



# The Journal of Practical Metaphysics



DEVOTED TO

THE UNIFICATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND SPIRITUAL THOUGHT

AND THE

*NEW PHILOSOPHY OF HEALTH.*

HORATIO W. DRESSER, Editor.

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## WHAT IS FREEDOM?\*

BY HENRY WOOD.

AT the first glance the answer to this question may seem very simple, but deeper investigation will reveal its complexity. In the light of the New Thought the true interpretation of freedom is now possible. Generally the philosophies of the past have represented man as enslaved from without, the creature of circumstance and endowment. But human trammels are not objectively imposed. We may advance another step and declare that man is incapable of slavery except as he rivets his own fetters. But perhaps the saddest part of an almost universal servitude is that those who are bound are entirely oblivious to that fact.

Two external forms of slavery that have oppressed humanity in the past are now near their end. They are servitude of the body to an outside master, and a slavery of the aspirations of the soul in imposed religious forms, by human dictation and persecution. What long centuries have been embittered with bondage, inquisition and warfare in the effort to forcibly stamp man-made dogmatisms upon neighboring souls! What a strangling of tender aspirations, a chilling of warm affections, a

\* Abstract of an address delivered before the Metaphysical Club of Boston, Jan. 25, 1898.

rending of loving ties and a breaking of anxious hearts, in the vain endeavor to cast religion in rigid forms and force them on God's children!

Turning from the past, it now becomes us to inquire if freedom be yet complete, and if not, to find what is lacking. Are there shackles yet remaining, and if so, how shall they be broken? Let us note some of the subtle but very real forms of bondage that are still extant, and consider the means which may be employed for emancipation.

Perhaps the most universal servitude is a blind subservience to convention and tradition. Many seem to be constantly in fear, lest they shall be anything but a perfect copy of some one else. They avoid any show of originality, and only can move in the deeply-worn grooves of others. Only he who is original can be free. No one else is quite like you, and it is your duty and privilege to act out yourself.

It is related of Procrustes, a celebrated highwayman of Attica, that he tied all his victims upon an iron bed, and stretched those of short measure, while those who were too long he cut off. Would that the operations of that iron bed had been confined to Attica! The world needs every unconventional character, and is not complete without him. To the degree that he is stretched or cut off there is a distinct loss, not only of freedom, but of accomplishment for himself and his kind. The great benefactors of humanity have been those who have been brave enough to be original.

Again, fashion is a social cage, and few there be who dare to beat against its bars, much less to break them. In many ways it is a tyrant. It often demands a tribute which robs one of health, comfort, time, usefulness, and even life, in the vain attempt to be and do exactly the correct conventional thing. While none of us are quite free from this kind of slavery, we may increasingly assert our liberty, and strive in some measure to emancipate both ourselves and those around us. It is important to hold up the ideal of freedom, even if the same be not at once fully realized.

Is the taskmaster some habit, physical appetite, or propensity? Once for all break the bonds. No one can deliver you but yourself. If you reply, "God only is able to break the chain," remember that it is God in you more than outside. He works in you "to will and to do." The divine strength is only available for you as it flows through you. These seeming tyrants that would put us in prison are not real powers, for when steadily faced they retreat and melt away. The infinite life in you *is you*, and is superior to all bonds and able to burst all limitations. It is when man separates himself from God that he becomes weak. The soul must be superior to all entanglements with environment; it must live in and from its own divine centre.

We need a knowledge of the law of free growth, and this includes a well-digested philosophy of the power of the thinking faculty. We must learn to put away beliefs of the power of slaveholders, seen and unseen. Let us cease harboring disorder, inharmony, wrong, fear, and weakness, if we would lessen their dominion and stimulate our own growth and liberty. We lend ourselves as servants and yield ourselves as captives to unwelcome things that we hold to be expected, feared, and even possible. Conventional limitations and apprehensions are uttered upon every side, and even stamped upon everything about us. Eternal vigilance in keeping the door of consciousness is the price of liberty.

As we recognize the divine law of human growth, and the inherent power that is lodged in the ideal man, we may wield them in proportion to our conformity to the universal order. The law works within. The new heavens and new earth which are promised are to come through a change, not in them but in ourselves. Our eyes are to be adjusted to what already is.

Freedom and happiness are the chief end and aim of all creatures. But they are impossible so long as bondage to the mistaken whims of an earthy materialism continues dominant. Our consciousness must be lifted above the ever-revolving treadmill of shifting appearances.

How the world groans under the thralldom of pain and suffering! They appear to be unrelenting antagonists and destroyers of peace and liberty, but the underlying and real tyrant is ignorance.

The real and inner self is all the time seeking expansion — a loosening up and free course. Opposing such expansion by the usual repression causes pain. We therefore unwittingly make our own suffering and rivet our own shackles. There must be more relaxation. New, high and idealistic thought often causes temporary physical pain by its expansive force upon shrunk tissues. The philosophy of this is almost universally misunderstood. We should mildly second its wholesome effort by concordant vibration instead of making it more acute and lasting by fighting it.

The spirit must be given free course and rigidity loosened before the message of the pain-monitor can be interpreted. The stiff and oppressive bonds of dogma, of fixed and final opinions and external authority, solidify and make more dense and obstructive the human organism.

Pain does not indicate death, but a vigorous, abounding life, whose pulsations are striving to overcome obstructions and press its vitality into harmonious expression. In proportion as we count it as antagonistic or an evil, so it becomes to us. The same bounding waves may either drown a man or buoyantly bear his bark onward to a desired haven. The waves are the same, but the infinite difference is determined by his attitude and action. What, then, should we do with pain and evil? Be submerged and enslaved, or cooperating with their normal, even though negative usefulness be borne by them to ideal liberty?

