that the former is on the mental plane while the latter is on the physical plane.

Does the reader understand how the conscious mind can have any influence over the body if the subconsciousness is thus related to the body? It is conceivable that the conscious mind might influence the body indirectly by modifying the subconscious mind as explained in an earlier chapter. But while New Thought teaches this, it goes beyond this and affirms a direct power of consciousness over bodily life. At this point in our journey night overtakes us again. Happy the New Thoughtist upon whom the sunlight of knowledge and understanding always shines.

Let us probe a little deeper into this conception of the relation of the body to the two minds. The body, we are told, is an exact copy of the mind. This statement seems innocent but mischief lurks in it. For there are two widely different minds, the conscious and the subconscious. Of which mind is the body a copy, an exact copy? It cannot possibly, at least to the unenlightened, be an exact copy of two diverse things at one and the same time.

Here is the rub. The conscious mind does not set the pace for its subconscious mate. The latter is the receptacle for all the past experiences of the conscious mind, many of which the latter would gladly forget or repudiate. The subconscious mind, on the other hand, unblushingly includes as living active forces within itself all the lies, impurities, meannesses, and all

things bad of which the conscious mind has ever been guilty and of which now it may be heartily ashamed. There is nowhere in the universe such a foul nest of vile, loathsome, horrid things as live forever in the subconsciousness of many men, men whose conscious minds may now be penitent and pure and loving. The subconscious mind is an old reprobate whose main tendencies and ideas and emotions and purposes are changed by the conscious mind with exceeding slowness. In countless instances the conscious mind is like Plato's white horse striving upward, while the subconscious mind is the dark horse dragging the chariot downward.

Now, of which mind is the body a copy? New Thought clearly gives the palm, in this connection, to the subconscious mind; for every mental movement that takes place in it is immediately and exactly registered in the bodily organism. Some go so far as to say that each atom of the body (what is a bodily "atom"?) is or contains an individual intelligence and that the subconscious mind includes all these intelligencies and that therefore it may truly be described as inwoven in all our physical tissues and materials. And yet the conscious mind, according to New Thought, exerts a mighty influence over the body. But does it wield this power directly upon the body or indirectly through the agency of the subconscious self? Some statements point one way and other statements the other way.

This matter is shrouded in obscurity by the haze that envelops New Thought, and no decisive answer is to be expected.

Again, if the body is thus without qualification or exception under the complete dominion of the mind, and if the mind is often antagonistic to spirit hilt to hilt, how can spirit sustain any relation to body at all? and how can it influence the body so powerfully? and still more, how can the body be the manifestation and mode of spirit, yea, spirit itself expressing itself on the physical plane? Did the patient reader ever sail into a thicker fog bank than this?

The light of the sun being shut out, does not New Thought supply us with chart and compass? Let us look. Different explanations are offered as to the relation of spirit to mind within the sphere of bodily life. The mind is only the instrument of spirit by which spirit acts on body. If this is true, then body is only in a secondary sense and indirectly an expression or mode of spirit. Moreover, upon this hypothesis, the influence of mind upon body is really the influence of spirit upon body. How, then, can the spirit and its forces be arrayed against the mind and its mischievous doings? For if mind is mere instrument, then spirit is the only actor.

Again, a second view is that mind opens the portals of the bodily organism to the mighty spirit or shuts the door in its face. Mind is the lockkeeper that opens and closes and adjusts at

will the sluice gates of the physical life to admit or to exclude the intruding tide of recuperative influence from the ocean of spirit. The energy all belongs to spirit, but it is the regal prerogative of the mind to direct that energy and to use it or misuse it.

If the mind can do all this, it is no mere instrument of spirit. Again, if the mind does this particular thing, then it is not the real creator and fashioner of the body. It is a real actor but it acts only as a middleman or agent, and an agent whose will is quite distinct from that of its employer; yet an agent, not an instrument.

From this second view we pass to a third. Spirit and mind positively contend with each other in the arena of the bodily life. The ignorant or the perverted and wilful mind injures the body, and the spirit, being beneficent, rushes in with the forces of nature to repair the damage and oppose further injurious action on the part of the mind. Spirit does this of its own initiative because of its own perfect nature which impels it to promote perfection everywhere. Spirit loves the mind, too, though the latter is stupid and bad. By the same painful operation that heals the body spirit chastises and disciplines the mind and seeks to mend its manners and its disposition. How does this agree with either the instrument theory or the lockkeeper theory of the relation of spirit to mind?

It is beyond question that New Thought of-

ten represents a positive opposition between spirit and mind in the sphere of the bodily life; and on the part of the mind this opposition often amounts to malign hostility to spirit. Yet mind is but an expression or mode of spirit or it is spirit itself manifesting itself on the mental plane! It is patent that New Thought escapes here from the attraction of its monistic lodestone. Such pluralism is at sword's point with the fundamental notions that All is One and that spirit is the All.

To the outsider this looks like civil war; the insurrection of the mind against monism, the crowned king of New Thought, is the great Rebellion. It seems to the uninitiated like a counsel of desperation or a forlorn hope when, in order to escape from the dilemma, the New Thoughtist begins to throw dust in your eyes by discoursing upon the mind as only the "partial" expression of the perfect spirit.

Another important question needs consideration. If the body is the physical expression of "the mind," how can the body in turn influence the mind? If the body is the creation of the mind, and the result of a continuous process of creation; if it is only the externalization of the mind, created, so to speak, in its image and after its likeness; if it exactly tallies with the mind, corresponding to it in the minutest details; if the body is the same thing on "the physical plane" that the mind is on "the mental

plane"; if it automatically registers every motion and state of the mind, then how can it be true that the body influences the mind at all?

But does New Thought affirm that the body influences the mind? Assuredly. True, it is declared that the body is always and completely passive; that it is as "clay in the hands of the potter"; that it "never acts but is always acted upon." And this is just what the New Thoughtist ought to say if he would be self-consistent. But consistency is not New Thought's jewel. In its realm Jove does not merely nod; he is sound asleep most of the time. The body is said to "tyrannize" over the mind. It can almost "enslave" the mind. It offers resistance to the mind. This resistance will some day, though perhaps not until some distant period in some future incarnation, be fully overcome and mind will be completely the actual master; but not yet, not now. But how can the body resist the mind in the slightest measure or in any way influence the mind for good or ill if the regulative New Thought ideas are true? The mystery here is forty fathoms deep.

It should be evident that in the sphere of the relation of body to mind and spirit New Thought has lost its way altogether. No polestar is discoverable. On this subject New Thought's beautiful poetic prose proves to be

a pretty jargon, a "darkening of counsel by words without knowledge."

Evidently a man should not read New Thought books unless he is uncommonly hospitable to ideas, so much so that he can entertain at one and the same time and without embarrassment guests that are irreconcilable to one another.

New Thought's mental healing is professedly based on ideas reviewed in this chapter. Surely one needs to be a born adventurer to burn his bridges behind him and cross the Rubicon that divides New Thought from common sense, especially if the health and life of those dearest to him is staked on the issue.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BODY AS RELATED TO MIND AND SPIRIT

(Continued)

DISEASE, ACCIDENT AND SURGERY

What is disease according to New Thought? It is physical disorder, absence of harmony, a result of the violation of law. As disorder, it is the externalization of mental disorder. As always, the mind is the mischief-maker. In any given case of disease the mind is or has been, perhaps years ago, perhaps aeons ago in some former incarnation, a violator of law. Violation of law is either ignorant or wilful. It may consist in the misuse of the body, or in the thinking of incorrect thoughts, or in the cherishing of wrong emotions as, for example, malice or envy or pride, or in the willing of that which is evil. By universal, inescapable law the internal must find expression in external conditions. The mind is the internal, the body is the external that corresponds to it and expresses it. (Be it observed in passing that this view regards body as the expression of mind, not of spirit.) Mental disorder becomes externalized in the shape of

bodily disorder. There is and can be no bodily disorder or disease unless there is first mental lack of conformity to law. The external is only the expression of the internal. Externalization is possible only when there is something internal to be externalized. Therefore, no mental disorder, no physical disorder. The physical, moreover, matches the mental with scientific precision. In fact, the body is so related to the mind that the latter's disorder is externalized in the body inevitably, precisely, automatically. Disease is Nemesis and always demands the exact pound of flesh, no less, no more.

Again, disease is often regarded in New Thought, not as disorder, but rather as the symptom of disorder. This is a radically different view. In the former view that disease is the bodily expression or externalization of mental disorder, disease emanates from the mind. It is only a physical duplicate of a mental state. It is the visible, automatic registering by means of flesh and blood of the events taking place in the mind. But this second view is very different. As a symptom of physical disorder, disease comes not from the mind but from the universal spirit. Typhoid fever, for instance, is produced by spirit. (New Thought laughs "germs," "microbes," "bacteria" out of court.) It is the effort of the universal, loving spirit to bless the body. Mind has produced disorder in the body. Spirit now comes

to restore order and repair the damage. The fever is the result of the inrush of the spirit's recuperative power; it is the energizing of the beneficent forces of nature. Consequently fever, pain, sleeplessness and so forth are to be welcomed; they are to be "loved"; they are to be "harmonized with" or "vibrated with." In vibrating with delirium tremens you are vibrating with good spirit. Only the unenlightened would think so evilly of delirium tremens as to call it "the horrors." True, it seems to be an enemy, but it is really a friend, and if you do not resist it or start back in affright from it, it will prove a friend indeed.

These two views of disease are not compounded of the same clay. It is hardly necessary to point out the obvious fact that if all bodily conditions are the exact expression of the mind, they cannot be the result of the spirit's working upon the body and in so doing acting against mind; acting to recover the body from injuries inflicted upon it by the mind. In the one case, disease is disorder, in the other case it is the result of the spirit's endeavor to banish disorder. In the one case it is not to be welcomed; in the other case it is to be welcomed, loved, "vibrated with."

The waning light grows dimmer still when we are informed that disease never comes unless the mind "invites" it. This invitation may be extended by the conscious mind or by the subconscious mind. It may be a recent invitation

or one given a quarter of a century ago or one given during a preceding incarnation a thousand years ago. An invitation once given can never be withdrawn and must be accepted. This is law and it is law which cannot be broken, not even by that expert criminal called the mind.

All disease is invited. It all has a mental origin. The body cannot initiate a disease. The body is but clay, passive clay, in the hands of the potter-mind. It never acts, but is always acted upon. The disease always exists first in the mind and only afterwards in the body.

This view of disease is quite congruous with the first view presented above, to wit, bodily disease is the bodily expression or externalization of mental disorder. Indeed, this "invitation" idea which seems to be a third view of disease is really only another way of describing the first view. "Invite" is only a figure of speech.

A little reflection will show that this "invitation" language does not keep step at all with the language that describes disease as symptomatic of bodily disorder. Fever, pain, sleeplessness and so forth, whether themselves diseases or symptoms of disease, are said to be results of the working of curative forces. Then it is curative forces, the lawbreaking mind has "invited," not physical injury and disorder! When, however, the New Thoughtist is not thinking about physical ills as something to be vibrated with and loved because they are the effects of the inworking of

the helping, healing spirit, but instead is thinking of physical ills as having been invited by the mind and as bound to come because they have been thus invited, he is thinking of physical ills as genuinely ills, evils, coming as an inescapable result upon the wrongdoer. These two views of disease are utterly contrary in the absolute form in which New Thought propounds them. One may well be chary of entrusting the issues of life and death to people who are thus entangled in their ideas about disease, and are not even aware of the tangle.

And yet we cordially acknowledge that some of the New Thought pronouncements concerning disease contain valuable truth to which the wise man will give good heed. The mind does to some extent express itself in one's physical condition. It is important to realize this and to act accordingly. New Thought is doing good service by its insistence upon this fact. It would, however, do far better service if it did not so exaggerate and distort the fact that to accept its presentation of the fact *in toto* we must surrender common sense and violate logical consistency.

Then, again, it is quite true that, whatever distinction between disease and symptoms of disease the medical authorities might consider valid, many of the disagreeable and painful accompaniments of illness are connected with the process which we ordinary people describe as "Nature's

effort to throw off the disease." A clear perception of this fact will help any reasonable man to be patient and even to congratulate himself upon the presence of this unpleasant evidence that life is making a winning fight in the contest with disintegration and death. A realization of this will be conducive to peace and rest and hope and cheerfulness and joy, and these mental conditions will in turn accelerate the healing process. New Thought tries to set forth these indubitable facts by its high-flown talk about vibration and about loving your enemies and thereby changing them into friends, and about the universal spirit, the "All-Good," working under invariable law for your recuperation, and so forth. And New Thought has been a blessing to many people who perhaps would never have come to realize these things if presented to them soberly as a simple cup of cold water but who become intoxicated with these truths when offered to them in the guise of effervescent champagne.

Again, the retributive nature of a good deal of physical disorder and the fact of personal responsibility for many of our pains and aches and ills and the important idea that physical conditions are not the result of caprice or arbitrariness but of the working of a strict principle of causation—these great and important conceptions constitute the invaluable kernel of truth in that bizarre notion of "inviting" diseases. Some people perhaps can learn these ideas best when

they are conveyed in the New Thought fashion. To this extent the cult does good and we are glad for the service thus rendered.

