

# THE MESSAGE OF THE NEW THOUGHT

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# WRITINGS

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# THE MESSAGE OF THE NEW THOUGHT

ITS HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES: A CONDENSED HISTORY OF ITS REAL  
ORIGIN WITH STATEMENT OF ITS BASIC PRINCIPLES AND TRUE AIMS

1911

WILLIAM WALKER ATKINSON

1862–1932

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## INTRODUCTION

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**T**HIS LITTLE book shows that New Thought reaches back to the oldest philosophical systems of the race; that it is closely connected with that strange revival of Transcendentalism which occurred in America about 1800 to 1825; that the idea of Mental Healing, or the New Psychology, came to the front at about the same date; that these two great streams of thought broadened and deepened and flowed on side by side; that they finally converged to a common channel and united in one mighty spiritual movement known as the New Thought, which includes Christian Science, the Emmanuel Movement and all kindred systems of healing.

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**T**O THE student of philosophical and metaphysical thought, one of the most interesting incidents in the rise of systems of thought is the rapid development and growth of the great movement known as "The New Thought." Springing into popular notice and favor a few years ago, it has permeated all phases of thought and work, and has exerted a marked effect upon the modern view of the meaning and purpose of life. Spreading far in all directions from its center, it has manifested its influence in current literature, the drama, art, and popular expression. Originally confined to a small circle of supposedly peculiar people, it has become a part of the gospel of everyday life with many of the most practical persons in the world.

To the man on the street, the most perplexing and annoying features of the New Thought movement are the apparent vagueness of its general fundamental principles, and the lack of clear information regarding its origin. To such a person, it seems as if the essence of the thought continually escapes the mental fingers of him who strives to grasp it. He is also perplexed by the oft repeated remark that "there is nothing *new* about the New Thought." Nevertheless, he feels that there must be some firm, fixed, fundamental truths underlying the

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philosophy of the movement; and, in spite of the assertions to the contrary, he is impressed with the certainty that this strange thought, and the manifestations thereof, must be new, else it would have been heard of long before. The student of the history of thought, remembering the difficulty that perplexed the followers of Emerson and the Transcendental Movement when they attempted to define their principles, and their complacency under the charge that there was nothing new in their philosophy, smiles at the repetition that history has manifested, and realizes that while it may be impossible to refute the charge that the New Thought is very old indeed, and that its essence is difficult to express in words, yet its power is manifesting over a wide area, and that it has all the force and initiative of an entirely new school of thought.

Someone has said that when a new and striking truth first presents itself, its opponents ridicule it, then fight it vigorously, then claim that it is not new at all, and finally assert that they themselves have always held to it and taught it. The truth of this somewhat cynical criticism would seem to be exemplified in the history of the New Thought movement. Originally ridiculed as visionary and impracticable, later vigorously opposed as heretical and revolutionary, it, in turn, was met with the charge that it was really the oldest kind of thought and that its name was unjustified and unwarranted. Now we find it voiced by many of its original opponents, without credit being given it; these good folks claiming that they have *always* believed these truths and have *always* taught and preached them. In view of the perplexity manifested by many who find themselves attracted by this new school of thought, we have thought that a brief consideration of its origin, fundamental principles, and general trend, might prove interesting and useful to these seekers for information.

In the first place, the New Thought has its origin much further back in the pages of history than is generally thought. The roots of its idealistic philosophy reach far back to the oldest

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philosophical systems of the race; its stem made its appearance in America in the first part of the nineteenth century. About 1800–25, there was manifested in New England a strange revival of transcendental thought. This revival may be traced directly to the interest in Arminianism and Arianism evinced a full century before by New England thinkers, an interest which spread out in two directions, one branch bearing the fruit of Unitarianism, the other more slowly budding into the revival of interest in Neo-Platonism which later bore the full flower of the Transcendental Movement of Emerson and his associates.