All real and intrinsic forces are tending towards our freedom and harmony, but if we turn about and oppose them we are fighting against that infinite Love and Law we call God. Thence it is that even within the confines of our own organism our enemies are of our own invoking. The mission of the Prophet of Nazareth was not to formulate a theological sys-

tem, or define church polity, but to proclaim liberty and open prison doors.

Note some other taskmasters.

Prejudice is a veritable oppressor, but it is so common that we take its bondage in some degree quite for granted. How little of the calm, judicial temper do we meet! How few can see the various sides of a question rather than a single aspect! How Truth, instead of being sought as "a pearl of great price" for its intrinsic value and beauty, is warped, colored and distorted, until it becomes actually false! How *our* sect, *our* party, *our* union, *our* nation are expanded to cover the whole human horizon! Nothing then is visible except fragments and shattered proportions. It is only the whole and rounded truth that sets free.

Not the least among the various forms of slavery is that of perverted ethical standards. As a nation we groan under a bondage more subtle but scarcely less rigorous than that of the children of Israel in Egypt. Man cannot trust his fellow-man. The East is distrustful of the West, and the West of the East. Party maligns party, and section, section. Capital and labor frown at each other, and a general suspicion of unworthy motives embitters politics, economics, and sociology. Charges of corruption and hard epithets echo and reecho in our legislative halls, and a kind of sullen pessimism casts its dark shadow over our fair land. All this because we are in a state of transition. We have sailed away from the shore of former things and lost our faith in the arbitrary dogmatisms of the past; but the great majority have not yet landed upon the farther shore of positive principle, and recognized the beneficence of the Established Order. Pessimism is servitude. The pessimist makes his own world and blackens it, and then dwells therein. He thinks that God made it that way, and thus cheats himself out of everything he might possess. He hugs his chains until they bear him down.

But let us turn from negation to that which is positive.

Optimism is freedom! Idealism is divine! God made the constitution of man the supplement to himself. A religion that is not optimistic drags man down, and is really not religion at all. Man is constituted to look up, and as he does so he grows upward. He becomes molded by his own ideals, and if they are high they are in the direction of true freedom.

Again, the man who cultivates hope is on the road to a larger freedom. It is a divine human faculty. Animals live in the present; but a true, intelligent faith brings future good into nearby view and even realization. People who always look down, or even on a level, characterize the uplookers as visionaries. But pray where would the world be today had it not been for the visionaries of the past?

In his beautiful essay on the education of hope James Freeman Clarke says of Columbus:

His expectations were considered extravagant, his schemes futile; the theologians opposed him with texts out of the Bible, and he wasted seven years waiting in vain for encouragement at the court of Spain. He applied unsuccessfully to the governments of Venice, Portugal, Genoa, France and England. Practical men said, "It can't be done." "He is a visionary." Doctors of divinity said, "He is a heretic, he contradicts the Bible." Isabella, being a woman, and a woman of sentiment, wished to help him; but her confessor said, "No."

Having noted the hopefulness of hope, let us now briefly explore the realm of the imagination in its relation to freedom. The imaging faculty has a wonderful creative potency. When turned toward lofty ideals it is like a magic wand. It performs the office of a former, or sub-creator. He who vividly dreams of a better world than he sees about him will go to work to bring it about. It leads to all invention, and even cold mechanical science must have its guidance. It increases man's freedom by giving him a vastly greater range of thought and action.

There is another human faculty, differing, though closely allied to the imagination, which is known as the intuition. A generous freedom is impossible with this power dwarfed or overshadowed. Its rank is higher than the intellect, which it is

able to beautify and illumine in every department of life. We live in a high-pressure intellectual age. When such over-development is linked to a feeble, spiritual perception there is a disproportion which amounts to a veritable servitude. The mind and memory may be crowded with unrelated facts and conventional learning, while the deeper and diviner nature is shrunk for want of that nourishment which only can make it rounded and fully free. When that which should stand at the head is made secondary the laws which are written in the human constitution are violated, and growth otherwise free and spontaneous hindered. The intuition is the judicial department of the soul, and should be as free and easy in its working as a delicate pair of balances.

Spiritual development must precede individual liberty. One must be able to make a daily flight among ideals, else he is "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined." We must strive to escape from the sombre prison-house of an earthy realism. If here self-incarcerated one will at length take on its color, absorb its quality and load himself with its gravity. Dogmatism is servitude. It is always inconsistent with an open and child-like plasticity which turns upward to catch the delicate reflection of eternal truth. The seers and poets of the world have been the most untrammelled and unweighted among the sons of men. Their range sweeps outward and upward among eternal principles and immortal ideals. The glance of their eagle eye penetrates the walls which hedge in the duller vision of the realist. They are more scientific than the scientist, moral than the moralist, religious than the religionist. What others measure by meets and bounds their elastic and keener sense weighs at a glance. They see that life is greater than events, and that all things have a fitting place in the perfect whole.

Advance yet higher to that province of freedom which deals with and interprets the Divine Mind. The prophets are those who have been intimate with God. They have soul contact with the Oversoul, and reverently but calmly walk on ground from

which the world has debarred itself, as being not only too holy but unattainable to human feet. They step over the boundary which men have set up between themselves and the Divine, and feel the pulse-throb of the Father. They clearly hear the soft, sweet harmony which is commonly inaudible.

The servitude of a misdirected worship often puts *things* in the place of the inner spiritual life. There is a disposition to blindly adore the Bible, the Sabbath, the sacrament, and the creed, as though they had a holiness aside from their elevating influence upon man. These and other related forms of subtle idolatry bind men with unbreakable, even though unconscious cords, and constitute a real bondage. Superstition, although greatly lightened in the current era, is one of the most unscrupulous of all the great invisible slaveholders. As already intimated, only the finding of God can introduce the most perfect liberty. Where shall he be found? If he be exclusively shut up in a single Book, found only in the sanctuary, manifest only for a single day in the week, can there be liberty? But there is a mount of transfiguration in every human constitution, and the full freedom of its summit includes the ability to see God everywhere. Finally, supreme freedom exists only in perfect love. Specialized love is but the kindergarten for the training and development of the broader and universal love. Mounting higher, it becomes universal by an activity that is all inclusive. Personal affection is not lessened, but only grandly submerged. Love's glorious climax will be attained only when it blossoms into universal recognition as the One Force of the universe. All other forces, qualities, and attributes will at last be found to be but colored lens effects of the one Principle, varying with each new step in the upward path of progress. The successive views through mediums yet in advance, as plane by plane they gain new transparency, will gradually correct former distorted views of the One Entity. Here is the heart and motive of the coming great ideal, Freedom. A recognition of such an Ultimate is a recognition of God and an entrance to heaven.