We now come to the subject of accidents. If bodily conditions are without exception only the expression of preceding mental conditions; if every state of physical disorder has been "invited" and invited by the sufferer himself, how is an accident possible? New Thought is consistent sometimes and is as thorough-going in its occasional consistency as it ever is in its inconsistency. And New Thought replies to the above question by averring boldly: There are no accidents. Accidents are impossible. If you slip on the ice in the dark going down hill and break your leg, it is not an accident. This is not a joke, gentle reader, any more than the injury is. There are no jokes in New Thought; it is destitute of humor, that is, so far as the New Thoughtist's own perception goes. No, it is not an accident. Law is universal and this has occurred under law. Very good. You cannot escape from that net, can you?

But (and this is what takes the wind out of your sails and brings you down on your beam ends) you invited this occurrence and it would not have taken place if you had not invited it. But when did you invite this fracture of your leg? Of course you did not do so consciously; at least not during your present incarnation. Your present conscious mind is fully acquitted of play-

ing you such a mean trick. Then it must be that low fellow, the subconscious mind, that invited your downfall. But don't be too hard on your subconscious self. For it is only a composite of what was once conscious experience. Indeed? Then sometime or other I must have consciously invited this fracture. But I know I never did such an incredibly foolish thing. Well, we may safely admit that in your present incarnation you are much too intelligent to be guilty of such folly. But how do you know but that in some preceding incarnation you were big enough fool consciously to invite yourself to break your own leg? Humiliating as it is, that was the case beyond all question. Proof? Proof abundant, at least to the enlightened. Your leg is broken. A broken leg is a physical condition. Physical conditions arise only as a result of being invited by the mind. All subconsciousness was once conscious. Ergo, you consciously invited yourself to break your leg. And if you did not extend the kind invitation in this life, then you must have done so in a preceding life, and the invitation was transmitted secretly in the sphere of the subconscious. Could mathematics do better in the way of linked logic long drawn out? Is it not plain that accidents are impossible? We see now another wonderful truth that up to this point has modestly kept itself hidden. The subconscious mind is the sum total of all the past conscious experiences not only of this life, but of

all your past lives in no one knows how many preceding incarnations!

We reach the inconceivability of accidents and this enlarged view of the subconscious self by way of the "expression" doctrine also. Since the external is only the expression of the internal and since your body with all its experiences and states to the last detail has its corresponding mental experiences and states and externalizes your mind and your mental experiences, and since this is the law of existence and law has no exceptions, you must be content to acknowledge that at sometime or other, somewhere or other, you did verily issue an invitation to yourself to trip yourself up on a dark night and break your leg. Rigid logic again and closely woven consistency. Such consistency leading to such wild notions awakens suspicion that the premises are incorrect. But if the premises are incorrect, New Thought as a philosophy collapses like a house of cards.

The mention of a broken leg leads us on to consider the attitude of New Thought toward surgery. If the two broken ends of the bone are not brought together by mechanical means, can New Thought mend the break and do a workman-like job? Such a question is scouted by New Thought spokesmen as unreasonable. They say that we would not expect such a feat from a surgeon. Then why ask a New Thought practitioner or believer to work such a marvel? It is

asserted that there is nothing in New Thought out of harmony with surgery properly practiced.

In the first place, it is true that no one would expect a surgeon to mend a broken bone apart from the use of material means. For the surgeon professes to use his hands as well as his mind. All his beliefs, moreover, accord with this method.

In the second place, is it true that New Thought principles are in harmony with surgery? New Thought asserts that a given physical condition is only the externalization of the patient's mind. This is expressly said to be true of the fracture itself. Why then is it not true of the coming together and the uniting of the two broken ends of the bone? Indeed, if any physical condition is only the automatic, inevitable expression of mental states, what possible room is there for the mechanical manipulation of the bone, and that by the hands of another person? The fundamental trouble is not physical at all; it is mental. Before there could be a physical fracture, there had to be a mental one. The only way to reduce the physical fracture is first to reduce the mental one. That once done, surgery would be quite superfluous, because the restored mental order must externalize itself in restored physical order. The truth is that the New Thought doctrine of "expression" and "invitation" logically not only makes the surgeon's work unnecessary but even impossible. For the

surgeon knows nothing about a broken leg as a mental state, and consequently he does not address himself to the mind. He deals with a bone or at least thinks he does. But his labor is all in vain. He suffers under a singular delusion. The bone simply cannot be mended until the mind is first mended. And, poor ignoramus, he knows nothing about mending minds; how then can he mend a broken bone? But surgeons do mend broken bones; and the New Thoughtist should examine again his fundamental principles to see where the error is.

Although New Thought affirms that clean and proper surgery is in harmony with its principles, yet it does not regard surgery as the ideal method. It is necessary at present only because of the hardness of our hearts, even of New Thought hearts. The present need of surgery is due to the fact that, unlike that "supreme idealist," Jesus, the present New Thoughtists, teachers and disciples alike, have not approached the ideal closely enough to be able to use the requisite degree of the power of the "real man" within. Progress in the acquisition of this power is gradual. We are powerfully affected by the materialistic thought so rife to-day. The subconscious minds of New Thoughtists themselves are slow to accept New Thought in all its length and breadth.

But the world is moving on. All men are progressing under the inescapable law of evolu-

tion. The momentum is increasing and is resistless. Consequently if you should break your leg several aeons hence after you have passed through a dozen or score more of incarnations and all the time should move forward steadily along the path of New Thought, it is to be hoped that then you would be able to dispense with all mechanical and material surgery. Indeed, surgery will necessarily be obsolete in a time when you will be able to dissolve and re-create your entire body or any part of it by the sheer power of thought. Such a power would certainly put the surgeon out of business.

CHAPTER IX

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF HEALING

New Thought practices two main methods of healing. They may be called the health-affirmation method and the harmony-with-disease method. These two methods of healing are quite incompatible with each other. They cannot be united. They can, of course, be practiced alternately and the patient can thereby receive whatever benefit each method may be able to impart.

Let us first examine the health-affirmation method of healing. The New Thought believer, if sick, gives himself some such mental "treatment" as follows. Or, a New Thought healer will give it in substance to him. The phrasing can be varied *ad infinitum* so long as the substantial contents remain the same.

I am well. The tides of life, healthful life, perfect life are coursing through me, strengthening, invigorating, uplifting me. The reality in me is spirit, infinite spirit, perfect spirit. The spirit of wholeness, the spirit that is full of health, infinite in vigor and power is in me, dominates me, controls me. Life, only life,

abundant life, almighty divine life, fills me; it fills me to overflowing. Life pulsates in my arteries; it feeds and tones up my nerves; it repairs the tissues. Life, perfect life thrills every cell; it tingles in every atom. I feel the thrill and tingle of life in every particle of my body. I am well; I am healthy; I am strong. I am full of vitality. Life is at the flood. Life in me is always at the flood. And so forth.

Many a man has found this to be an efficacious "treatment." It is necessary to repeat the treatment frequently. One should repeat it frequently enough to create an atmosphere of that kind for the mind. These ideas should be held often enough and intensely enough to become the dominant note in the man's life. Indeed, the treatment must be continued for weeks, months, and in some cases years before health will be completely restored.

This method is based on the idea that the outer and visible is only the symbol of the inner and invisible. The universal law is that the inner shall find expression. Fill your mind with any thoughts, true or false, good or bad, and those thoughts will become externalized; they cannot escape concrete embodiment. Consequently thoughts of health, imaginings of health, desires for health, and the will to be well, cannot help resulting in actual health. Particularly the positive affirmation that *I am well* must find expression sooner or later in bodily perfection.

But if I am not well; if actual ill health and the purpose to become well is the very reason why I keep saying "I am well"; if the fact that I look forward to the bodily expression of the thought "I am well" as a future experience shows that I admit bodily ill health to be my present state, then am I not a liar when I say "I am well"? New Thought answers, No. This method of healing is justified by the following truths: Universal spirit is perfect in every respect. That which is perfect is not diseased; there is no disorder in its life. Pain, being either physical or mental, cannot be felt by spirit. Now the "real man in you" is universal spirit. Therefore you do not suffer pain. You are not diseased. You cannot be ill. You are perfectly well, and have the right to say so. You are merely reminding yourself and impressing upon your consciousness as vividly as possible the central truth about yourself, namely, that the real man in you is God, the omnipotent and perfect spirit, the only being in existence. You are not telling a lie to yourself, you are not acting the hypocrite. You are telling yourself the truth, the truth the unenlightened do not know, the truth which is the glory of the New Thought philosophy.

The chief secret of health, then, is this so-called "consciousness of God," this living the "real" life.

But surely New Thought juggles with words.

The infinitely perfect spirit is the "real" man "in" you; therefore, the claim is, whatever is true of the real man is true of you. The real man is well; therefore, you are well. Now this is a tremendous fallacy and altogether vitiates the professed justification of the health-affirmation method of healing. For "you" and "the real man in you" are not usually identical in New Thought. The word "you" is a personal pronoun and distinguishes you from others. It denotes individuality. But the "real man" is neither personal nor individual; it is instead impersonal and universal. The identification of "you" with the "real man" is illegitimately resorted to only to meet a special need.

Another fallacy is the implicit denial of the sickness. The real man is not sick, and you are not sick. But if neither one is sick, who or what is sick? If no one is sick, then what is all the pother about? Why take a "treatment?" Why resort to the healer? The fact that a man undergoes the treatment and books are written for his direction and encouragement is a virtual acknowledgment that someone is sick. The treatment and the alleged justification of the treatment is a denial that he is sick. It is thus a "Yea and Nay" scheme. It affirms and denies one and the same thing.

One can understand how a sick man might constantly say to himself: I am sick and need healing and strength. I do now open up my

being to the incoming of the tides of cleansing, healing, restoring influence from the infinite Spirit, my Creator and the source of power. But to say that "I" am that infinite Spirit of power and health, and at the same time to say (by deed, though not by word) "I" am sick is a very different position and is simply blowing hot and cold with the same breath.

A third fallacy appears when we consider the subconscious mind—that death's-head at every New Thought feast. The subconscious mind is said to be the depository of all our thoughts, feelings, and volitions of all our past lives and of our present life up to the present moment. None are lost; all continue to live and act. Among these past mental experiences that thus live on in perpetuity are a host of erroneous "sickly" ideas, feelings, and volitions. The body, be it remembered, is the absolutely exact expression of the subconscious mind and therefore of this host of "sickly" and evil mental occurrences as well as of the healthy and good ones.

How, then, is it possible for the body ever to become perfectly healthy? This is surely a hard nut to crack. But New Thought writers apparently do not even know there is any such nut. They talk about modifying the quality of the subconscious mind by sending down into it from the conscious mind continual rills of healthy ideas. They forget that according to their own

definition of the subconscious mind and according to their own solemn warnings based upon that definition, the subconsciousness is an Augean stable that can never be wholly cleansed. For its sickly, evil ideas and emotions can never be ousted. Once harbored they abide forever, or at least as long as the mind abides. And since the body is said to register and express the subconscious mind with finest precision, is not the body in a hopelessly evil case?

Any one of these three fallacies is important enough to condemn the principles on which the health-affirmation method of healing is based. This method, nevertheless, is not entirely erroneous. It is, however, an illustration of the New Thought practice of putting truths out of focus so that true perspective and proper proportions are destroyed.

In closing this discussion of the health-affirmation treatment of disease let us consider the length of the healing process. As already stated, the "treatments" must in some cases be repeated through many years. There are several grave reasons for this. First, it is the conscious mind that makes the affirmation. Now, although the conscious mind has a great influence over the body, it is the subconscious mind chiefly that regulates the physical life. Consequently the body will not be healthy until the affirmations of health become dominant in the subconsciousness. It is characteristic, however, for the lower

self to change slowly. Therefore, in many instances the body will not change to health rapidly.

Secondly, your body is now expressing on the physical plane a great deal of your past badness and error in the mental plane. It will take time to counterbalance this by new thoughts of health and power. (As we have already seen no new thoughts of health can, according to New Thought, annihilate old thoughts of sickness, and these "sickly" ideas must continue to be expressed by the body.)

Thirdly, our environment is a materialistic one, crowded with errors as to the body and as to health and disease. We have to make, each one for himself, a new thought environment; we have to become at home in a new world of ideas, New Thought ideas. But this cannot be done in a moment. It takes time. Eternal vigilance also is the price of our liberty to be perfectly well.

Fourthly, the healing of the body is vitally connected with the transformation of the whole man, including his moral nature. It is useless, according to some New Thought writers, to try to heal the body apart from endeavor to purify the soul. For physical disorder results not only from unwisely thinking thoughts of physical weakness and disease. It results also from impure, covetous, proud, jealous, selfish, malignant thoughts and feelings. Bodily health is the

physical expression and counterpart of morality, love, goodness. Moral transformation, however, is usually a slow process. Restoration to health, therefore, is equally slow.