In the earlier years of the nineteenth century, New England thought began to escape from the influence of Locke and Bentham, which had previously dominated the philosophical thought of the time and place. A new interest was manifested in the ideas of the newer schools of English and German thought. Many old ideas went by the board, and were replaced by new conceptions. In the field of literature a similar revolution was manifested. Many old idols were overthrown, and it began to be popular for persons to display a keen and lively interest in the writings of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Herder, Goethe, and others who held certain ideas fitting well into the new conceptions. But most strongly in evidence was a strange revival of interest in Neo-Platonism, that school of thought which has had a number of unexpected revivals in its history, each revival being the starting point for an upheaval in many fields of contemporary thought. Whenever and wherever Neo-Platonism is revived we may look for a renewed interest in mysticism, idealism, and the idea of an immanent God.

These awakened New Englanders were attracted by Coleridge's idea of a higher reason or transcendental intuition, which was a manifestation of the indwelling spirit, and by means of which one might experience an immediate perception of things above the plane of the ordinary senses and reason. Coleridge also taught them that there was a great Universal Spirit, which was reflected in the spirits of all men. Wordsworth presented

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to them an attractive form of higher pantheism—a nature in which was immanent the One Spirit of the Universe; a universe animated by a Universal Mind, proceeding under Universal Law and Order. The writings of the Neo-Platonists planted many fertile seeds of future development in the rich soil of the New England mind which had been prepared for this day by the influence under way for a century. It is significant that the term “new thought” was used even in that early day; not, however, as indicating a cult or particular school of thought, but rather as a term describing the newly awakened tendency, and in contrast to the “old thought” of Calvinism and the old schools of philosophy. The early Unitarians also used the term “new thought” in the same way, as applied to their teachings.

This “new thought” interest and tendency began to take upon itself outward form and shape about 1830, when the various elements found themselves attracted to each other in what was afterward the Transcendental Movement. Emerson’s work had attracted much attention, and his writings served as a nucleus around which sympathetic thinkers grouped themselves. Channing and Ripley, Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Brownson and Hedge, all well known in connection with the “new thought” of that day, met and considered the advisability of forming a general society. For a number of years the work of these writers created great interest, and a loosely organized following gathered around them.

The Brook Farm Community, founded by George Ripley, in 1841, played an important part in the work, attracting, as it did, such men and women as Hawthorne, Alcott, Curtis, Channing, and Margaret Fuller, in addition to its founder. In 1840, “The Dial” was founded, with Margaret Fuller as the first editor, and such men as Emerson, Channing, Alcott, Theodore Parker, Ripley, and Thoreau, as contributors. Afterwards, Emerson became the editor. This journal was the official organ of the Transcendental Movement, and served to fasten the attention of the nation

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upon it and its principles. This time may be considered as the real date of the birth of the modern New Thought movement.

From the beginning, the critics were puzzled when it came to a statement of the principles of Transcendentalism, but the followers of the school smiled at the bewilderment of the critics and went on their way happy and filled with the joy of the new truth which had come to them. Some of them even went so far as to *defy* the critics to define their principles and beliefs, so far above the understanding of the common herd did they feel these principles to be. Transcendentalism is defined by the dictionary makers as: "The philosophical conception that there can be knowledge of transcendental elements, or matters wholly beyond the ordinary experience of the human mind." But the Transcendentalists went much further than this. Margaret Fuller, in her memoirs, says:

"Transcendentalism was an assertion of the inalienable integrity of man; of the immanence of Divinity in instinct ... On the somewhat stunted stock of Unitarianism, whose characteristic dogma was trust in human reason, as correlative to Supreme Wisdom, had been grafted German Idealism, as taught by masters of most various schools—by Kant and Jacobi, Fichte and Novalis, Schelling and Hegel, Schleirmacher and de Wette, by Madame de Stael, Cousin, Coleridge, and Carlyle; and the result was a vague yet exalting, conception of the god-like nature of the human spirit. Transcendentalism, as viewed by its disciples, was a pilgrimage from the idolatrous world of creeds and rituals to the Temple of the Living God in the soul."