## CHARACTER BUILDING.

BY HORATIO W. DRESSER.

WHEN one awakes to thoughtful self-consciousness in this great world of physical law, order and necessity, where events succeed each other according to a rhythm which we did not arrange, and where we seem to be mere involuntary observers of pains and pleasures which are forced upon us, the inevitable question is, What may I do? What part, if any, can I play in the great drama of creation? Am I in truth a mere helpless spectator cast about by nature's forces, a mere centre of reflex action at the mercy of rigid fate and changeless law? It seems so at first. One is almost appalled by one's helplessness. Nature has been here for ages and has perfected her organism. We are born into an environment where physical and intellectual habits are firmly fixed. We would have preferred better physiques and better parentage, but we have to take ourselves at this late day as fate has chosen for us. Social customs, educational methods and intellectual pursuits are so firmly established that there is little opportunity for innovation. Human nature itself has a character determined by a higher power, and is very much the same the world over. Even our desires and tastes seem to be not quite our own, but are tendencies which we find ready made and almost thoughtlessly lived by.

An appeal to psychology gives but little more satisfaction. Our feelings or perceptions are distinctively our own, but still we are compelled to feel and to be conscious. I do not *choose* to perceive the world of nature; nor do I will to become self-conscious. But all this I find as a gift of my existence. The power of paying attention is voluntary, to be sure. I can give

immediate direction to my mind and turn from a painful thought to a pleasant one. Yet even attention is not always at one's command. Sometimes pain is so intense that one is *forced* to pay attention to it, even though one knows that by so doing one's suffering is increased. If I desire to speak, the process is largely mysterious, wonderful, and involuntary, whereby my thought gives rise to the movement of the vocal chords and lips. Nor am I quite certain that even the desire is voluntary, for something suggested it. During our thinking process, do we not rather observe ideas as they come into the mind than compel them to come? And where do they come from? From past involuntary perceptions stored up in the memory, ideas we have heard or read, feelings we have enjoyed or suffered despite our wills, or they have come through the mysterious process known as inspiration. If I have an emotion or thought I must wait until a word *occurs* to me before I can express it, for words refuse to come simply at my beck and call. Language itself I find ready made and at hand. I seem to be a sort of involuntary spectator of my own involuntary self, engaged in a drifting process of feeling and thought, in which one idea leads to another by the law of suggestion or association. Sometimes one can recall an idea at will. Again one has no power over it; and if I *try* to create, to imagine, I may seek in vain for one fancy, one air-castle which is not in some way suggested by this great stream of involuntary experience. For even if I think of a dreamy realm among the clouds, peopled by beings with fluid bodies, where time runs backward and space has fine dimensions, I am still drawing my materials from knowledge of present day life. I can create absolutely nothing out of hand or out of mind.

If in despair at finding anything voluntary I turn at last to the realm of inmost emotions, I learn that my pains and pleasures, my hates and loves are called out by some incident or some person other than this inmost self. I love and hate quite without reason, and you must not expect a man to account for

his tastes. And who am I that thus loves, observes, and thinks, and seeks something voluntary in human life? Did I make myself in any respect, and would my conduct really be voluntary after all, even if I could at this late day freely choose what to perceive and what to ignore, if I could imagine with no food for the fancy to play upon?

What are you trying to make out, some one asks—that the world is a mere machine where every event is fated to happen, where the effort to build character is an illusion, and where we are not ourselves at all as we now believe? I reply that I am not trying to make out anything, but simply to state facts which every one may verify—facts which seem to me of the profoundest significance in interpreting human life. I ask you to pass with me in your thought one stage beyond where introspection usually goes. I ask you to consider the very ego itself behind the great stream of consciousness; for before we can build up character intelligently and permanently we must know what the self is that builds.

I shall try to show that these facts concerning our inner life are just such conditions as are needed for fullest moral and spiritual development. But I have not yet fully stated these facts. This is but one-half the story. The other half is the untold history of the soul. This has been the neglected factor in human thinking. We have laid too much stress on environment. Nowadays it is the fashion to lay emphasis upon the thought process. But even this is insufficient.

So much has been said and written in recent years about the power of the mind over the body, the influence of mental atmospheres, and of harmful and helpful thoughts that many have grown weary of the subject, and are earnestly seeking to gain this more fundamental knowledge of the soul. In the first burst of enthusiasm the importance of mere thought has been greatly overestimated, as if it were possible to accomplish anything we desire simply by thinking or affirming it to be so. Experience surely does not confirm this belief. There is a vast

difference between thinking and actual accomplishment, between merely *believing* or affirming, and not only expressing but also *being* the virtue we believe. One might sit still for hours wishing one's self in the next room and thinking about the steps necessary to take one there. Yet until one should not only will to move but also *start*, one would remain in the same position. In order to accomplish anything in the external world, we know that *work* must be done. The same law must hold in the inner world. A large percentage of our thoughts pass in and out of mind without making much impression upon us. Ideals are held in thought and affirmed, and good resolutions without number pass through our consciousness. But a resolution alone is of little consequence. We must *do* something. We must so think and so act that a deep and lasting impression shall be made upon mind, life and character. In other words, there are three stages through which we must pass—knowing, doing, *being*. The majority of our fellow-men are still in the first stage; they know, but do not *do*. Many are actively trying to live righteous lives, to *do* the will of the Father.