This emphasis on the ethical is praiseworthy. But alas! once more truth is distorted almost out of all recognition of its fair lineaments. Is it true that men in good health are necessarily saints and sick men are necessarily sinners? What about the mighty men of valor who have been ruffians, pirates, thieves, and blacklegs? What shall we say of men and women who have been truly salt of the earth and yet have passed their days in weakness and pain? "Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9: 2-3.)

For such reasons as the above the New Thought disciple sometimes makes slow progress toward health, and has to persevere for a long time in the face of seeming failure. But let him remember that healing takes place in the mind before it appears in the body; and that if he is taking faithfully the mental treatment prescribed above and repeatedly immerses himself in the God-consciousness, his subconscious mind is surely changing. Let him remember also that since the inner must find expression in the outer and the outer is only the externalization of the inner, and since the law is absolutely invariable,

his body simply cannot help being healed in course of time (if he lives long enough!). Faith is essential, confidence is the talisman, perseverance is the secret of success. For without faith the affirmation that I am well is no affirmation, it is merely a form of words. To have power over the subconscious mind the conscious mind's affirmation must be a real one. By the law of the relation of the conscious to the subconscious mind the intenser the former's belief in an idea the more deeply and powerfully will that idea impress and change the latter. Faith, therefore, strong faith has a large place in New Thought healing. It is not usually called faith. The New Thought votary does not believe; he KNOWS.

CHAPTER X

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF HEALING

(Continued)

The other main method of healing in New Thought is that of harmonizing with the disease and the pain. The word "vibrate" is one of the shibboleths by which a New Thoughtist betrays his connection with the cult. We are directed to "vibrate" with the fever or the headache or the insomnia.

When sickness overtakes you, do not resist it. This principle or law of nonresistance is one of the leading features of New Thought therapeutics. We must not resist a disease because resistance produces "friction." "Friction" is a chief bugaboo in New Thought. It is as destructive as grit in a delicate mechanism. Resistance to disease is useless. In fact it is worse than useless. It tightens the grip of the disease upon you. The more you struggle the deeper the fangs sink into your shrinking organism. Whatever you do, do not resist, do not strive against the disease that seems to threaten your life.

For disease will cease to threaten you with death if you vibrate with it. You can change its

frowning aspect into one of benignancy. Smile upon it and it will smile upon you. Does not Jesus say, "Love your enemies"? Disease is an enemy or seems to be such. Love this enemy and it cannot help becoming your friend. This is the law of the universe and cannot be broken. Nothing can harm you but you yourself. No harm can come to you from the disease if you love it. If you do not love it, harm will come, and you will be to blame. In this matter as in all others you are the only possible source of harm to yourself.

Therefore regard the fever as your friend. It is your friend, though disguised as an enemy. It has a mission. That mission is to teach you a needed lesson; it is to discipline you; it is to heal you. The representations of this mission are varied, but in any case the purpose of the disease is kindly; it intends only good to you. It is your friend. Welcome this friend, rejoice in its presence, embrace the sickness, vibrate with it, harmonize with it, yes, love it.

By welcoming physical ills is meant in part that you should give them amplest opportunity. Give the fever the freedom of the city. Give the cancer *carte blanche*. Desire tuberculosis to do its perfect work. Place no obstacle in the way of cerebro-spinal meningitis. One would naturally think that to increase the scope and power of your dear friend's beneficent ministry within your physical organism would be to gain

a greater blessing. The curious thing, however, is that you must be careful not to increase the power of this friend. Let him go to the length of his rope, but above all things do not lengthen the rope a single inch. Resistance gives greater power to the disease; therefore do not resist. If diphtheria is simply the effect of recuperative forces, one would think that the increase of its virulence would indicate an increase of the power and efficiency of the recuperative forces. The simple fact is that the increase of the diphtheria means the increased effectiveness of the destructive forces. The New Thoughtist is forced to recognize the existence of destructive forces. His explanation is that diphtheria left to itself or rather "vibrated with" is only recuperative, but the instant you resist it, it becomes destructive, the friend is changed to an enemy. Forces that are not the forces of the mind destroy the body because the mind resists their loving work.

This attitude to disease is based upon the idea that sickness is the result of the operation of universal spirit working directly upon the body. In some way or other the body is in a damaged condition and needs repair and renovation. Spirit is the "Eternal Wholeness" and by its very nature seeks to promote wholeness and perfection everywhere. Spirit also is loving and seeks to promote that which is good. Perfect health is wholeness on the physical plane; it is a good thing. Consequently the loving spirit

seeks to establish and preserve health in all bodies.

Now the effort of spirit to heal the body appears in the form of disease or in the form of the symptoms of disease. The New Thought conception in this particular is very misty. We are told to love fever, pain, weariness, sleeplessness and so forth, because they are the result of the work of the recuperative forces of spirit operating to restore the body to health. That frightful hobgoblin, insomnia, is an angel of light and love transformed into the appearance of Satan. It is really a good thing and emanates from the infinitely perfect and loving spirit that is thus working for a person's health.

This conception of disease is based upon the idea that spirit operates directly upon body. The mind has no part or lot in this matter of healing except to stand out of the way and not interfere and especially not resist. The health-affirmation advocate is properly an alien in this circle of ideas.

Again, observe that if the disease itself is the friend we are to love, as is sometimes plainly stated, then the disease is not the bodily disorder or damage itself but the effect of the operation of recuperative forces. But if the physical disorder is not to be called disease, what shall we call it? New Thought gives it no name. Confusion of thought necessarily arises.

Again, the disagreeable accompaniments of the healing process, such as fever, pain, sleep-

lessness or what not, are said to be the result of "friction." There can be no healing, at least usually, without friction. But New Thought warns us against friction. It is deadly. We must not resist disease because resistance produces friction, and restoration to health is difficult proportionately to the amount of friction. Here is something of a riddle.

Note further that the idea of resistance is very prominent. Who resists? You resist. "You" in this case means your mind. Positive resistance, then, between spirit and mind is a fact according to New Thought. How then can spirit be "the All" and mind be simply spirit expressing itself or the expression of spirit or the means of the expression of spirit? Will the idea that mind is "the partial expression" of spirit abolish the difficulty and harmonize this actual antagonism between spirit and mind with the fundamental monism of New Thought?

It ought to be self-evident that a man cannot give himself this harmonizing-with-disease treatment without thinking about the disease. How can a man vibrate with appendicitis, embrace it, love it, without fixing his mind upon it? But according to the health-affirmation method this is just what a man must not do. He must not think of the disease; he must only affirm health. Contrary to Christian Science, which in many respects is identical with New Thought, he must not even deny the existence of disease, lest in so

doing the bare idea of the disease be presented to his mind.

The New Thought theory of nonresistance is, if not true, perhaps second cousin to the truth. To take away every vestige of fear and replace anxiety and dread and alarm with confidence, serenity, hope, and joy is to do a great deal for a sick man. It is of great therapeutical value to calm the mind, to create repose, to inspire assurance that what is is for the best, that one is on the upward road, and that the very thing which many dread will prove a blessing.

All this is possible to intelligent Christian faith and has been actualized in the experience of millions of Christian believers. In order to receive this help in sickness one does not need to worship at any shrine of pantheism like New Thought. He does not need to accept the paradox that we are to love disease in order to get rid of it, that we are to embrace loathsome leprosy that it may leave us and leave us, we fondly hope, forever; going to the full length of absurdity by rejecting medicine and belittling sanitation because the use of remedies and care is resistance to disease, converting it from a friend into a foe!

Finally, New Thought's relation to health is not only restorer but preserver. Indeed, in theory its chief value to the physical life consists not in the cure of disease but in its prevention. The affirmation of health is said to be just

as efficacious in the preservation of health as in its restoration. And this position is thoroughly consistent. According to New Thought the power to preserve or restore health issues from a new consciousness, the "God-consciousness." Its therapeutics is merely a by-product of a process that affects a man's whole life. The aim of New Thought, like Christianity, is to transform individual men and by so doing to build up a new humanity. It seeks to create in us a new consciousness incomparably wiser, purer, stronger, happier than the ordinary human consciousness of to-day. This new consciousness is necessarily accompanied by bodily perfection; and, if true to its principles, New Thought would never waver from the position that bodily health cannot be produced or preserved apart from the mental, social, and moral health of the individual concerned. Of course this last position is a *reductio ad absurdum*.

CHAPTER XI

DRUGS, HYGIENE, AND DIET

It is easy to see why New Thought deprecates the use of medicine, though, as will appear in the present exposition, from one of its standpoints, the use of the *materia medica* is reasonable and helpful. According to the health-affirmation idea drugs are useless. How can a man affirm perfect health, and at the same time pour drugs down his throat? If I am well, I do not need medicine. Further, to use drugs would be an admission that I am ill and so would be contrary to the affirmation of health and would nullify that method of healing.

The use of drugs is also diametrically opposed to the harmonizing-with-disease method of healing. How can a man welcome disease and at the same time fire pills at it? How can a man love a sickness and yet seek to banish it? How can a man "vibrate" with an illness and yet try to get rid of it by the use of "poison"? The use of drugs is a wanton insult to one's benefactor. It is resistance; and resistance only serves to change a friend into an enemy and makes the disease or its symptoms destructive instead of curative.

Drugs are useless also because of the power of

thought. Thought creates, moulds, and controls the body to the last detail and degree. This is true of the bodies of all men, and not only of the bodies of New Thought disciples. If thought has the whole field to itself, medicine is an interloper, and, further, an interloper that can accomplish nothing. At least, its trespassing is effective only so far as thoughts arise in connection with the use of the drug and do their work on the body.

The last sentence suggests a solid basis in New Thought itself for the use of drugs. The body is the expression of the mind and its ideas. If it is my fixed idea that by taking the pills I shall be cured, that involves the idea that I am going to be cured. This idea of cure cannot help becoming externalized or expressed in an actual bodily cure. So long as I have the idea that healing is coming and is certain, the healing will take place. If the use of drugs is, in my ignorance, prerequisite to this confidence, then it is reasonable to use them even from the New Thought standpoint. And we find that sometimes New Thought theorists do suffer the use of medicine. This sufferance of a "superstition" is said to be only a concession to the new recruit or the weak brother who as yet can only toddle on the high plane of New Thought and still gasps for breath in its rarefied atmosphere. But note that while the use of drugs is quite compatible with the New Thought teaching con-

cerning the complete and exclusive power of the mind over the body, it will no more mix with the health-affirmation and the harmonizing-with-disease methods of healing than oil will mix with water.

And what would the reader suppose New Thought's estimate of hygiene to be? If New Thought principles are correct and if logic has any rights at all, then sanitation is in the same class with the use of drugs. There is no need to repeat the above course of reasoning; it applies equally well to sanitary science. Recall also what was said in an earlier chapter concerning surgery. Most New Thought writers are not audacious enough to flout sanitation. The "materialistic" spirit of the age has that much hold on them. They say: Hygiene is desirable, though the power of thought is the prime thing. This is the New Thought flag at nearly half-mast. Why lower the proud colors so far? Why should the claim that the power of thought is all-sufficient and indeed is the only existent power yield an inch to the claims of sanitation? Such yielding can only be by way of concession to our ignorance. Like the concession to use drugs, this concession also nullifies the idea of our infinite perfection which is the nerve and sinew of the health-affirmation method of healing and of preserving health.

Diet is also a matter of professedly little importance to the New Thoughtist. It might be

hinted here that, according to the New Thought idea that the only power exercised over the body is mental, it is passing strange that food is necessary at all. It will not be necessary in the golden age when thought will be able to create and dissolve the body. At present, for some inexplicable reason, we must eat. New Thought we see has still a sphinx or two. But does it make any difference what we eat? Each New Thought writer is a free lance. Some say, for example, eat no flesh. Others enunciate the welcome doctrine: What a man eats should be governed by his individual taste. Some rashly cross the boundary of New Thought and standing on our vulgar, materialistic soil warn us against "overloading the stomach with rich food which clogs the system and produces disease." This is a fearful jolt for the hapless uninitiated reader. Not that he craves the rich food; but to see a New Thoughtist fall right off his ethereal "subjective plane" and strike our earth-level "objective plane" with such a sickening thud—all the spectator's strength goes from him and he is left as limp as a rag. But his spirit is revived almost at once by being assured by the same writer that digestion is chiefly a matter of mental states. Complete recovery is retarded, however, by reading a statement by another author to whom thought-power has absolutely no limit that it is difficult to cure malaria in the swamps where it was contracted. Then again

it is like taking a cordial to see the New Thoughtists laugh microbes to scorn and ridicule people for being afraid of such tiny things as disease germs, real or imaginary. Still it is rather hard on the critic's system to swing back and forth in this fashion like a pendulum.

In these practical and important matters of drugs, hygiene, and diet (and we may include surgery also), matters upon which life and death depend, the trumpets of this quixotic movement give forth no certain sound. New Thought oscillates between the only position logically derivable from most of its fundamental ideas and the position which ordinary men would call the common sense one; that is to say, it oscillates between entirely ignoring drugs, hygiene, and diet and giving them whatever place in human life a gradually ripening collective wisdom rooted in experience may commend.