The essence of the Transcendental movement may be found in the essays of Emerson, particularly in his essay on the "Over-Soul," in which is sounded the dominant note of the later New Thought. Emerson was essentially an idealist and a mystic. As Cooke says of him:

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“Emerson belongs in a succession of Idealists. That company he loves wherever its members are found, whether among Buddhists or Christian mystics, whether Transcendentalist or Sufi, whether Saadi, Boehme, Fichte, or Carlyle. These are the writers he studies, these the men he quotes, these the thinkers who come nearest his own thought. He is in the succession of minds who have followed in the wake of Plato, who is regarded by him as the world’s greatest thinker. More directly still, Emerson is in that succession of thinkers represented by Plotinus, Eckhardt, and Schelling, who have interpreted Idealism in the form of Mysticism.”

The broadness and catholicity of Emerson’s thought has descended in a direct line to the New Thought movement of today, which draws upon all sources for its truth, taking its own wherever it finds it, “whether on Christian or on heathen ground.”

Emerson drew largely from the fountains of ancient Greece, but the distinct flavor of Oriental idealism pervades his thought. It were as if his thought had seeped up through the deep sands of Oriental thought, rising and filling a basin of the purest Greek design, from thence bubbling and pouring forth in a way distinctively his own. In his conception of the One he is a Hindu, but in his expression of the Life of the Many he is filled with the true Greek spirit. In his message the Pipes of Pan may be heard playing, always accompanied by the deeper and dimmer droning worship-note of the Temple of Brahm.

And this has been passed on to the New Thought—this strange mingling of the Orient and Ancient Greece—the calm, serene majesty of Brahm, and the leaping, joyous, living, loving, changing form of Pan. In the first aspect, we see Brahm the Unmanifest, brooding over his creations, breathing outward and inward, in aeonic rhythm, throughout all eternity. In the second, we see Pan, the expression of Manifest Life, who sings: “I am the joy of life! The joy of being! Today this; yesterday a pine upon a mountain crag; tomorrow a butterfly; a blade of

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grass; a rainbow over a waterfall; a lizard warming on a rock; the rock itself; a beam of the moon! I am nothing because I am everything; everything because I am nothing.”

By one of those peculiar coincidences or correspondences which are noticed by all students of the history of thought, the rise of Emerson's Transcendentalism was accompanied by an equally striking development of what may be known as “The New Psychology.” The peculiar features of this last named phase of thought were: (1) the idea that the mind has a direct and positive effect upon the body; that physical conditions, in health and disease, depend materially upon mental states; (2) that the mind possessed many latent powers which are capable of development and manifestation along lines running above the more common natural processes; (3) that man, by the exercise of his will and imaging faculties, may transform his character and nature, and literally “make himself over.” These three principles were expounded by numerous teachers, under many names, and theories, some quite scientific and others almost grotesque. A study of the writings and teachings along these lines, in the middle part of the nineteenth century gives one an idea of the intense interest being manifested in these subjects. There was no apparent connection between them and the Transcendental Movement, except that as a rule the same persons were likely to be attracted toward both. But both movements were destined from the first to coalesce, blend together, and unite into one common and larger movement.

The first indication of the blending was the appearance of persons in various parts of the country, who met with great success in the healing of diseases by means of the methods of the New Psychology, *based, however, on the fundamental principles of Transcendentalism.* The two streams united at this point, but just where or how it is almost impossible to state as the traces and records have been lost in the passage of the years. But the union and blending is unmistakable—the waters of the two streams may be clearly distinguished as they are

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seen flowing, side by side, along the new channel. And, here, as is always the case in new movements in which the healing element enters, the phase of healing for a time overbalanced and outshone the philosophical phase. It has been so in all new religions, and it was so in the new religio-philosophy, the New Thought. The people were first attracted by the promise of the healing of their bodily ills, and afterward remained to absorb the philosophy.

It is to be regretted that we are not able to name many more of the prominent mental healers of about fifty or sixty years ago, who were the first to make the natural connection between the transcendental philosophy of Emerson and his followers and the application of mind-power to the healing of disease. They did their work well, and others followed in the steps without thinking it worth while to record the names of the original teachers. Quimby, Dresser, Evans, and a few others are remembered—the others are forgotten. All served their purpose in the great plan, however, and made the connecting link between the two schools of thought. Mrs. Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, undoubtedly did more than any other one person to make popular the healing of the body by metaphysical methods, and her insistence upon her basic philosophy was an inspiration to others who agreed with her in the main, but who differed from her regarding certain points of doctrine and organization.