In this discussion we are concerning ourselves so far as possible with that part of us which can really *be* and really act, and I shall have to ask your indulgence if, as a pioneer in this inmost realm of human life, I encumber the discussion with the uncertainties of the experimenter.

Let us turn once more to the stream of consciousness which we have found largely involuntary and baffling. Let us try to catch the very process of activity in its inception, that we may learn what deeds make for character and what acts unmake us. Note that in this baffling thought process all that we hold dear in life is present. Personality is here, love is here, attention, volition, choice, the soul, companionship; but in a very different sense from that formerly believed when it was thought that God existed apart from the world and man was independent of him. When closely scrutinized, the facts simply mean that not even in our most sacred experiences, not even when

we seem to be most wholly alone or most truly ourselves, do we possess one thought, one volition independent of our environment, apart from the Life of which all movement and all consciousness is a sharing. Everything is bound up inextricably with everything else. Everything is related, and no part is to be described or explained apart from the whole, not even the freedom of the will. Our philosophy must then take account of all these relations. All that we think and all that we do is partly self and partly other than self. Freedom itself would not be free without laws and conditions of freedom. Man feels bound by law only so long as he fails to understand it. He rebels because of action and reaction when he is ignorant. But when he becomes wise he rejoices that as he sows so must he reap, for without this law he would not know what to depend on. When the soul awakes to an understanding of its powers it feels bound by no law. It makes its own destiny; it commands circumstance; it is the builder and maker of character, the master of fate.

What we really desire, therefore, when we ask ourselves in all seriousness, What is freedom? is not independence to follow out our caprice, to be wilful, but to live at peace and in harmony with what we have; to be wisely and happily adjusted to it, and to press onward to the realization of higher ideals through gradual evolution. It is ever the man that *understands* who is free. It is the man of character that moves the world. And the basis of that power and of that understanding is recognition of what his inmost power is. This apparently helpless spectator carried down the stream of thought like a stick of wood floating in a river, is just the man of power he is *because* he lives in that stream. Out from the deep soul-centre in each of us proceeds all that regulates life, so far as we play a part in it. It is a *little* centre, a mere point of energy, *yet the most powerful centre of life's activity*; and the whole clue to life's mystery is bound up in the fact that we exert ourselves at this centre, that potentially it is that part of us which shall in due time *master* all else.

But to observe the soul in the process of activity is like trying to grasp the river as it flows. I therefore ask you to call the imagination into play and picture yourself as temporarily outside the stream of thought looking down upon it. Imagine yourself seated on the bank of a river on a beautiful summer's day. You are away on a vacation, and feel free from care. There is nothing to disturb you. You have decided to let the future provide for itself. You are seated there in a comfortable attitude, peacefully watching the rapidly flowing stream, its little eddies and rivulets, its calm spots and its rapids. You are for the time being like a great sage standing upon a mountain top, forever gazing out upon the play of the world; simply the observer, calm, restful, and in perfect peace.

I lay great stress upon this first stage, that of the peaceful observer, because without inner calmness, without poise one may not hope to understand and develop character in this deepest sense. One must reach the stage where one can inhibit impulse, where one can calmly pause before an angry man, resist the temptation to pay him back in his own coin and send out instead the spirit of love. To do this means that one has attained *self-control*, that one can say to one's lower self, *Peace, be still!* and be obeyed. For the man of character is the man of power; he is the one who concentrates and regulates his forces. The basis of this self-regulation is this calm centre within, and this calmness may be developed by cultivating the power to observe in the quiet manner above described.

At the present moment, for example, become this calm observer looking out on the play of the world. Say to yourself, *Peace, be still!* then wait and watch. This mass of sensations, of light, heat, cold, sound, hardness, coming from our immediate environment, and the feelings coming from our own bodies, represent the superficial layer in this ever-changing stream of consciousness on whose banks you are seated as the observer. This is the plane of physical consciousness, the realm of impulse, of the feelings which make us aware that we live in the

visible world among beings like ourselves. Then comes the realm of thought about these feelings, the ideas suggested by our life in the world and with each other. We not only feel, we not only live, but we know that we feel, and have ideas or beliefs distinctively our own. If, then, you look one plane further down into the thought stream, beneath this surface which tells you that you are physically present in this room, you will find the thoughts which your presence here suggests. Out from the great realm of memory come the ideas which you have read and thought on these subjects, and you are carrying on a sort of semi-conscious thought process of your own independent of the one this lecture suggests. Now and then your thought wanders away from the subject, you ask yourself if you ought not to be at home, or problems arise which you would like time to consider. But finally the thought becomes more quiet, and you reach the plane of deep, settled conviction beneath this realm of passing thoughts and emotions. Always you find yourself *there* if you look. Doubts and trials may come into your life superficially. But down deep within you always have faith, you always believe and love whatever your lips may say by way of doubt and criticism. Down deeper still you find individuality, ambition, longing to accomplish. You are restless to be doing something; you feel the pressure of a self within that is only partly evolved. Deeper yet, what do you find? Is it not the great omnipresent Life of the universe itself, welling up within and seeking expression? Is it not the presence of this Life within you which accounts for all your struggles for perfection, your ambition to develop character and do some work of consequence in the world? If so, then you have touched the deepest level. Character is not to be built up out of nothing. Our ideals are not to be thought out at the dictates of some caprice; but *here within* the real ego is already latent. It is like the dormant life of a rosebud pressing within and seeking to come forth. The secret of life when you have sounded the stream of consciousness to its lowest depth is to move harmo-

niously with the current which you find there. The best result that can come from the cultivation of these moments of calm contemplation is the discovery of this deep undercurrent of life. Ordinarily the mind is too active to perceive it. If one tries to force the mind to be still, one is not likely to touch this deeper centre. But by quietly observing, by turning away from physical sensation and the active pursuit of ideas, one may quietly settle down to harmony with it.