CHAPTER XII

PRACTICAL DEFECTS IN NEW THOUGHT THERAPEUTICS

When New Thought promises a man the restoration or preservation of his health by the sheer power of thought, it assumes that a man can control his own mind. This assumption is also at the bottom of its doctrine of "invitation." If a man is well, he is sure to become sick, if his mind consciously or subconsciously (and the subconscious was once the conscious) "invites" disease. And how is disease invited? By thinking thoughts of sickness and weakness and weariness and pain, and by harboring feelings of pride, envy, covetousness, hatred, lust, impatience, uncharitableness, or selfishness in any form, and by willing anything that is wrong, wrong in the slightest degree. What control over his mind, therefore, a man must have to prevent disease from invading his body! If a man on the other hand is sick, how can he be cured? He must not only keep all these evil thoughts, feelings, and volitions out of his mind, he must positively think correct and noble ideas, cherish moral and benevolent feelings, even toward the most spiteful enemies and the most degraded men, and will only that which is right. What a con-

trol of his own mind a man must have to heal himself of his disease! No wonder that New Thought has its fair proportion of backsliders.

This assumption that a man can control his own mind completely, or nearly so, is a fatal flaw in New Thought therapeutics. For it is becoming ever clearer to psychologists and alienists and to thoughtful people in general that it is not so easy for a man to control his mind as many persons suppose. In fact, just how best to gain control over our own minds is an extremely difficult problem. Experience is crammed with evidence of its difficulty. Temptation, moral struggle, inward conflict, aspiration toward ideals hard to attain, mean nothing unless they mean that men are far from possessing perfect control of their own minds.

New Thought itself has its own ways of admitting this truth. The conscious mind is often perverse, wilful, wicked, malignant, a rebel against the "real man," the spirit, not submitting to the guidance and control of the spirit as it should. Again, the subconscious mind is often opposed to the conscious mind and to spirit, and in so far as it is evil, as it always is in some degree, it is at variance with the spirit which is "All-Good" and also with the conscious mind when the latter reforms.

Furthermore, the conscious mind in many instances becomes discouraged in its attempts at mental healing, and backslides all too readily

in consequence, and New Thought books contain numerous passages exhorting the conscious mind to persevere in the good way; for unless the conscious mind is persistent and thorough, the body cannot be healed. This is a clear recognition that it is extremely difficult for a man to control his own mind.

The New Thought emphasis upon the relation of sin to disease and righteousness to health is tremendous. It is one-sided but it is mighty. This emphasis strikes a responsive chord in the Christian heart. It is a pity that New Thought adulterates the truth with so much error, and thus promises far more than it can fulfill and brings the truth itself into disrepute by reason of the error and the failure. We must condemn the New Thought therapeutics as impracticable and unjustifiable when, on the ground that a man can control his body by controlling his mind, the use of medicine and the aid of the physician is opposed and sanitation and dietetics are relegated to a very subordinate and obscure place in order to emphasize and glorify mental influence upon the body.

One need hardly proceed further in criticism of New Thought therapeutics. If a man cannot control his mind sufficiently, or if his acquisition of this power is slow, so slow that in most cases it will not be complete until some future incarnation, then the alluring promises of New Thought, just as in the case of Christian Science, are like

the false lights along a dangerous coast that lure the ships to the rocks and to destruction. Of course New Thought advocates have no intention of thus performing the work of wreckers.

Another fatal flaw in New Thought therapeutics is the assumption that a man's mind has far more control over his body than it really possesses. The mind does influence the body. But the New Thought position is an extreme one, and, because extreme, invalid. Mind is the legitimate controller of matter. At present our minds do not have their rightful and destined control of matter. A new era is dawning, the era of New Thought, in which the mind will gain absolute control. Men's minds will then be able to summon material atoms at will and by the power of thought shape them into visible forms and in turn disintegrate these forms. At that time a man will be able to dissolve his own body, and in this manner part with it instead of by the unnatural process of death. Some hold further that men will be able to dissolve and reproduce their bodies at will as often as may suit their purpose.

New Thought writers have no evidence for this, none at least that is available for use with us who live on the "objective plane." To us it can be naught but the wildest speculation, clothed often in magniloquent verbiage. But even if it were all true, what then? How does this bear upon the healing of disease at the pres-

ent time, for example, in your own case? New Thought itself confesses that this complete mastery over matter is only an ideal, not an actuality. How then can I be sure that my mind can gain such a degree of control over my body as to eject disease, and stop pain, and prevent disease and pain for the future?

We are told that we can be sure of the result. We are assured also that when a man enters upon the path of New Thought, he at once begins to make progress toward the complete mastery of matter by the power of his mind. The practical difficulty inheres in this very idea of progress. For if it is a matter of progress and not of instantaneous reception or achievement, the very critical question is, How long will the progress take? Will the length and ease of the pilgrimage be the same for all persons? When disappointed devotees complain that they do not get the results hoped for, the best that New Thought can do is to assure them that the results will appear if only the patients persevere long enough. But the legitimate question still remains, Will my mind acquire sufficient power over my body to end the disease before the disease ends me? It is a life and death race between my progress in thought-power and the progress of the disease. New Thought gives no satisfactory answer to this question.

The problematical nature of the case becomes still more obvious when we remember that the

mind which according to New Thought especially controls the body is the subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is the everlasting sink of all one's past evil as well as the repository of all one's past good (everlasting sink, that is, if the mind is everlasting). If this subconscious mind which is evil as well as good is the mind that especially controls my body and if disease results only from error and evil in the mind, how is it possible for me ever to become perfectly healthy? This was pointed out earlier, but it will bear repetition. Surely New Thought, instead of being, as it claims, an angel of hope to a diseased humanity, is a messenger of doom. It boasts of its optimism while unaware of its pessimism.

As to the problem of the extent of the influence of the mind over the body, that is a question for physicians, and physiologists, and psychologists, and alienists to answer. In view of the above exposition it is not necessary to answer this question in order to form an intelligent estimate of New Thought therapeutics. We may have sufficient evidence of mental influence both in the causing and in the curing of disease; we may gladly believe in this mental influence; and we may confidently give ourselves mental treatments; and yet not make an extravagant application of principles which only contradict and annul one another when pushed to the extreme and transformed into wild vagaries.

The third practical defect in New Thought

therapeutics reveals itself when the question is asked, Can the body affect the mind? According to New Thought principles it cannot. This application of its principles is sometimes expressly made. Have you a fit of the blues? Do not blame your liver. "Blues" are mental. You never have the blues unless you invite them. The whole New Thought circle of ideas is congruous only with the conception of the passivity of the body under the power of the mind. Some of its expositors tell us that there is nothing in their principles inharmonious with the belief in a reflex influence of the body upon the mind. This is an unproved assertion and the critic respectfully begs leave to differ.

Consequently the extent to which the body does affect and control the mind sets New Thought therapeutics at nought. What becomes of the health-affirmation method of healing? Or of the harmonizing-with-disease method of healing? Or of the idea that all bodily states are merely the expression of prior and causative mental states?

It is unnecessary for this book to deal with the question of the influence of the body upon the mind. It will suffice merely to speak of the possibility of physical influence upon the mind. Common sense declares, rightly or wrongly, that this influence is extensive. There is a prevalent belief, for example, that impatience, irritability, despondency, and other disagreeable mental

states are the results of a disordered liver, of exhausted nerves, of insomnia, and so forth; and conversely that mental vigor, alertness, hopefulness, serenity, patience, light-hearted joy may be in part the result of prime physical condition.

Furthermore, there is probably much truth in the argument that, since a mental state such as grief or fury is impossible apart from specific conditions of the blood and movements of the muscles, the body has a part in producing the grief or the fury. It is well-known that a man by certain movements of his fists, arms, facial muscles, eyeballs, and other parts of the body can deliberately work himself up into a passion or frenzy, quite impossible without this coöperation of the body. Movements of the body can also help to induce a happy and quiet frame of mind. If the mind can influence the body, there seems to be just as convincing evidence that the body can influence the mind. Indeed, it is generally felt that a significant element in the moral struggle of human life arises from the fierce conflict between the body with its passions and the mind with its ideals and its high purposes. A therapeutical method that almost wholly ignores what seems to be practically a tremendous factor in the relation of the body to the mind is one-sided and untrustworthy.

In conclusion, when we consider New Thought therapeutics from the practical point of view we see that it makes three assumptions: First, a

man can adequately control his own mind; Second, the mind completely controls the body and therefore a man can control his body by controlling his mind; and Third, the body has no influence over the mind or at most its influence is slight and negligible. The first two of these assumptions are unfounded in experience and are contradicted by experience. They are therefore serious practical defects, truly fatal flaws, in New Thought therapeutics. The third assumption may be in accord with the facts, but an immense array of evidence seems to discredit it. It is at best an hypothesis and should not be proclaimed as knowledge, infallible knowledge. And it is too precarious an hypothesis to constitute solid rock beneath the feet of a man wrestling for his very life.

But to all reasoning the follower of New Thought answers: New Thought does heal, therefore New Thought is true. If a man is afflicted seriously with the New Thought obsession, especially if he has been healed within its charmed circle, you might as well cannonade Gibraltar with apples and oranges as attempt to capture his assent by reasoning with him. He cannot be made to see the significance of the crucial fact that he himself admits that healing takes place under Christian Science (whose negation method he condemns); that it is wrought by the more than doubtful relics of saints; that it comes in answer to prayer to the living God

who is regarded as other than the petitioner's "real" self; and that it is obtained by a variety of "mind cures." If healing comes in connection with all these cults and methods which differ widely from one another, how can the cure establish the validity of any one of them? At most there is indicated some nucleus of truth common to all alike, but not a demonstration of the truth of any one cult or method entire to the disproof and discrediting of all the others.

CHAPTER XIII

LAW

By "law" New Thought does not mean command or decree or rule imposed by authority. The idea of authority is delusive. Authority implies the existence of two or more beings, one of whom has authority over the others. But since there is only one being existent, there can be no authority, unless one uses the word loosely and declares that the one and only being is authority unto itself. Theoretically New Thought repudiates as invalid what ordinary people would call laws human and divine.

The word law is used in New Thought in another and quite legitimate way, namely, as denoting regular method of operation in the universe. Although New Thought often speaks of law as if self-executing, we may look upon this mode of speech perhaps as personification; a misleading personification, it is true; yet New Thought is not in this respect a greater sinner than science itself.

Law is universal; there is no luck, or chance, or fate. No event is a mere happening. This is a universe of order. All events are links in a chain of cause and effect. The chain is never interrupted or broken. The forces of nature

never in a single instance depart from one uniform method of operation.

This method is the method of perfect wisdom. It cannot be improved upon. It is so wise that the best interests of the universe would be violated, if law were ever suspended or changed in the slightest degree.

Law is also beneficent. It is preëminently the "Law of Love." It seems inexorably cruel and pitiless when we reflect upon the pain and suffering that exist under its régime, but in reality law is kind and loving, tending only toward the welfare and perfection of all that is. Invariable law, infinitely wise and beneficent, is the true and only hope of humanity and therefore should be welcomed, not feared.

As to the source of law or, in other words, as to the originator and administrator of invariable method in the operation of the universe, little is said. Such terms as "divine method" and "divine constitution" are employed. Infinite spirit is said to have a "plan" and is represented both as being eternally self-existent and as moving on steadily toward the perfect expression of itself in minds and matter. From these conceptions and from the idea that only spirit *is*, it is fair to infer that New Thought regards law as coëternal with spirit and as an element in the immutable constitution of the "Eternal Wholeness."

The "All-Good" lives in complete accord with

law, that is, it never departs from its own method. The universal life of the "real man" is a harmony. "Harmony" is one of the chief gods in the New Thought Pantheon. Life consists of an infinitely intricate complex of "vibrations." In New Thought "vibration" and "vibrate" are words to conjure with. The universe is a vibratory system. We have already seen the use of these words in connection with the harmonizing-with-disease method of healing. All the vibrations of the "Universal Spirit of Wholeness" are in perfect concord, and together constitute a grand orchestral harmony. Universal life is a perfect harmony because it is in perfect accord with its own constitution as expressed in universal law.

The material universe is also under law. The "forces of nature" act under invariable law. Whether the operation of absolutely invariable law excludes miracles depends upon the definition of miracle. New Thought rejects popular ideas of miracle and all forms of supernaturalism as contrary to the idea of universal law. This repudiation of the supernatural is easy since New Thought does not need miracles. What need has a man for miracles if he believes that in accordance with law it is at present theoretically possible and some day it will be actually realizable to create and disintegrate material forms by the sheer power of thought? As before stated, New Thought writers in citing biblical

miracles, especially those of Jesus, always assume them to be historical and see in them illustrations and evidence of the truth and power of New Thought principles. New Thought not only does not need supernaturalism, it has no room for it. For all that is done, call it miraculous or not, is done by the "real man" or the "subjective man" in me and in you.

New Thought applies its idea of law to petitionary prayer and bows it out with fine disdain. The very idea of an ignorant "mind" suggesting to the universal Intelligence that it change its procedure or do something it would not do if the request were not made! To admit such a possibility would, it is held, shatter law by an earthquake at its very center.