Many of Mrs. Eddy's pupils separated from her organization, and formed schools of their own, or else practiced and taught independently. Others, not her pupils, but influenced by the movement which she has initiated, also founded similar organizations and associations. Many while retaining allegiance to the orthodox churches, nevertheless availed themselves of the benefits of mental or spiritual healing, their work being known as "faith healing," "mind-cure," "mental science," "divine science," etc. Differing widely regarding details of theory, all made cures and attracted a following. In New England,

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especially, the healing of disease by the power of the mind assumed the nature of a "fad," and became widely known as "the Boston craze."

The investigators of psycho-therapy in the ranks of the medical fraternity in France and other European countries, added new interest to the subject, and many physicians sought an explanation for the wonderful successes of the mind-healers in the new theories and methods of Suggestive Therapeutics. Writers began to publish magazine articles and books showing that diseases had been cured by mental methods, in all times and in all ages, regardless of special theories or doctrine. This, however, did not discourage the new movement as intended, for its own writers soon pointed out that these ancient cures, as well as many modern ones, were made by reason of a great natural principle of Mind which many had stumbled upon and used in ignorance of its real nature. These discussions, however, served a useful purpose in informing the public that these strange cures were based upon perfectly natural, and not super-natural, principles; and that they did not depend upon any special creed or dogma for successful application. Accordingly, the workers in the independent field increased rapidly in number, and thousands of earnest persons who were cured helped to spread the tidings of the New Thought as it then began to be called the old term being given a new application.

The influence of Theosophy also must be taken into consideration when we look back over the history of New Thought. While not adopting the doctrines of Theosophy, the adherents of the New Thought found much in the new Theosophical teachings to corroborate their own ideas. This is not to be wondered at, considering that both schools drew freely from the same original ancient sources. In the same way, the renewed interest in the teachings of certain sects of the Early Christian Church, brought to light many points of resemblance between some of the beliefs of the old Fathers of

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the Church and the New Thought teachings. This, also, was to be expected, in view of the fact that both teachings were largely influenced by Neo-Platonism. The popular works of Prentice Mulford served to bring into still wider prominence that phase of the New Thought teaching which deals with the influence of the mind regarding one's environment, success, etc. His essay, "The Drawing Power of The Mind," opened a new world of thought to many. Many magazines devoted to the subject were published, and quite a number of books dealing with the question were written and circulated.

Gradually, but steadily, the interest of New Thought people was extended to the spiritual phases of the philosophy, and to the phase of self-help and character-building, the healing phase, however, maintaining its original importance. A new interest in the philosophies of the past and present was shown by a large portion of the public, and a marked increase in the production and sale of metaphysical books was noticed. One of the most striking manifestations of the new spirit abroad in the land was the rise of the Spirit of Optimism. People who never heard of the New Thought found themselves impressed with the importance of Being Cheerful, Looking on the Bright Side, and Keeping Sweet. "Don't Worry" signs and motto-cards were noticed on all sides. And, also, a new spirit of Self-Reliance and Self-Help was manifested. It is difficult for a young person to realize the change in the public opinion regarding these things from that of twenty-five years ago. A new spirit animates the people, and, although many know it not, they owe it all to the New Thought teachings.

The wonderful success of the Christian Science Church is an indication of the great interest in the new philosophy manifest on all sides. But the bulk of the New Thought following are not connected with any organization whatsoever. Many are independents; many retain their relations with the orthodox churches. New Thought is not an organization—it is a MENTAL ATTITUDE. Many manifest "New Thought" principles with

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success in their everyday lives—and yet do not realize that New Thought has had anything to do with their views. They have simply *absorbed* the New Thought spirit which surrounds them on all sides. The orthodox pulpits echo New Thought sermons every Sunday, although the term is never mentioned—and this, too, is well, for New Thought is, and should be, as free as air, and the property of all.