But how can one thus harmonize the thought with the deep moving of the Spirit? How can one take the current of life when the tide serves?

This question leads us to a consideration of the second stage in our introspective process. You are not only an observer of life's play, but also a chooser. Always in the marked experiences of life you are conscious of alternatives. When the angry man comes to you, you may return anger or send out love. When you see a person in suffering or in danger, side by side with the prompting to hasten to his relief comes the temptation to wait and let some one else do it. All through the day and every day that we live opportunities are coming up before the observer for choice or decision. How easily the choice is made! How quickly we take the selfish course, and what stupendous results follow one of these little acts of choice! Is not the entire moral life summed up in this series of opportunities, which we take or lose? What more could we ask of ourselves than the ability calmly to wait as observers until we should persuade ourselves to choose the wiser way, take the unselfish course, and thus make every deed tell in the endeavor to develop character? What more could the universe ask of us than that we should act up to the best guidance we have, be true to the higher self?

But we know perfectly well that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. We know that we ought to be true to the higher prompting, but somehow we let the opportunities pass. What is the reason? Are we perverse? I think not. I think the

majority of people are earnestly trying to do better and to be better; to pass to what I have called the third stage where they shall not only believe, but do and *be* good. We do nearly as well as we know how. The difficulty is that an important domain of our nature has been misunderstood. In order to consider this obscurest part of the character-building process, let us go one step farther in our analysis of the thought stream.

We have noted the fact that it is not enough simply to will or choose. We must also make an effort, accomplish work; that is, behind the power to observe and to choose is the ability to *act*, a centre of spiritual force so great that it can *master* circumstances.

Take, for example, the nervous man. He is rushing along at full speed, spending all his energy. Suddenly in one of those decisive moments which mark a turning point in life, the folly of the whole procedure comes over him. He determines to be moderate and takes himself actively in hand. Perhaps he has resolved a hundred times before to overcome his nervousness; but circumstances once more swept him on. This time he realizes that the whole matter is in his own hands, that the circumstances will not change until *he* changes them; moreover, that his soul has the power to change them, that it is potentially a supreme master, but he has been unconscious of its power. Accordingly he stops himself in the midst of his haste, and in order to obtain full control makes himself walk at first *very slowly*. He does not accomplish this without encountering great opposition. Always when we take a great opportunity there is resistance to be met and mastered — the resistance offered by habit, by the body, or by selfishness. The essential is to know that we have the power to step in and control our forces, but have not exercised it, or at least only in part. How is it possible to make any progress until we do thus decisively take ourselves in hand?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## WHAT IS INTUITION?

BY C. STANILAND WAKE.

A FAIR idea of the notion of intuition prevalent among evolutionists may be gathered from the statement that "intuition perceives necessary truths because truths so distinguished express relations that are simple, constant and familiar, and from which all contingencies are therefore excluded." Intuition is regarded as a perception of relations, not of objects, and it enters into all our judgments. But it is not an *à priori* form of thought; as the philosophy of evolution "finds that the element which is *à priori* to the individual has its origin and explanation in the experience of the race." Such is the case even with the intuitions of space and time, which "are constructed of experiences which lie so far back in the forgotten past that their elements are scarcely to be detected." Intuitions, no less than aptitudes and tendencies, are thus accumulated and transmitted experiences of the race. This is evidently not a complete explanation of the nature of intuition in general, whatever may be the case with particular intuitions. These must be referred to some essential principle of our being, and the missing factor is sometimes referred to as "spiritual," intuition being then described as "spiritual perception."

To this view it may be objected that, whatever sense is ascribed to the term "spiritual," this term and "intuitional" are not usually recognized as synonymous. We speak of "intuitive perception," and the very use of the word "perception" implies that intuition has a mental element which in the last analysis may be found to be simply intellectual. Its mentality

undoubtedly establishes a relationship of some kind between intuition and reason, and yet the former would seem to be more intimately allied with instinct. Some light may perhaps be thrown on the subject by a consideration of the difference between instinct and reason, or rather, between the mental processes which result in instinctive action in the one case and in rational action in the other case. That these processes have much in common is required by the facts, that they both result in action, and that the aim of activity is with each the supply of some want. In the case of reason, however, a series of ideas passes through the mind, connected with the means of attaining the desired end, which is apparently wanting in the case of instinct. Nevertheless, there must be *some* consideration of the fitness of means to end in instinct, otherwise there would be no certainty in its action, and the resulting act would not be instinctive, in the ordinary sense. There must indeed be the formation of a judgment of relation, although it is not consciously arrived at, the action accompanying it being performed spontaneously in response to a feeling of organic need. Here we have a fundamental point of connection between instinct and reasoning, the latter process really consisting of several mental operations such as take place in imitative action consciously and in instinctive action unconsciously, "following quickly one after another; in other words, the forming of *several* successive judgments of relation instead of a single judgment."

This distinction between the several phases of mental activity called instinct, imitation, and reason can hardly be more concisely stated than in the following passage which I may quote from my "Chapters on Man":

In instinct, the action makes instantaneous response to the sensation which arouses mental activity. In simple thought, not only actual objective perception, but a judgment of the relation of the sensation accompanying it to a past sensation, intervenes between the perception and the resulting action. In reasoning, both the perceptions and the accompanying judgments formed in the mind are multiplied, and therefore the external action resulting from this phase of mental activity is necessarily less rapid in its response

to sense impression than in either imitation or instinct. Viewed in this light, the difference between the several phases of mental activity resolves itself into one of duration between the original sensation and the resulting action, which follows the more slowly or rapidly as the objects of thought, about which the mind becomes active in relation to the sensation, are few or many.