The material universe includes of course the human body. Human bodies are therefore under law. Moreover, since life under law is a harmony, since all occurrences under law are links in an infinitely wise and beneficent series of cause and effect, bodies should always be in harmony with law. But New Thought admits that human bodies are often out of order, in a state of disharmony, and do not "vibrate" properly. There is a screw loose at this point in New Thought. The screw is supposed to be tightened by a reference to "mind." Bodily disorder is not the fault of matter and its laws but of those miserable offenders, called "minds." Matter of itself is not evil but good, and if minds only behaved

themselves and did not interfere with the forces of nature, matter, even in human bodies, would always be in perfect order. It is mind that muddles everything (including New Thought?).

Observe how, after camping awhile on the high, far-stretching plain of monism in the rare and serene atmosphere of universal law where the only existent being operates by an invariable method, the New Thoughtist in order to escape a difficulty strikes tent and steals away to a quite different region, the low marshes of pluralism, the habitat of that monster called the "mind."

Considering now this matter of universal law in relation to the meddlesome, intractable mind, notice that the mind is said to "violate" law, actually violate law, violate UNIVERSAL law. If law were a mandate issued by authority, its violation would be conceivable. But in New Thought law is only regular method, it is the method of operation of Being. This method is invariable, absolutely universal. It is not and cannot be suspended for a single instant anywhere in the universe. In fact, there is only one being and this being lives and works in perfect harmony with absolutely invariable law. And yet there is such a thing as the violation of law, departure from invariable method. How is it possible? It is not possible if the fundamental ideas of New Thought are true. Nevertheless

New Thought admits that law is violated and extensively violated.

The mind is an anarchist. It defies universal law. And yet this anarchist is only the expression, utterance, mode of existence of the omnipotent, perfect, infinitely good spirit whose very constitution is universal law and harmony and concordant vibration! Surely here the bottom drops out of the New Thought philosophy.

The advocates of New Thought, however, will not let the mind go scot free from law. For the spirit takes cognizance of the mind's violation of law and becomingly adjusts itself to the situation. The spirit's action in the case bears the two aspects of retribution and discipline. We are back again in the territory of law. It is in accordance with the laws of the universe that the spirit should instantly and exactly with infallible precision and with perfect love inflict retribution upon the erring mind when it violates law. The mental anarchist is not permitted to flaunt his red flag with impunity. The spirit or the forces of nature inflict strict retribution. This is the law and spirit always conforms to law.

But the process which from one standpoint is retributive is from another angle disciplinary. The universal law is a method of progress and a method of love. Spirit adjusts itself with utmost nicety and promptitude to all the follies and evils of the mind in precise conformity to law. This action of spirit is reformatory and

will finally bring the mind (every mind without exception) to conform freely, spontaneously and perfectly to the law or method of the spirit. Chaos is gradually disciplined into Cosmos.

Even we cave dwellers who live on the "objective plane" are able to gaze upon some of the foregoing ideas without blinking. This conception of the reign of universal law is not new. It is one of the common-places of modern science and it has profoundly influenced Christian theology. It is to be expected that any intellectual movement that claims to be so modern as to style itself the "New Thought" would make much of this ruling idea of modern thinking. Credit is due to the quasi-philosophy under review for its insistence upon the fact of law and for its effort to banish from men's minds the superstitious notions of chance and caprice and luck and arbitrariness and irrationality in the working of the universe. In this respect it is serving this generation beneficently and effectively in spite of the contradiction at its very core. Even a house divided against itself may stand for a time and have a useful mission. But at last, shore it up as one may, such a house cannot stand.

CHAPTER XIV

HAPPINESS

Few things are so attractive to troubled and burdened hearts as the vision of unclouded happiness and perfect peace. New Thought holds up before men's longing eyes the ideal of perpetual joy, happy-hearted superiority to a disagreeable or sordid environment, a blessed emancipation from the tyranny of circumstance, an assured and reposeful mastery of all conditions, perfect rest amid all the unrest of the world, serene self-control in the presence of life's great tragedies, a quiet spirit calm and radiant amid all the worries, uncertainties, disappointments, and petty trials of daily life. The promises of New Thought, like the refreshing springs of the green oasis in the burning desert, well up to meet the lips of nervous, careworn, over-worked, troubled and suffering men and women.

Why should I not be happy if the "real man in me" is the infinite and perfect spirit that creates and controls all things or of whom all things are only the expression? The "All-Good" is perfectly benevolent, and is equally omniscient and omnipotent. How can anything untoward, undesirable, lamentable, or tragic occur when nothing exists besides the loving, all-wise, and omnip-

otent spirit? Further, this one and only being, perfectly good, wise, powerful, always works in accordance with law, law beneficent and immutable. An impregnable rock surely! What foundation for peace and joy could be so solid as this? Contemplate it one moment! There is only one being; this being is limitless in wisdom, power, and love, and its method of working is unvaryingly beneficent. If this is true, there is no place in human life for anything really evil or regrettable or ominous or, indeed, in any respect undesirable. There is nothing in the past to regret, nothing in the present to harm, nothing in the future to fear. We are all moving forward under the guidance and control of the inescapable law of evolution. Nothing comes into our lives unless it is necessary for our ultimate welfare and perfection, and nothing stays any longer than it is needed. Existence is a paradise without even the least noxious serpent; it is most precious ointment without a single fly. Such is the gospel of New Thought to a tired and troubled world longing and sighing for peace and comfort and power and all that constitutes happiness.

But we must study the rationale of the case a little further. In the first place, the conscious mind has the royal prerogative of receiving or rejecting any influence from without that seeks admission. It is our privilege to choose what shall be the contents of our own minds. Our

minds live in an ocean of ideas, impressions, personal influences that are pressing upon them from every side as water surrounds and presses upon a submerged object. But nothing can *enter* the mind except by the mind's voluntary permission. Or, to use another figure (it may be charity to call it a figure, for New Thought language concerning thoughts and influences is often amazingly materialistic), the mind lives in an atmosphere in which float myriads of very active emanations or particles from other minds. These emanations, which are thoughts or influences, come flying or darting through the air. They come from every point of the compass and from great distances, and impinge upon one's mind. The latter may admit them or send them packing just as it lists.

In the second place, happiness entirely depends upon the contents of one's mind. If your mind contains only thoughts of happiness, virtue, goodness, love, peace, joy, power, health, contentment, and so forth, you are happy and cannot be unhappy. But if your mind, on the contrary, contains thoughts of misery, vice, badness, selfishness, hate, envy, jealousy, disquietude, weakness, sickness, dissatisfaction, and sorrow, you are unhappy.

From these two premises that the mind can admit or reject thoughts exactly as it pleases and that happiness depends wholly upon the character of your thoughts, the conclusion is

inevitable that perfect and perpetual happiness is within the power of any and every man.

If you would be happy, you must in particular realize your oneness or identity with infinite spirit; for spirit is limitless in its perfections and is infinitely peaceful and happy. To become and remain immersed in the God-consciousness, realizing that the real man in you is perfectly happy, is to live submerged in an ocean of peace and joy. Unhappiness is impossible to the mind that fully opens itself or is "negative" to the "All-Good" and is at the same time and by that very process "positive" to and positively against all that is evil and miserable.

Are you sick? Think yourself as abounding in health and vigor. Are you fearful? Remind yourself that nothing can harm you except your own thoughts, and proceed to choose only thoughts of power and peace and good. Are you melancholy? Banish at once the miasma of despondency and let in the sunshine of bright imaginings and happy thoughts. Say to yourself: Life is sweetest music. My heart is gay. I sing and trill and carol for very joy. Are you misunderstood by your friends? Admit no thought of regret or sorrow, much less of resentment or bitterness. Send forth upon your friends, as winning forces, thoughts of truth about yourself and of kindness to them. Are you hated by enemies? Love them. Rejoice in the good that is in them. Remember that at

the center you and they are one and the same being, the one and only real man. Tell yourself: Their hatred is only a mistake on their part. When they come to know me better they will love me. Especially when they learn that I am they, they will love me. I send forth to them thought-forces to enlighten and win them. Are you losing money in business? Let no thought of uneasiness or repining enter your mind. That is the way to further loss. Rather recall that all events take place in strict accordance with law and law is invariably beneficent. You may be traveling toward wealth by the circuitous route of seeming failure. But whatever is is best.

Above all, whatever happens to you or to your loved ones, do not resist. Instead, "vibrate" with everything. Resistance brings friction. Friction involves disquiet and loss of peace. When peace goes, power goes; power to recuperate or to acquire or to enjoy. Since friction thus brings unhappiness, beware of friction and the resistance that produces it. Does any person, event, or thing seem hostile to you? Resistance will only give him or it added power over you. Resistance is therefore virtually surrender. Love your enemies, whether these enemies are persons, events, or things, and you change them into friends; and when they thus become your friends, they will enhance your happiness.

Whatever happens, accept it as the best thing for you and for your loved ones. All things are under law. The working of universal law has brought it about, and since law is beneficent, the event is beneficent also. Therefore rejoice in apparent misfortune, exult in what seems tragedy, be peaceful, contented, satisfied, happy, under all conceivable conditions. "All" is good, and nothing outside of "the All" can touch you, because there is nothing, either good or evil, outside of "the All."

This is the New Thought way of putting the old saying that it is worth a thousand pounds a year to look on the bright side of things. This sunny optimism of New Thought is glitteringly attractive and is one of its strongest features. For moping and repining and complaining are not in favor with most people. This *sursum corda*, this call to joy and peace and confidence, this summons to mastery and victory, rings out like the peal of marriage bells. It comes upon the hot, fever-laden air of the world like a fresh, bracing breeze from the hills. It is a tonic to mind and body, and is doing this weary old world much good. What a pity it is that men with such an angel's song of peace and gladness should ever sing another tune! But, alas! the *repertoire* of New Thought includes laments and dirges. After all New Thought has its devil. The reader is by this time well-acquainted with this devil and knows that it is the "mind." In

fact there is a pair of devils, the conscious and the subconscious minds. The diabolical minds are constantly running amuck among the flowers and bowers and manifold beauties of paradise. And the problem is how to be happy in spite of the dark ways and heathenish tricks of the mind. This is a difficult problem because happiness is impossible if the mind does not behave itself. The magnificent promises of New Thought are conditioned upon the perfection of the mind and their fulfillment is doled out only in proportion to the progress of the mind toward perfection.

Everything hinges upon a man's control of his own mind. New Thought advocates often speak as if it were the easiest thing in the world to exclude all thoughts and feelings of pain and heartache and longing and regret and pity and sympathy and sorrow and anger and indignation besides all the restless feelings that arise from sex and temperament and the complex social relations—to say nothing about pride, envy, covetousness, hatred, sensuality and all the rest of the devil's brood. And what about the difficulty of keeping the mind positively occupied with nothing but correct and good thoughts of every description? We may well remark again that it is no wonder that so many disciples of New Thought find that the harvest does not correspond to the seed-sowing of hope and expectation. And what do their prophets do to help them in

their disappointment and discouragement? They merely remind them of New Thought principles often couched in beautiful poetic language, point to shining examples of the successful application of these principles, and exhort them to start again and persevere, PERSEVERE. Surely a poor gospel after all for weak and tempted and burdened humanity.

Again, the subconscious mind is an insuperable obstacle to the quest for happiness. New Thought says: If you would be happy, all you have to do is to admit correct, righteous, happy thoughts, and reject all incorrect, evil, and unhappy thoughts. But according to its own descriptions of the subconscious mind nothing that once gets into that mind can ever be expelled. Yes, but happiness is a matter of consciousness. That which is in the subconsciousness can therefore make no difference to one's happiness. But what if subconsciousness affects consciousness? New Thought declares that the conscious life is largely the welling-up of our subconscious life into consciousness. It also tells us that the subconscious mind teems with the whole black list of thoughts that are destructive of happiness. How, then, can the conscious mind be free from these thoughts that blight happiness and banish peace? The truth is that New Thought unwittingly exhibits the subconsciousness as the marplot of its whole scheme for the fulness of peace and plenty and power and joy.

New Thought reaches the same suicidal conclusion in another way and hangs itself by the rope of its doctrine of "expression." The inner and invisible is always seeking and gaining expression or embodiment in body and possessions and circumstances. But the immensely larger part of the inner and invisible in individual life is the parti-colored subconscious mind. Its manifestation will necessarily be as variegated as itself. New Thought ideas consequently, carried to their legitimate conclusion, make a life of complete happiness absolutely impossible to any human being.

Christianity too offers men happiness. Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He left peace as a precious legacy to his disciples: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful." (John 14:27.) He told them that his joy was to be in them and that their joy was to be "made full" and that no one could take their joy from them. The Christian's peace is a "peace that passeth all understanding." It is a peace that abides. It is not a few quiet, shaded pools situated here and there along the rushing river of life; it is in the very flow and movement of the river. It is not the peace of the cool evening's stillness after the hot day's hard work is done, it is the rest of spirit while bearing the

burden and heat of the day. Christ's peace is not rest from the yoke, but rest under the yoke, heart's-ease even while dragging toilingly at the load of life.