The very name, “New Thought,” may even pass away—but the spirit will remain, and the work will be done. The “Emmanuel Movement,” which is really an application of certain New Thought principles, has been instituted in certain churches, and thousands have been healed thereby. The theology of the day has been strongly influenced by the New Thought teachings, and the rapid face about noticed by all students of the Protestant Churches, is due almost entirely to this general spirit set into activity by the New Thought movement. Professor William James says:

“Those of us who are sexagenarians have witnessed in our own persons one of those gradual mutations of intellectual climate, due to innumerable influences, that make the thought of a past generation seem as foreign to its successor as if it were the expression of a different race of men. The theological machinery that spoke so livingly to our ancestors, with its finite age of the world, its creation out of nothing, its judicial morality and eschatology, its relish for rewards and punishments, its treatment of God as an external contriver, an ‘intelligent and moral governor,’ sound as odd to most of us as if it were some outlandish savage religion ... The only opinion quite worthy of arresting our attention will fall within the general scope of what may roughly be called the pantheistic field of vision, the vision of God as the indwelling divine rather than the external creator, and of human life as part and parcel of that deep reality.”

Prof. Charles W. Eliot, late President of Harvard, in his celebrated address on “The Religion of the Future,” says:

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“The New Thought of God will be its most characteristic element. This ideal will comprehend the Jewish Jehovah, the Christian Universal Father, the modern physicist’s omnipresent and exhaustless Energy, and the biological conception of a Vital Force. The Infinite Spirit pervades the universe, just as the spirit of man pervades his body, and acts, consciously or unconsciously in every atom of it. The twentieth century will accept literally and implicitly St. Paul’s statement, ‘In Him we live, and move, and have our being.’ The new religion is therefore thoroughly monotheistic, its God being the one infinite force; but this one God is not withdrawn or removed, but indwelling and especially dwelling in every living creature ... This central idea of a new religion will therefore be a humane and worthy idea of God, thoroughly consistent with the nineteenth century revelations concerning man and nature, and with all the tenderest and loveliest teachings which have come down to us from the past.”

And now for a brief statement of the general principles of New Thought, ignoring the disputed details of doctrine and theories existing in the various schools and organizations embraced within the limits of the all-inclusive general body of affiliated thinkers—principles sufficiently general to include the main, essential, and fundamental beliefs. For, differ as may, and do, the various branches of the New Thought regarding some of the details of the teaching, there are certain basic principles which are common to them all.

I. The fundamental principle underlying all New Thought ideas is that there exists AN INFINITE AND ETERNAL SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE OF BEING. This Principle of Being, it is affirmed, is without beginning and without ending; without limits of time, space, or power; absolute; unconditioned; and alone without a second, a rival, or a companion. The qualities of Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience—all-power, all-presence, and all-wisdom—are attributed to it.

II. This Principle of Being is regarded as non-material and spiritual in its nature. It is thought of as Pure SPIRIT. The

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essence of Spirit being regarded as MIND, the Principle of Being is spoken of as Universal Mind. Its substance is regarded as Mental Substance. Its power is regarded as Mental Power. From this arises the statement that "All is Mind," including the manifestation, emanation, or expression, of Mind.

III. This Principle of Being is held to be ONE and one only. There being nothing in existence other than this One Principle, the universe must be regarded as necessarily an emanation, manifestation, or expression of the One Principle of Being. And, we, being a part of the universe, must also be an emanation, expression or manifestation of that One Principle of Being. There is nothing else for us to be. Moreover, the One Principle of Being must be *immanent* in everything, in different degrees of expression and manifestation. By "immanent" is meant "staying or remaining in; not passing out; inherent; internal; not transient."

In these above stated first three fundamental principles of the New Thought, we find a fundamental truth of Idealistic Philosophy, as old as the history of philosophic thought. There is nothing new about this truth. The same thing has been said by the ancient philosophers of India, five thousand years ago; by the philosophers of Greece, twenty-five hundred years ago; by Berkeley, Hegel and Kant, and their followers. Then, where does the *newness* of New Thought appear!