In each of these cases mental activity is attended with an act of judgment, simple, as in instinct, or complex, with more or less objective perception, as in reasoning. Nor is it different with intuition. When we speak of intuitive action, we mean action following an unconscious act of judgment, which we regard as intuitive because unconsciously performed. So in "intuitive perception of truth," an act of judgment is really required, though there is nothing but the perception to make us cognizant of it. Even when speaking of "intuition of danger," a judgment is implied having reference to the relation between ourselves, that is, our organism, and the source from which the danger springs. The act of judgment is in each of these cases spontaneous, and hence intuition and instinct are closely allied processes. But they are not the same. Instinct may be described as educated intuition, that is, the product of experience, and it may have passed through the stages of imitative thought and habit before becoming reduced to the simple act of judgment in which instinct resembles intuition. Reason is indeed resolved into instinct by the elimination in the course of repeated experiences of various stages of mental action, the fundamental psychical fact arrived at as the result of which process is an act of judgment. This cannot be got rid of, because it is essential to all mental activity, and hence we shall not be wrong in regarding it as that which is usually spoken of as intuition.

This conclusion will be objected to by those who regard intuition as a kind of mental alertness, which makes the person possessing it "capable of knowing without deduction"; by which is meant in the absence of reasoning. But intuition is not actual knowledge, nor is the capacity possessed by "the intuitive" that of knowing. It is the capability of recognizing truth when presented to the mind; that is, of performing an act of judgment

without a process of reasoning as to the rightness or otherwise of what it is asked to accept as true. The presentation as well as the judgment is in ordinary intuition unconscious. Hence intuition may be described as clear intellectual vision, giving a perception of truth on mere presentation without meditation or contemplation; that is, without reflection. Intuition as thus understood is intellectual insight, and appears subjectively as spontaneous right judgment. From the objective side, however, it is right action, and intuition is therefore the very principle of truth or rightness, that which underlies all mental activity, under its dual aspect of internal impression and external expression.

As thus explained it is evident that, different as are their phenomena, intuition and reason are intimately allied. Reason has to do with phenomena, be these regarded as objective or subjective, the consideration of which in consciousness leads to knowledge of truth; this being recognized immediately on the completion of the reasoning process. This completion is marked by a final act of judgment, equivalent to its simple judgment of intuition, which differs from reasoning, as we have seen, by the omission of the various steps that give reasoning its special character. The final judgment in the latter process is exactly the same as that which could have been reached without these steps if the facts they are intended to establish had already been known, either expressly or by implication. Intuition may be declared therefore to contain within itself the principles of reasoning. It is indeed merely a name for the deductive side of the complete reasoning process, in its widest general expression. As usually spoken of, intuition is in reality merely a term to denote deduction without conscious thought, and without reference to any antecedent process of induction. But the term might well be applied to the mental process which, proceeding from principles firmly established by scientific analysis and demonstration, affirms by deduction the existence of truths not recognized by the ordinary mind. True intuition is percep-

tion by the eye of reason, and hence it is both the alpha and the omega of intellectual activity, using this phrase in its widest psychical acceptation. If reason is the function of spirit, then intuition is actually "spiritual perception"; but this is a matter which requires independent consideration.

One thing can be said with certainty. Intuition may be educated, just as the physical sight can be educated; hence with some persons its action has a much wider range than with others. Thus intuition in its highest phase can be exercised only by those in whom, through natural gift or acquired faculty, it exists in its most developed state. With such persons the mental principle sees deeper or farther than is possible under other conditions; as the fine-edged razor will penetrate farther into an opposing obstacle than a dull-edged one, or an ordinary knife. Intuition, like the steel blade, has degrees of fineness, and accordingly persons differ in their intuitive power. It is the same with "good judgment," as we should expect from the fact of intuition being akin to judgment, and thus men of great intuition are as rare as great judges. Both alike—and this is true of all men of real genius—see the truth at a glance, although they may require the knowledge of principles, and the art of language to explain to others the bearing of such principles on the conclusions they have formed. Such conclusions are rational in their nature, though intuitive in inception; and intuition must be regarded as the actual activity of the rational faculty, or in other words, the basic function of the organism as the seat of psychical activity. It is "mental" insight; not after a process of reasoning, or of simple contemplation, which implies, however, equivalent psychical action, but *at sight*. "At sight"\* is a condition of intuition, but its essential characteristic is insight, which is the expression of the unity which underlies all organic existence.

\* See Dr. Paul Carns on "At Sight" in *The Monist*, Vol. II., No. 4.

## EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

### HEALING.

#### I.

THE subject of healing is in many respects the most difficult question with which the student of the New Thought has to deal, since there is such wide diversity of opinion in regard to it, and because in its higher aspects the experience itself is in large part indescribable. There is much that will not be told, and much that would be of little value even if it could be put into words, for the reason that each one must perceive its reality through individual experience in order to know what it means. Nearly all the problems of life are in fact involved in this question; the whole subject is so complicated, and in a sense still so obscure, that one is at a loss where to begin, what to regard as accepted facts, and what to reject as mere theory. Glowing accounts of cures by the mental method may be had in abundance, and there are thousands who are ready to give evidence that they have been not only entirely healed, but permanently converted to the new doctrine. But the simple facts, shorn of personal bias and stated in scientific language, are not so readily obtainable. Yet as the same difficulties are in large part encountered whenever one seeks fundamental truth, one may as well make the effort here as elsewhere. In this paper I shall therefore treat the subject in a general, often in a skeptical and somewhat superficial, way, approaching the real problem by degrees, and suggesting meanwhile some of the secondary questions which the central problem itself presents.

But first let me confess the sense of wonder which attaches to the entire process even after one has made it the study of years. The subject is in fact very much like that of any specific attempt to wrest from the universe every detail of one of its secrets—something always escapes us. When nature awakes from her long winter's sleep, and everything expands and grows in the light of the warm summer's sun, what causes this marvelous change—can anybody tell? The scientific man may enumerate the steps whereby the great transformation takes place, just as he may analyze the physical basis of life. But what is the dormant *life* itself, what is the hidden force without which the nicely adapted substances are mere collections of chemicals? Apparently we know a great deal about every factor except the one which somehow animates and uses them all.