The Christian joy inheres in the soul as its perfume in a rose. It shines like a lamp within a globe, irradiating and beautifying the soul. The Christian's peace and joy is utterly separate from callous indifference to trouble; it has nothing in common with the factitious repose arising from the denial of the existence of evil; it stands in sharp contradistinction to the shallow happiness of the man who dare not sympathize with the sufferer or be indignant at the wrongdoer or permit any ploughshare of elemental human passion to make deep furrows in his soul or bare his spirit to the sharpness of any sword of anguish, because such experience involves "friction" and friction prevents or destroys power and peace and joy.

According to Christianity no man ought, in view of the sin and woe of the human race, to desire to escape every pang. "Sorrowful yet always rejoicing" is the true keynote. The ideal man was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief as well as the man in whom dwelt the fullness of joy and peace. Man is made for happiness, but he is also made for love. And love suffers in a world of sin and sorrow, suffers by sympathy with the loved ones who sin and suffer. Even God suffers. "The Lamb slain from the

foundation of the world" is the history of his heart.

But, though Christianity calls upon men to suffer, it nevertheless promises happiness within the soul. To a man surrendered to God and man in loving self-sacrifice it makes little difference what accompaniment so-called Fortune plays; he will ever sing in his heart the song of heavenly joy. It did not disturb Paul's peace because he endured so many afflictions for the sake of Christ and the Church. In the inner dungeon at Philippi Paul and Silas at midnight sang praises to God. The apostle declared that he rejoiced in his sufferings for those whom he had led to Christ. And a modern missionary, whose friends were attempting to dissuade him from service in Africa, replied, "If Christ wants me to be a hidden foundation-stone lying unseen in an African grave, I am content." What can disturb the peace and joy of men like them who drink deeply from the sacred chalice of divine love? Indeed, the suffering itself, when it is for love's sake, brings to a man happiness peculiar and unfathomable.

Christianity, furthermore, gives full recognition to the reality of sorrow and trouble and evil. It does not stultify itself by acknowledging and denying the existence of evil in almost the same breath as New Thought does. But while recognizing evil as a fact, a terrible reality, and admitting the presence of mysteries

insoluble in this world, the Christian religion breathes peace upon the spirit and inspires hope and courage and strength so that no man is so truly and profoundly happy as the thorough-going Christian. He believes in God the Father. He is sure that "all things work together for good to them that love God." He believes that he is the immortal son of the everlasting Father who has a plan for the life of his child and has all eternity in which to carry it out. This present short life is but the prologue to the endless epic of existence; it is but the first scene of an everlasting drama; it is but the orchestral music before the rising of the curtain that hides from our view the stage of the eternal world. We dwell in the mists here, thick mists sometimes, but they are not the chilling vapors that precede an oncoming night that shall darken our souls forever, but rather they are the mists that precede the sunrise, the dawning of the everlasting day. And the Christian can be calm and reposeful and full of a great and inextinguishable joy because he is sure of God, of God whose names are Righteousness and Love.

No man need turn away from Christ the real Light of the world to follow after the phosphorescent gleams that float over the treacherous marshes of a quagmire philosophy in order to have the fullness of peace and joy. Christian hymns testify abundantly to the real Christian experience. If one seeks to select a representa-

tive utterance, he is embarrassed by his riches. Perhaps the following verses may represent hundreds of others like them as they certainly record the blessedness of the life of those who truly follow the Master who gave us the Beatitudes.

“In heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may rage without me;
My heart may low be laid;
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?

“Wherever He may guide me,
No want shall turn me back;
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack:
His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim;
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.

“Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen;
Bright skies will soon be o’er me,
Where the dark clouds have been:
My hope I cannot measure;
My path to life is free;
My Savior has my treasure,
And He will walk with me.”

CHAPTER XV

GOOD AND EVIL

At the risk of some repetition it is desirable to devote a few pages exclusively to the topic of this chapter. New Thought ideas on the subject of good and evil are a puzzling maze. The bewildering confusion arises from the attempt to reconcile hard facts with the fundamental dictum that the "All" is absolutely good.

On the one hand New Thought frequently admits the existence of what are commonly called evils, moral, social, mental, and physical; and on the other hand the existence of evil is most grudgingly granted, toned down, obscured by explanations that do not explain, and at times denied outright.

Let us follow a few threads in the tangled skein. In the first place, it is asserted that all *things* are good. Things in themselves are not and cannot be evil. If evil exists, it consists in the wrong use of things; they become evil only by being misused. To this position no Christian believer in a perfect and benevolent Creator should object. The Bible says, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1: 31). New Thought holds to the goodness of things because things

are in some undefined sense or other included in the "All-Good."

In the second place, as already stated, the perversion of things is evil. Common sense and Christianity indorse this position also. But if the central idea of New Thought is true, there is no possibility of this evil perversion of things. Who does the perverting? Things do not misuse themselves. All that exists is good and is one, and the "All" is infinitely wise and good spirit. How then can misuse and abuse of things arise?

We men are the offenders. We men, however, in our "real" selves are the infinitely good spirit. It is evident that those who misuse things are in some way radically other than the "All." New Thought is compelled by the facts of life to abandon its monism and speak as if there were a genuine and highly significant ontological distinction between infinite spirit and individual human minds. In this way it reaches the idea of evil. Sometimes it proclaims monism and denies evil; at other times it proclaims pluralism and affirms evil. Now it would erect an edifice of life and health and happiness and morals on the one basis, now on the other basis, and still again on no one knows which basis. Its writings are a medley of incongruous assertions and exhortations that are hopelessly at variance with one another.

In the third place, there is no evil outside of the mind. The mind takes the wrong attitude

toward spirit, toward other minds, and toward things. The mind takes this wrong attitude either wilfully or ignorantly. Occasionally the New Thought teacher has much to say about a weak or a perverse will and gets pretty close to a true idea of moral evil. He finds this very dangerous ground, however, for a man who believes that the sum total of being is absolutely good and he is sure to retreat and make statements implying that there is no real moral evil after all.

Usually the mind is represented as taking the wrong attitude, not in perverse wilfulness, but in ignorance. Sin is due only to lack of information. This must be so. For no one would knowingly injure himself; and, since other people are identical with his real self, he would never knowingly injure others. Notice in passing that we have here the same confusion of the impersonal, universal, real man with the personal, individual "mind" represented by the personal pronoun which we observed once before in another connection.

The New Thoughtist, like the Christian Scientist, seems to think that he escapes the terrible problem of evil or that it becomes attenuated almost to a shadow by calling it ignorance. Evil is said to be only an error. But is not an error an evil, at least in the intellectual sphere? Are not many so-called errors, moreover, loathsome, monstrous, destructive? Do we save ourselves

from them by a euphemism? Do we lessen their power to defile and curse when we put a different and less repellent label on them? New Thought and Christian Science say that "All" is good, and they think that they consistently hold to this fundamental dogma just because they refuse to call a spade a spade. Instead of saying "evil" they say "ignorance," "mistake," "error," "partial expression," and lo! there is no evil and truly the "All" is good! Whatever you call it, the horrid, accursed thing is in human hearts and lives just the same. A cesspool is just as foul whether you call it a cesspool or a means of sanitation.

When New Thought declares that the only existent being is infinitely wise and then affirms that the error in human life is inconceivably enormous in the total and then says that the prevalence of error is due to the fact that the infinitely wise and only being only partially expresses itself, and yet the being is not in error but only the "mind," and yet the mind, crammed with dangerous and horrible errors, is only the being's expression of itself and that therefore even the most frightful evils are not positively but only negatively evil, when New Thought talks in this fashion, as it usually does, it is but a "Job's comforter" for the poor fellows that are smitten from sole to crown with painful boils, physical or moral, and are passing their wretched days on the dunghill.

In the fourth place, New Thought usually teaches that evil or error is but temporary. It is temporary because by the law of evolution knowledge must increase. Evil is only for a time because it is simply limitation, and by the process of evolution, as New Thought interprets it, limitation of every sort is gradually diminishing, for the infinite spirit is moving on toward perfect self-expression. Evil is transient also because it is a means of education. Great stress is laid upon this aspect of evil, perhaps because to the New Thoughtist it seems to offer an open door to escape from the problem of evil, or at any rate to lessen its magnitude. It is even asserted that men make "mistakes," knowing that they will profit by them, and this position is condoned. This is tantamount to the maxim, "Let us do evil that good may come"; the apostle Paul adds, "whose damnation is just." Few New Thought writers thus carry the consequences of their ideas to the very last ditch, and yet all of them imply this conclusion. And since all evil is educational, it is transitory; for when the education is completed, the means of education will disappear.

In the fifth place, there is no such thing as evil. Evil is only appearance, not reality. It is not real, but only a shadow; it is not positive, but merely negative; it is not essential badness of heart, but only ignorance; it is not a wicked choice of that which a man knows to be wrong,

it is instead a mere fantasy, only the product of disordered senses and incorrect thinking.

Such expressions are surprising when one's eyes are fixed upon the facts of consciousness and conduct. They are not so surprising, however, when uttered by men blinded to the facts of life by a metaphysical theory concerning ultimate reality. Men cannot dwell continually upon the idea that there is only one being and that this being is absolutely good without belittling the evil of human life, minimizing its guilt, losing the sense of sin, and regarding so-called evil as the temporary, unpleasant road to goodness and perfection.

But if moral evil is what the human conscience declares it to be and particularly if evil is what the individual and social conscience as enlightened and developed under the teachings and influence of Christ has always felt it to be, then it is an incalculable harm to men individually and collectively to minimize the badness of evil and virtually to explain it away altogether.

It is far better that the painful truth of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin" should be acutely felt. To make men feel, on the contrary, that moral evil is at the worst a venial offense; that it is only a wart on the skin, not a cancer eating at the vitals; that it is a mere mistake, simply, so to speak, catching a crab as one rows along the stream of life; to make men feel that at heart they are as pure and good and blessed as God

himself, that in fact they are God, is to open wide the flood gates for evil to rush through and devastate human life.

The tendency of men to indulge fleshly lusts or greed of gold or passion for position and power is so strong that it is immeasurably perilous to remove legitimate barriers to their selfishness. New Thought teaches that licentious lust and all abominable passions are only on the surface of life, they do not issue from your "real" self, at heart they do not belong to you or affect you. True, it will be a mistake for you to indulge these propensities, but, if you do, the law of evolution, the universal law that is infinitely wise and beneficent in its operations, will rectify the results of these "mistakes" both in your own life and in the lives of those you seem, but only seem, to injure. Vile lusts are only limitations, the partial expressions of perfect purity; cruelty, hate, malignity, and jealousy are the partial expressions of perfect kindness, generosity, and love. And it is because these passions are only a partial expression of goodness that they seem to be evil. All this sort of thing about which the unseeing world makes so much ado is only a superficial and temporary phase of your experience. Some day you will outgrow these mistakes by becoming further enlightened. The indulgence in what the uninitiated multitude calls dreadful and dangerous passions will really prove to be an ascension, not perhaps directly, but by

a sort of spiral path to the plane of light and life and knowledge and goodness. That which is misnamed evil is the means of moral culture. You go to school to vice to learn virtue; selfishness is your tutor to train and perfect you in love.

This is in part the present writer's phrasing of New Thought doctrine. Nevertheless it presents strictly and without any exaggeration the outrageously immoral and dangerous substance of certain favorite New Thought ideas.

Christianity on the contrary proclaims uncompromisingly the reality and the enormity of moral evil and calls upon men to repent. It tells men the naked and humiliating truth about themselves. It awakens conscience until the clarion call is heard within the soul summoning the sinner to forsake evil and turn to goodness and to God. It also woos the man from evil to goodness by the tender and profound appeals of the divine love, especially as revealed in the cross of Christ. Christianity offers the indispensable help of an almighty Savior and Friend to aid the sinner in repenting and in reforming while at the same time it rouses all the forces for good in the man's nature to work with God for the cleansing and transformation of heart and life. Its standard of goodness is the moral perfection of God himself as exhibited in the life of Jesus, the elder Brother, and the sympathizing Helper of every man. It is in the sphere of personal

relations that men are moved and helped, and it is just here that Christianity meets and helps men.

To exchange all this for the idea that I am the good God and have no evil or need at the heart of me, and that seeming evil is only the limitation which my infinitude undergoes and is but the partial expression of my limitless perfection as I move on steadily and surely from personal to impersonal existence, and that, being under the law of evolution, I need not worry over my "mistakes"—to exchange the Christian conception and experience for New Thought's superficial travesty of the sublime conceptions of law and evolution and optimism and the immanence and infinitude of God is to exchange gold for tinsel, and diamonds of the first water for paste imitations.

CHAPTER XVI

NEW THOUGHT ETHICS

The last chapter laid the foundation for the study of New Thought ethics. We shall first of all consider the connection between the New Thought idea of moral evil and its conceptions of being and of law.