IV. The New Thought, reasoning from the first three principles of belief proceeds as follows: It being conceded that man is an expression, emanation, or manifestation of the One Principle of Being; and that that Principle must be *immanent* in him, just as he is contained within it; then it follows that its power, its presence, its mentality—its Spirit, in fact—must abide within his being, limited only by his own limitations of power and ability to *express* it. Its nature being essentially *mental*, it must follow that man's power to apply and manifest its qualities must lie in the region of his own mentality—his only real power must be Mind-Power. Therefore, in the degree

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that he is able to express and manifest this indwelling power must be his individual power. There is no other power to be; no other place from which it may be drawn. From this arises the simple but clear definition of New Thought: "*The recognition, realization, and manifestation of the God in me.*"

V. Proceeding from the above, New Thought holds that our mental states, attitudes, ideas, images, and actions, determine our mental and physical conditions and status. This agrees with the old Biblical saying: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he"; and the equally positive statement of the Buddha that: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts." Not only is our character the result of our thoughts, but so also is our environment, our health, our physical condition, our degree of success and attainment. The New Thought holds with Prentice Mulford (and Swedenborg before him) that: "Thoughts are THINGS." It holds that "Right Thought" expressed in "Right Action," will enable a man to realize all of his ideals. He may make real his ideals in this way. Health, Happiness, and Prosperity, belong to man by right, and may be realized by his recognition, realization and manifestation of the Principle within him, by the proper exercise of his mental powers.

Here then we find what makes the New Thought *new*. It is the *practical application* of these world-old truths. It is the characteristic spirit of the age—the Western spirit—bringing into the field of practical everyday life the great truths of the past. Bringing these great truths down from the realm of idealistic dreamings and mystical musings, the New Thought has placed them in the midst of our actual, practical, busy life, and set them to work. It has harnessed the spiritual forces, just as it has the material forces, and pressed them into service in the affairs of man. It has placed within the hands of man the machinery for working out his own destiny—for mastering his own fate. It has discarded the old idea that man is a "worm of the dust," a creature of Fate, and a pawn of Circumstance. It bids him lift his

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head and gaze with unfaltering eyes upon the universel saying: "I am the Captain of my Soul; the Master of my Fate; the Ruler of Circumstances!" And, this in no egotistical, vainglorious spirit, but rather from the knowledge that immanent in him is "all the wisdom there is; all the presence there is; all the power there is;" and that the degree of his attainment is limited only by the degree of his ability to express and manifest those immanent, indwelling qualities. It teaches man that he is not an alien or a machine, but rather a Son of God, made not in the physical image of an anthropomorphic Deity, but rather in the mental and spiritual image of a Mental and Spiritual Father—begotten and born of Spirit; not "created" from the dust of material substance. This is the Message of the New Thought to Man. In the degree that he recognizes, realizes, and manifests its Truth, does he become that which it tells him he really is. Is this not a NEW MESSAGE of hope, faith and courage to Humanity! IS this not a *new* thought for the race!

But this is not all of the Message. New Thought does not stop with informing man of the means whereby he may become healthy, happy, and prosperous. It shows him his newly-realized relation to his fellowman and to the universe of Life. Let us proceed with our consideration of its principles.

VI. The New Thought teaches the Brotherhood of Man, as well as the Fatherhood of God. It shows that since we are all expressions and manifestations of the One Principle of Life, then indeed are we all brothers and sisters in that Life—each, substance of the One Substance; each, mind of the One Mind; each, spirit of the One Spirit. It teaches that there is no real separateness—that "separateness is but the working fiction of the universe." It teaches that "One life runs through all creation's veins"; that, as the poet has sung:

"For the All is One, and all are part,  
And not *apart* as they seem to be;  
And the blood of life has a single heart,

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Beating through God, and clod, and Me.”