Likewise with the phenomena of healing. One may easily describe the general conditions of healing, the experience of becoming open to spiritual power, of directing this power to the patient through concentration or suggestion, as well as the physiological process accompanying the mental change. But are we not a bit hasty when, neglecting the real point at issue, we confidently affirm that one factor in particular has wrought the cure? This favorite factor of ours—faith, auto-suggestion, telepathy, the prayer of silence, or what not—like that of a drug heralded as a great specific, may have been but the last in a long chain of helpful causes, which played only the culminating part. Or the case might have been like that mentioned by Dr. Hillis of Chicago in a recent sermon on healing:

In Iowa a gentleman at whose home a reception was given wheeled out to the porch the chair of his mother, who had not taken a step for many years. During the gayeties of the evening a hanging lamp fell with a crash to the floor. When the flames had been subdued and quiet restored, the mother was found standing in the room, having lost her rheumatism and her pain. Years before nature had cured the ailment; but the woman waited for some event or person to rouse the dormant will. Had some scientist or faith healer or theosophist happened along, a cure almost miraculous would have lent the healer great fame.

Obviously the matter of credit must be set aside, for at best the physician is only an instrument of the healing power. Admittedly every slightest circumstance, the entire state of one's being at the time is involved in a case of genuine healing; and in order to return a full answer to the question, one must consider the nature of mind, the constitution of matter, the nature of pleasure and pain, of health and disease, the ultimate meaning of suffering and the experiences of healers of different schools.

Let us, then, consider a number of specific cases and examine them as much in detail as possible, in order to tabulate the various factors; for the day is past when one may safely generalize about mental healing, or even about disease. Diseases can no more be classed under head as "errors of the mind" than as physical entities, or under the terms of some compromise between these extremes. A man's trouble may have as little foundation as the suggestions which caused the death of the English criminal, in the instance so often referred to, or it may be cured by one wise suggestion. His own nature, his whole complaining, nervous or apprehensive habit of thought may be involved, so that nothing less than an entire change of living will suffice; in which case he must be gradually taught to see that he creates his own misery. Or the trouble may be so largely physical that mere enlightenment would never cure him. In all cases of mental cure the M. D. is ready to doubt if there really was a disease, and in the same way the mental healers stand by each other in opposition to medical practice. According to some, disease comes from germs; others deem it in many cases the result of obsession. Some will tell you that all diseases come from troubles of the stomach; in other words, indigestion and insufficient mastication. But further back is the nervous habit which caused one to eat hurriedly. Some diseases, like typhoid fever, apparently have to run their course, even under mental treatment, although they may, as in the case of grip, be hurried through in a few hours. An easily influenced

person may be cured far more readily of a dread disease than an obstinate one can be relieved of some slight malady. Only daughters and wealthy ladies who board prove to be hard people to cure, while those who have no time to be sick are scarcely in need of a physician. A credulous person is an easy subject for mental treatment, where the highly cultivated intellect deems the therapeutic suggestions absurd, and is therefore slow to respond. The disease of a baby may come entirely from its mother, who must be healed before the child can be cured. And so on through a long list of interesting facts, all pointing to the conclusion that few cases are alike, while in most instances neither the disease nor its cure is to be described apart from the *temperament* of the individual.

But let us take a typical case and consider the factors of cure in the patient. The sufferer is troubled by some malady which originated in fear, nervous shock, suppressed emotion, accident, haunting mental pictures, or some other cause which threw mind and body out of harmony. The first trouble was probably of slight consequence, and might have been either mental or physical, or both; but through misunderstanding of the sensation of pain, and by wrong treatment, it has now been magnified into a disturbance which the medical doctors cannot cure and which the patient fears may lead to some fatal disease. For usually those who try the mental cure turn to it as a last resort. They have lost faith in drugs, and this is a decided gain. They are uncertain about the new method, but are willing to try it. This is also a help, for if there is receptivity the healer's task is just so much the easier. Some, indeed, try the mental cure simply to please their friends, or for the sake of experiment. But it is better on the whole that the patient should have faith, should be really ready to give the new cure a fair trial. Occasionally, it is true, people have been cured of drunkenness and other bad habits by members of the family who treated them unbeknown. Still if there is not conscious willingness to be helped, there must at least be sympathy,

affinity, subconscious openness of some sort ; and usually there is unconscious cooperation.

Receptivity, then, we may set down as one of the factors instrumental in effecting a cure. The patient's disposition, as we have seen, is another factor, for people vary all the way from those who are naturally so rigid that they will not give up any condition till forced to relax, to those who are so pliable that one has to avoid bringing too much power to bear at one time. Receptivity is therefore a very variable factor, and is closely connected with the degree of emotion, coldness of intellect, and non-receptivity being found together.

Auto-suggestion in the form of expectant attention is another noteworthy factor. The mental healer requests the patient to take a comfortable physical attitude and "become as receptive as possible." This self-induced attitude is analogous to hypnosis, which is defined by Dr. H. A. Parkyn as "a state of mental quiescence in which the suggestion of the operator has an exaggerated effect upon the mind of the subject." In such a state even the absurd affirmations and negations of the Christian Scientist, "You have no headache," "You have no head," are as effective as gospel truth, *if the mind accepts them* ; for the desideratum is to make an *impression* upon the mind, consciously or subconsciously. When the patient is suffering from acute pain, or fears some "uncanny" result, the auto-suggestion is of course unfavorable ; and in cases of "real" disease the "work" must be done almost wholly by the healer, frequently amidst the opposition and counter-suggestions of relatives, friends, and the family physician, who has given up the case as "hopeless." Here, then, it is equally impossible to generalize.