There is only one being. The only being is infinitely wise, powerful, and good. It lives and acts invariably in perfect conformity to beneficent law. If this is true, then every expression of the only being is the action of perfect being in perfect conformity to perfect law. Even though any particular expression of being is a partial one, yet it is nevertheless the action of perfect being in perfect conformity to perfect law. The material universe is one such expression. Each human mind, including intellect, and feeling, and will, is such an expression. Each human life, physical and intellectual and moral, is an expression of perfect being that always acts in perfect conformity to perfect law.

There is therefore no evil, no moral evil. The individual mind cannot be really evil. New Thought does not hesitate to teach this. If we have any right to talk about evil at all, it is not

because minds and their doings are positively bad, but only because they are negatively bad. Evil is only a lack of something; it is incompleteness and incompleteness that is a natural and inevitable stage in our progress toward perfection. It is the stage of partial ignorance and partial knowledge. There is manifestly no room here for the fundamental moral instincts of mankind. Indeed we are sometimes expressly told that regret for our past misdeeds is foolish. Repentance exposes the mind and body to weakness and sickness. It is harmful because it produces friction; and "friction" is one of the nightmares of New Thought. Fear is man's worst enemy, even the fear arising from the consciousness of guilt. Remorse is folly. Conscience is the great deceiver and the great bully. How many degrees the needle of the New Thought compass is deflected from the magnetic pole of truth by the pantheistic iron in the hull of the ship!

Now since sin is only ignorance, the way out is the path of knowledge. Let there be light. Show men their errors and they will forsake them both in theory and in practice. It is impossible for a rational being to live irrationally. A man cannot knowingly act an error or live a lie. Perfect goodness comes of necessity with perfect knowledge. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the real tree of life, and in the day in which thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely live.

But how shall one acquire knowledge? Look within. Know thyself. Christian and Buddhist sacred writings, Emerson's Essays, Walt Whitman's poetry, New Thought lectures and books, and other external sources of knowledge are helpful toward enlightenment, but after all the royal road to learning and consequently to moral perfection is to look within. But what is there within? The universal spirit, the real man, which is omniscient. One may well relegate to a second place all the wisdom of the ages that is to be found in books, if, by looking within, the very pages of omniscience are open to view. New Thought lays great stress upon the idea that knowledge of how to live is accessible to any man because in every case the real man is the universal spirit and in looking at the universal spirit he is only looking at himself. This is uncommonly like sleight of hand. The ignorant mind looks at the omniscient real man and in so doing is looking at itself! Ignorance gazes upon knowledge and beholds itself as in a mirror! This is still another instance of the fallacy of confounding the individual self with the "real" self.

We saw in an earlier chapter that the God-consciousness, the realization that you are God or infinite spirit, is the secret of knowledge. And since knowledge makes moral evil impossible, the consciousness of God, the living the "real" life, the realizing sense that you are the only,

the universal, the infinite being is the path to perfect goodness.

Let us see how this is supposed to work practically. Let a man meditate long and deeply upon the central truth of New Thought that there is only one being until he realizes it vividly and profoundly. He thus comes to know that he is the All. But if he is the All, then, in opposing the All, he is opposing himself and injuring himself. (Note that the real man can suffer injury; in other connections New Thought denies this.) But no man will wittingly injure himself. It follows that when a man gains a clear vision of his oneness with the All, or, better, that he is the All, it is impossible for him wilfully to rebel against the All and its laws. Rather will he love the All. It is easy to love one's self. When I know that my real self is the All and especially the "All-Good," I shall love the Eternal Wholeness and love it spontaneously. Nothing else but love to God is possible to me when I have gazed long and steadily within and see that I am God.

When I see that I am God, I shall see also that there is no one above me who gives laws to me. Moral authority is null and void. There is no such thing as a valid command. All authority is in myself, which is equal to saying there is no such thing as authority. It is a degradation to think of obeying anyone. The idea of obedience is a superstition, for it is nonsense

to talk about obeying yourself. But that is the only obedience possible, since there is only one being and you are that being.

New Thought here rides its monism desperately hard. Notwithstanding, at other times we find the saddle on a very different horse, and read of the mind being "open" to and "positive" to the real man, and resisting the infinite spirit, and receiving help and power from the spirit of wholeness, and so forth.

Again, by looking within at my real self I come to understand, that since there is only one being, my fellowmen are equally with myself that one and only being. In other words, all men are my real self. If I hate and injure them I *de facto* hate and injure myself. No one, however, can knowingly injure himself; therefore the man of knowledge will not and cannot injure any fellow-being. And when I realize that my fellows are my real self, I shall love them, simply because I cannot help loving myself.

Love and knowledge are the great words in New Thought ethics. They are the two foci of its ellipse. The perfect life is the life of love. This life is practicable for all men; for knowledge necessitates love, and knowledge is to be had for the looking at one's self. Could any scheme of practical morality be simpler and easier than this of New Thought? At last we have a short cut to perfection!

It should not fail to be noticed that in New

Thought love is always in the last analysis self-love, and, so far as its ethics can be classified, they are utilitarian. The cardinal idea is that injury of others is injury to self and doing good to others is doing good to self. Its love is theoretically nothing but self-love. This is true at any rate so long as it is under the spell of pantheistic monism.

New Thought, however, often appeals from Richard drunk to Richard sober. While intoxicated with pantheism, it is all for self-love, but at other times, it denounces selfishness unsparingly.

But how is a reprehensible selfishness possible? It is connected with individuality. And here pluralism comes in with a rush. This is ever the case with New Thought. While monism holds the territory and reigns serenely over its wide and glorious domain, suddenly a tidal wave of pluralism rushes in resistlessly upon the fair landscape and engulfs it. In New Thought the "mind" is always the skeleton in the closet; it is the ghost that refuses to be laid.

Proceeding now to the consideration of individuality and selfishness we learn that men are individual persons. They can think of one another and act for or against one another. And observe that "another" means an *other*, not self. The individual now is the self; though not the "real" self, yet for the practical purposes of New Thought ethics it is the self. Tom is Tom

and Dick is Dick and Harry is Harry. And because they are three individuals they can pull three different ways at once. Now this is selfishness; and it is evil, moral evil. Surely New Thought is here "not far from the kingdom" of ethical truth. But just as Bunyan's pilgrim discovered that there was a short route to hell from the very gate of heaven, so New Thought falls back from this high place into the abyss of the immoral. Tom, Dick, and Harry are not after all to be blamed very much for their selfishness, and when they have become New Thoughtists they must not indulge vain regrets over their past contrariness. It is only a matter of ignorance and enlightenment. They selfishly pull three different ways because the fact of individuality looms up too large before them. If they perceived the truth that they are in reality only one being, they would pull together in harmonious coöperation. Selfishness, the root of all the suffering and wretchedness in the world, is inseparable from individuality. It cannot be eradicated except by the suppression of individuality. Individuality for this reason is decidedly under the New Thought taboo. The ideal existence is not personal but impersonal; not individual, but universal. Life will reach the zenith of purity and glory when the universal spirit shall live only in the universal or spirit mode and all individuals shall have become absorbed in universal being. One cannot help wondering why the universal

ever individuated itself at all. It seems like the self-degradation of infinitely perfect being. Is it not merely a plunge into the depths just for the sake of climbing slowly up to the heights again?

As to the dynamics of New Thought ethics, no special need of power is indicated and certainly no power outside of yourself is to be expected for a single instant. Not power but knowledge is essential to success. New Thoughtists, like Christians, have the benefit of the example of Jesus and they make some use of it. They also seek help in the ethical life from all the great and good men in the past and present. In this respect many Christians could learn wisdom from the followers of New Thought. They use the Christian Scriptures not a little. They feed their souls most of all in the verdant, flowery pastures of New Thought literature.

Christian ethics stand out in marked contrast to the ethics of New Thought. Christianity does not trifle with dynamite by playing fast and loose with the idea and fact of moral evil. It believes in the great intuitions of the human soul. Truth is writ large in the vast race-feelings of mankind; of them God might say, "Behold, with how large letters I have written unto you with my own hand." The moral intuitions, are, according to Christian ethics, the clear, limpid springs in which truth wells up into our consciousness from the deeps of the divine mind: and

New Thought would muddy these clear springs of knowledge. The primitive intuitions constitute God's fundamental revelation; they are his directest and most immediate utterances to the human soul. In them we come face to face with the Eternal Reason. They are the root of all human reason, faith, and knowledge, the very taproot of both the intellectual and moral life.

The human conscience, whether of the Christian or of other men, gives the lie direct to the claim of New Thought that men never sin against the light, that moral evil is ignorance and as such is not to be condemned. Men know that they deliberately violate true principles of action and of being, and they condemn themselves for doing so. Men know that they often antagonize their own highest interests, and wilfully and maliciously seek to injure others although they know that their wrongdoing will some day come down like a boomerang upon their own pate. Christianity agrees with common sense in recognizing all this, and it calls this wilful wrongdoing evil, and, when viewed as the transgression of the law of God, calls it sin—sin, unnatural, abnormal, irrational, ruinous, damnable, the worst conceivable thing in the universe.

Christianity, further, is altogether out of sympathy with the New Thought idea of the essential evil of individuality. It fervently believes in the individual life. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" is its question and its

challenge. Its Founder taught that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. His gospel is the gospel of the "whosoever." The ideal of Christianity combines in perfect balance the individual and the social. It would develop each distinct and separate person, not blot out his personality. Instead of bidding men hope for absorption into Nirvana as their highest goal, it teaches them to follow him in whose Father's house are many mansions. Christianity, while working for the perfecting of the individual, is also looking and laboring for the kingdom of God, a vast and glorious social system of perfected personal beings living together in perfect harmony and love.

Christian morality is reënforced by the Christian religion, and "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation." All the example, precept, sentiment, and rhetoric of New Thought does not furnish moral power enough for the needs of the ethical life. New Thought cannot satisfy the deepest moral needs of men because it ignores the reality of the profoundest moral instincts or denies them utterly. Christianity gives full recognition to them and offers to weak and sinning men the very power of God, of God who is not a man's own real self.

CHAPTER XVII

NEW THOUGHT AND RELIGION

Whether New Thought is religious or not, depends upon what religion is. There are highly elastic definitions of religion. It is, for example, a feeling, a temper, an aspiration, an attitude, a being spiritual, and so forth. But the idea of religion, as held almost universally in all ages, involves the existence of two parties, the one human and the other not human or at least not now living an incarnate human life.

But the keystone of the New Thought arch is the dogma: All is One, One is All. Or, to state it more clearly: There is only one being, and that being is your real self. Now, it is plain that if there is only one party and you are that party, religion as historically conceived is an impossibility, and the very conception of religion which has been one of the greatest factors in the intellectual and moral life of man is untrue.

New Thought uses some of the leading religious words. It speaks of revelation, but means by it the unveiling of yourself as spirit to yourself as mind, the method of revelation being introspection. It speaks of communion with God, but understands by it conversing with yourself. Its

communing with God is a monologue; its beatific vision is the rapt contemplation of self. New Thought uses the term atonement, but only as signifying the harmony of your lower, personal, individual self with your higher, impersonal, and universal self. The word salvation is used, but the only divine Savior a man can have is his own divine self, often referred to as "the Christ within." Moral government is wholly self-government. The almost universal conception of obedience as being and doing what another commands is degrading and weakening. Indeed the worst possible evil is the surrender of the right to govern yourself. New Thought sometimes speaks favorably of religion and seems to regard itself as religious, but it discourages adherence to any one religion, because all religions require obedience to an authority other than the worshiper himself.

All this is not religion. New Thought might justly be called spiritual, however, because it teaches us to regard ourselves as essentially spirit and to give the first place to the spiritual nature with its needs and powers and possibilities of service, of achievement, and of blessedness. But the identification of your spirit with God robs the word religion of all meaning.

New Thought, then, is not a religion and is not religious so long as it wears the guise of pantheistic monism. But whenever it appears as pluralism, as it does at any moment without the

slightest warning, then it is practically a religion. For such a wide chasm separates the infinite spirit on the one side from the individual, personal, erring, weak, "mortal" mind on the other side, that two distinct beings are virtually involved. A New Thoughtist may proclaim from the rooftops his own infinity, his identity with God, his oneness with the All, yet as soon as he begins to talk about the mind we are listening to a very different story, to the life-history of a very different being. Between the two stools of monism and pluralism the New Thought philosophy comes to the ground.

Much the same metaphysical and moral attributes which the Christian ascribes to God the New Thoughtist ascribes to his real self. The same weakness, ignorance, and sinfulness which the Christian affirms of himself the New Thoughtist (though the view of sin is extremely shallow) attributes to his "mind." And just as the Christian regards the infinitely holy and loving God as sustaining the relation of authority and providence, and love, and power to sinning men, so the New Thoughtist posits much the same relation between his real self and his mind.

Practically, therefore, New Thought in its unguarded pluralistic moments and moods is religious. But as a religion it is immeasurably inferior to Christianity. This is true because, in addition to other reasons, it does not hold firmly to the essential distinction between God and man.