And this realization must awaken love in all hearts for all life. The pain of the world becomes the pain of all; its joy, the joy of all. One’s neighbor is indeed one’s self, and one can love him even as one’s self, if one accepts this Message. And the message also causes one to love the One with all the might and power of his mind and his soul. The essence of all true religions, of all times, and all names, and all lands, is expressed in this Message of Love. Love then is seen to have a new meaning and reason and purpose and intent—the reconciliation and uniting of the many apparent parts of the Whole, which are indeed but one at the last. LOVE then, is the Heart of the New Thought! Its spirit is well expressed by William Marion Reedy, when he says:

“Love is the only law. Love is spirit, and matter the child of spirit. All this any man who reads may know ... But where does it end—this intelligent love? There is a limit to the finite. But the finite is part of the Infinite. It would seem that the pursuit of the law of love would bring one only to the unknowable, pushing it only a little further back. Love may follow where love leads—unto the essence of God even—for God is Love. The material aspect of love need not deter us from pushing ‘farther North.’ To those who believe in the Oneness of Matter and Spirit, there is no unknowable. The end of the law of Love, and of the spiritual faculties for its perception, can be the knowing of this unknowable—union with the Infinite. Let us make a flight.”

And this, then, is the basis of the ethics of New Thought—the recognition, realization and manifestation of the Brotherhood of Man, based upon the Oneness of Life, and the Fatherhood of God. Can there be any higher Message, any more valid basis of ethics!

But even this is not all of the Message of the New Thought—there is a still higher truth contained within it. It bids man look

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onward, and upward, while lending a helping hand. There is a seventh principle to be added to the foregoing six.

VII. The New Thought teaches that man is in a stage of Spiritual Evolution—pursuing The Path of Eternal Progress. It teaches that he, in his unfoldment of the Divine Essence within himself, is opening himself to the expression of his spiritual powers—ever facing the Central Sun. Slowly, but surely, does the awakened soul disentangle itself from the illusion of separateness and mortality, and take upon itself the qualities of oneness and immortality. Looking ever upward, onward, and forward, does it press forward on the Path of Attainment. Sheath after sheath of mortal illusion does it cast aside on the journey, and reveal itself in more beautiful and rare, and still more beautiful and rare form and appearance. Like the hand discarding the glove, it becomes better adapted to feel the real things of being. It looks not behind—its gaze is fixed on the scene before it. The past belongs to the past—the soul lives in the Now. Each moment is a new moment to it—each experience a new experience—each place a new place. And all are seen as good, and as a part of its spiritual life. To the awakened soul, it is always: I AM; HERE; NOW! And so it proceeds, ever advancing on the Path of Eternal Progress—ever pressing on, and on, and on, to higher and still higher planes of existence and activity. Led by the Voice of the Spirt, listening to the Song of the All-Life, it rises higher and higher, and higher; on, and on, and on. Such is the final Message of the New Thought. It is beautifully expressed by, Holmes, in “The Chambered Nautilus”:

“Build thee more stately mansions, oh, my soul;  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length are free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life’s unresting sea.”

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Regarding the details of the life of the soul after it discards the material frame that has sheltered it, the New Thought utters no dogmatic dictum. All shades of belief and theory regarding immortality are found among its followers. It leaves to the individual, or the congregation of individuals, the privilege of speculation. The New Thought is not an organization, creed, cult, or church—merely a body of affiliated thinkers, in sympathy regarding fundamentals, though perhaps differing as to interpretation. But as its fundamentals are based upon the One Spirit, in which all expressions of spirit must exist as the drop exists in the ocean, it must declare for the indestructibility of spirit. It must, and does, voice the truth contained in the ages-old “Bhagavad Gita”:

“Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never.  
Never was time it was not; end and beginning are dreams.  
Birthless and deathless and changeless, remaineth the spirit forever;  
Death hath not touched it at all; dead though the house of it seems.”

And under all its beliefs, there is a general agreement that after aeons and aeons have passed, and the individual spirit has reached higher and still higher planes, there may, and probably will, come a time, when it will once more seek the Bosom of the Father, and find there that Eternal Peace and Rest which the Infinite alone can supply—that blessed Union of which the mystics of all ages, lands and all religions have fondly dreamt, and of which the Buddhistic poets sing:

“The dew is on the Lotus!—Rise, Great Sun!  
And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave.  
*Om mani padme hum*, the Sunrise comes!  
The dewdrop slips into the Shining Sea!”

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is for YOU. Why not apply its teachings in YOUR everyday life just as thousands of others have done? You can never tell what you can do until you TRY.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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