Yet in many cases the *desire* to be healed has so much to do with the cure, the expectancy of relief, and the effort to help one's self by looking away from the trouble, that it is well always for the patient to follow the directions of the healer as faithfully as possible. Occasionally the patient's faith is sufficient to do a large part of the work. Sometimes an old patient

will write for absent help, and the healer will forget the appointment. But so familiar is the patient with the general requirements that the right conditions will be observed almost unconsciously, and the work will be done without the aid of any factor besides this inner faith and receptivity. I have known of former patients who asked the privilege of coming occasionally to sit in the chair where they had once received treatment, as they found it easier to lay off their burdens and become receptive. It is probable that if we could assume the attitude of complete receptivity to the healing power, if we could become as a little child, that this would be all-sufficient to affect any cure. The animal who has been injured and lies down quietly until nature heals the hurt does this; and wonderful cures are wrought among the ignorant and superstitious simply because they have not the doubts which put barriers in the way of the healing power.

Here, then, is an aspect of the subject which it is well to bear constantly in mind. Frequently the whole matter is in the patient's hands, and it is possible to help one's self on any occasion if one will remove the obstacles to nature's resident restorative power—the fear, doubt, anxiety, tension, and all states of mind tending to draw one into self, to shut in and contract where one should open out and expand. Even in cases of chronic invalidism, where, for example, the person has been unable to walk and is gradually restored to health through the agency of a healer, there is often little apparent change until the person is *convinced* of the cure and is willing to make conscious *effort*. It might therefore be stated as a general law that the patient stands in need of the healer only to the degree that he either fails to, or is temporarily incapable of, relying upon himself. Yet one should avoid the erroneous conclusion which some have reached, namely, that the whole process is subjective, for in most cases the essential impulse is given by another mind.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## METAPHYSICAL CLUB.

201 Clarendon St., Opposite Trinity Church, Boston, Mass.

**ORGANIZED** to promote interest in, and the practice of, a true spiritual philosophy of life and health; — to develop the highest self-culture through right-thinking, as a means of bringing one's loftiest ideals into present realization; — to stimulate faith in, and study of, the higher nature of man in its relation to health and happiness; — to advance the intelligent and systematic treatment of disease by the mental method.

**HEADQUARTERS** for the Club, at the above address, are freely open to members, and to others interested in the movement, from 9 A. M. until 5 P. M., daily (except Sunday).

**LECTURES** will be given from November to May. Announcement later. Admission to non-members twenty-five cents.

**MEMBERSHIP** in the Club may be secured by the payment in advance of **Three Dollars**, which is the annual fee. All who sympathize with the purposes of the Club are cordially invited to join.

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At the annual meeting of the Club, April 5, after an address of welcome by the president, Rev. Loren B. Macdonald, interesting papers were read on "The Metaphysical Movement": *a*, Its Significance; *b*, What it has Accomplished; *c*, What it Promises.

Of its evolution Dr. J. W. Winkley said: "This movement and all that belongs to it, we shall do well to note, has had its evolution, both as to its theory and practice. And we must remember that this so-called New Thought, or spiritual healing, or name it the gospel of the power of the Spirit, is a revival of an older—the gospel of the "works" of Jesus Christ.

"This revival is a large and live one indeed. The New Christianity, if it may so be called, has advanced more in two decades than the original did in two hundred years. It has been said here that 'the New Thought is the same largely as the best thought in the Christian church.' So it is, we believe. Then why should Christian ministers repudiate it?

"We have to complain, however, that the church has neglected and still ignores Jesus' gospel of the 'works,' which we hold is an essential part, the practical half, of Christ's Christianity. And its neglect explains in large measure the ineffectiveness of the other half—Christ's gospel of the word, given by him to be preached in all the world.

"We are beginning to see in these latter days the real meaning, the deep significance of Jesus' 'works' and the revelations they were intended to make; thereby was shown the supremacy of the Spirit; thereby was given a revelation of God the Father as the omnipotent Healer; thereby a revelation was made of the deep, the true, the God-like nature of man, of his almost unlimited powers and possibilities; thereby were revealed many other equally transcendent and far-reaching truths.

"We wish to emphasize at present the fact that this movement is made up of many phases, which we have to study to understand its evolution. These are so many sides of one whole. We want them all. Each brings its contribution, each has its truth. One gives us the spiritual side; another, the

moral ; still another, emphasizes the element of law ; still another, the scientific side. And each has a practical value."

Of what it had accomplished Aaron M. Crane said : "The things which can be numbered are its least accomplishments. In the realm of disease no man can count the pain assuaged, the suffering alleviated, the sick restored to health, the lives prolonged, the good done on every side. A mountain of witnesses stand ready to testify. In the intellectual world the heaven is working unobserved and unrecognized, but effectually. In the religious world also this truth is moving and leading divines and organs of thought, so that they are acknowledging that the Christians have left out of consideration a large and important factor in Christianity. These things are on the surface. Only we who are actively engaged in the work are aware of the multitudes who through this movement have come into a broader, simpler, sweeter and truer recognition of God and of man's relation to him, and consequently into a better, purer and more exalted and more helpful life."

Rev. Helen Van Anderson spoke briefly but most hopefully of the metaphysical outlook for the future. "Ah, I see it bright with fulfilment of present promises. I see new social conditions, new ideals in the home, new relations among men and women, new standards of living, new and purer moral possibilities, new methods of education, new and beauteous phases of childhood ; new systems of physical, mental, moral and spiritual development ; new basis for individual and national government, new forms of politics. I see a new national literature, a new renaissance in art, in science and religion ; a new and glorious Race as the product of all. And this new race ? Every member shall stand forth in the dignity and power of his own individuality, an inspired, aspiring and consciously self-governed soul. In this new time that is to be there will be less theory and more practice, less talk and more living.

"And all the world in unity,  
Shall widely show diversity."

*(Further reports of this meeting will be given in a later issue.)*

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(See Club announcement on another page.)

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