Even when unwittingly a pluralist, the New Thought disciple is largely influenced by himself as monist. By his fundamental identification of the sinner with the holy God, the enormity of sin and its guilt is obscured, the idea of real moral authority and government is nullified, the voice of conscience proclaiming ill desert and penalty therefor is weakened, knowledge alone instead of both knowledge and moral power is the supreme need, the highest love, that of one person for another, is excluded, and the heart-stirring, conscience-rousing, soul-winning love of God in Christ for men is a chimera. The highest moral sanctions are lacking and also the genuine religious experience of the Christian type which is the mightiest moral dynamic.

We may now touch upon the attitude of New Thought to Christianity, to the Church, and to the Bible. We are told that the real Christianity has never been tried. But at last the hour has struck, the fullness of time has come, and Christianity appeared as New Thought comes riding in the chariot of the sun to illumine, cleanse, and beautify the world. So-called Christianity is a degenerate and a pervert. It has entirely misunderstood the mission of Jesus as he understood and proclaimed it. Men perverted his religion into a religion of dogma and of institutions. In its primitive period, before it became dogmatic and institutional, Christianity was vital and effective, but it soon lost its life and power. It

needs revitalizing. It needs to become incomparably more spiritual than it is. To this end it must be delivered from the thralldom of dogma, it must be removed from its intellectual and historical foundation, above all it must be rescued from sectarianism.

New Thought poses as the savior of Christianity. It proposes to save the Christian religion by offering itself as the only genuine Christianity. It claims that all its leading principles are to be found in the New Testament. It affirms that its ideas constitute the substance and essence of biblical Christianity.

Sometimes New Thought leaders say biting things about the Church and about the doctrines held by most Christians. Usually, however, there is no bitterness and no call to arms. The antagonism takes the form of what is suspiciously like a supercilious assumption of superiority. Sometimes they talk in a condescendingly benevolent and patronizing manner: The Church is not to be directly opposed but should rather be tolerated. The Churches, including even their denominationalism, are useful as a lower stage of religious development. The fact that they exist shows that they were needed; for nothing arises unless it is necessary and desirable; evolution reigns, and the series is an ascending one. (What now about Christianity's fall from its pristine purity?)

It would be unreasonable, therefore, to attack

the Church and its dogmas and institutions and denominationalism and unspirituality. To do so would be foolish also because resistance would only entrench this degenerate Christianity more deeply in the life of the world. That which is erroneous and wrong and harmful cannot be overcome and displaced by resistance, but only by love. Just as you must love a disease if you would extirpate it, so you must love the Church and its dogmas if you wish to see New Thought take the place of the Church and of "dogmatic Christianity." Let us cultivate a oneness of spirit with all the intellectual, external, formal, dry-as-dust systems of religion, and they will become our friends instead of our enemies. They will become so friendly, indeed, as to please us by disappearing from the face of the earth. We will love them into annihilation. Could one find a more striking example of *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re?*

New Thought is respectful to the Bible and often enthusiastic in praise of the grand, old Book. It claims to be in agreement with the Scriptures. The Bible is to it the greatest ethical and spiritual book in the world. It records the experiences and utterances of many of the greatest "practical idealists" in history. Particularly it presents to us the supreme idealist, Jesus of Nazareth. The Bible is the supreme book-revelation of God the real man. New Thought writers frequently quote

from the Bible. But they throw all sober principles of interpretation to the winds. They utterly despise the interpretations of Christian scholarship. They believe that what is known in the Christian world as scientific interpretation leads men astray, positively disqualifying them for a correct understanding of the Scriptures. For spiritual things are spiritually discerned. To interpret Scripture as one would ordinarily interpret human language is to be carnal; it is to bring the Bible down to the gross "objective plane," although it was produced upon the high and spiritual "subjective plane." New Thought seers look below the surface of Scripture and see the deeper meaning, the meaning that is "real." The results of this penetrative insight are often most surprising to men of common clay like biblical scholars and Christian commentators. Helpful, however, as the Bible is and highly to be prized, it is only one of many bibles; and anyway the chief source of knowledge is the inner light and the inner voice. The Christ within, the real man, your own real self is the light that is all-sufficient.

There is no need to lengthen this book by discussing the attitude of New Thought to Christianity, its creeds, its institutions, and its Bible. Information concerning that attitude is all the reader needs. Having received it, he is intelligent enough to form his own judgment and to take his own stand in respect to New Thought.

It is not within the province of this book to espouse any particular philosophy and champion any views as to the nature of ultimate reality, of the relation of the infinite to the finite, of mind to matter, of spirit to body, of the nature of subconsciousness, or to discuss ethical theory, or the concept of law, or the theory of evolution. The sole object of this book is to tell what New Thought has to say on these weighty themes and to judge of its value from the standpoint of self-consistency, intelligibility, and practicality.

In the judgment of the present writer the handwriting of Truth upon the wall of New Thought would be: Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. Not that it does not contain much precious truth or does not impart incalculable benefit to many of its votaries or is not a powerful ally of Christianity against materialism and worldliness.

New Thought is exposed to just censure rather because it propounds as a new philosophy of life a medley of ancient and, in important particulars, incongruous ideas, undigested and unassimilated, ideas whose mutual relations its sponsors do not discern and whose logical implications and consequences they do not perceive.

The head and front of New Thought's offending, however, is not that it mishandles noble ideas but that it offers its fundamentally self-contradicting philosophy as the basis for practical living and as the determining factor in the great-

est issues of life, and as the superior of and substitute for the Christian morality and the Christian religion.

New Thought contains truth and does good; nevertheless it is a menace. It is the good that is the enemy of the best. To say nothing about the possibilities of harm as well as of benefit in the sphere of therapeutics, it is not safe to let loose upon the world for practical application the idea that the real Jesus and the real Judas are absolutely identical, that there is no essential difference between Paul and Nero, between St. Francis of Assisi and Caesar Borgia, between the Virgin Mary and Herodias. The Christian does not believe that the vile purlieus of vice are the chosen abodes of Deity, that dens of infamy are courts of heaven, that the brothel is one of the rooms in the palace of the King. While hardly any New Thought writer would be brazen enough to put his doctrine in this terrible form, that is exactly what his doctrine amounts to.

Moral evil is regarded leniently, blandly, placidly. It is treated as mere ignorance; past evil is not to be regretted; penitent sorrow is frowned upon. Moral evil is the upward path to perfection. And the climax in this series of indulgences to the sinner is that there is no such thing as real evil, evil only seems to be bad. All is One and One is All, and the All-One is the All-Good.

Any philosophy or religion proclaimed as the

guide of life must be judged chiefly by its ethics and by its moral tendencies and moral influence. Christians cannot but believe that to quote the Bible in support of the outrageous ethics described above and in the preceding chapter and to cite Jesus as the supreme example of what New Thought stands for is nothing less than "to steal the livery of heaven to serve the devil in." If Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life," then New Thought, notwithstanding all its truth and beneficence, is either as ethics or as religion, to a serious extent false and pernicious.

APPENDIX

A few suggestions for the study of New Thought may be welcome. A man is not equipped for its study unless he has had some training in psychology and is acquainted with the history of philosophy, although, lacking these qualifications, extra hard-headed common sense will go a long way.

Before reading books that belong strictly to New Thought, it would be well to peruse "The Law of Psychic Phenomena," by T. J. Hudson (A. C. McClurg & Co.), and if possible, to read extensively in F. W. H. Myers' monumental work, "Human Personality." The perusal of "Psychotherapy," by Hugo Münsterberg (Moffat, Yard & Co.), a book by a scientific psychologist, could be read with profit both before the study of New Thought books and also subsequently to the reading of a dozen of them.

Coming to New Thought books in the strictest sense one might well begin with an excellent work by Henry Wood, "The New Thought Simplified" (Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard Company). It would perhaps be best to follow this by R. W. Trine's charming book, "In Tune with the Infinite" (T. Y. Crowell & Co.). Then to see to what lengths New Thought can really go one

should read that amazing display of rhetorical pyrotechnics, "The Discovery of a Lost Trail," by Charles B. Newcomb (Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard Co.). Next one should read, in order to complete the foundation of his study of New Thought, the following three books:

"The Mastery of Mind," by Henry Frank, (R. F. Fenno & Co.).

"The Philosophy of Self-Help," by S. D. Kirkham, (G. P. Putnam's Sons).

"Man and the Divine Order," by H. W. Dresser, (G. P. Putnam's Sons).

The student may now rove and browse at will in the pastures of New Thought literature. A short list of books is appended:

"Mental Healing," by L. E. Whipple, (The Metaphysical Publishing Co., New York).

"The Will to be Well," by C. B. Patterson, (Funk & Wagnalls Co.).

"Studies in the Thought World," by Henry Wood, (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.).

"Nerves in Disorder," by A. T. Schofield, (Moffat, Yard & Co.).

"Mind Power and Privileges," by A. B. Olston, (T. Y. Crowell & Co.).

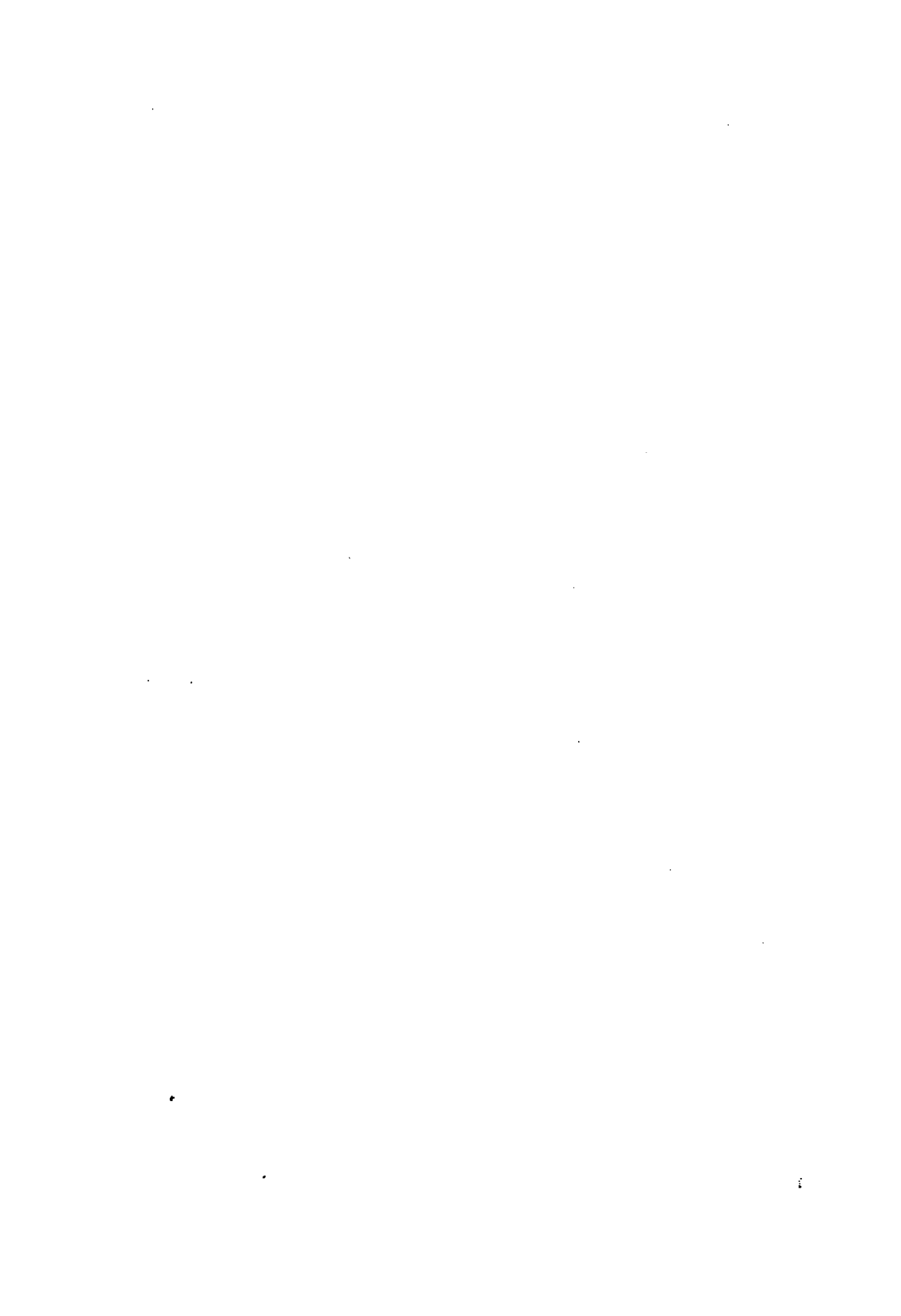
"Paths to the Heights," by Sheldon Leavitt, (T. Y. Crowell & Co.).

"What All the World's A-Seeking," by R. W. Trine, (T. Y. Crowell & Co.).

"From Poverty to Power," by James Allen, (R. F. Fenno & Co.).

"Mind Power," by W. W. Atkinson, (The Progress Co., Chicago).

The perusal of even these few books will familiarize the student of New Thought with its ideas, methods, ambitions, tone and temper. Of course if the reader wishes to pursue the matter still further, the number of New Thought books is large and is being constantly increased.

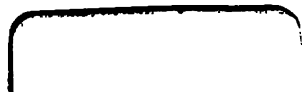




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