

The Path – January 1892

OF "METAPHYSICAL HEALING" — *William Q. Judge*

The time for temporizing or for silence in respect to what are severally styled "Mind Cure", "Mental Science", "Christian Science", and the like has now come to an end, and the moment has arrived when something definite should be said on these as well as some other subjects. The first note was sounded at the theosophical convention for 1890, (1) when in the message sent by H. P. Blavatsky she wrote that some of these practices were of the nature of black magic as explained by her in that message. She says "In other words, whenever the healer interferes — consciously or unconsciously — with the free mental action of the person he treats, it is Black Magic". At that time many persons were hurt, some on their own account and others on account of the feeling they had that people of the class who believe in and practise these so-called sciences would be thus driven away from the Society. Several members accordingly studiously refrained from mentioning the matter, and in many quarters it fell into silence absolute.

In the first place, it cannot be said that no cures have ever been accomplished by means of the practices referred to. There have been cases of cure. For, indeed, one would have to be blind to the records of the medical profession to say that the mind has no part to play in the cure of diseases. That it does have, as any physician knows, for if the patient continues to be depressed in mind there may be a failure or even a death. But this is not "mind cure" nor "mental cure". It is an assistance to the regular treatment. And as very many of the troubles of people are imaginary, sometimes in the acute form because of imagination, it does happen in those cases that a cure may be effected by the schools we are speaking of. Some nervous derangements may be thus cured. And if that is brought about by directing the mind of the patient to high thoughts, there can be no objection to it. But if the mind is filled with wrong philosophy, or if the affirmations and denials found in these "sciences" are used, or the "construction of the divine and spiritual form" be gone into, the whole thing is bad.

And here it is well to state our position about the cure of bodily ailments. It is that inasmuch as they are of and in the body, those that come from a wrong attitude of mind will disappear when we are contented and self-centred, while those that are chronic, being mechanical and physical, ought to be treated by such means and not by an attempt to drag the spiritual and divine down to this plane of being. In none of the ancient schools was it permitted to one to use for himself, or to sell, the divine or spiritual powers. Furthermore we see that the savages are the most healthy of men. Yet they know none of these things and do not care for such ideas. Yet although the Red Indian of the early days did much murder and lived not righteously, he was a fine specimen of physical health. This shows that health may be maintained by attention to the ordinary laws of nature on the material plane by attending to hygiene and exercise. Yet again, looking at the prize-fighter and the athlete, it is plain that they, by attending to the same rules and wholly disregarding the fine theories of the mental healers, become well and strong and able to bear the greatest fatigue and hardship. It was the same in the days of the athletes of Rome and Greece.

A number of fallacies have to be noticed in these systems. Using the word "thought", they say that our diseases are the product of our thought, but they ignore the fact that young children of

the tenderest age often have very violent diseases when no one will say they have had time or power to think. Babies have been found to have Blight's disease and other troubles. This is a fact that looms up before the arguments of the mental healer and that never will down.

But regarding it from the theosophical side, we know that the thoughts of the preceding life are the causes for the troubles and the joys of this, and therefore those troubles are now being exhausted here by the proper channel, the body, and are on the way *down and out*. Their exit ought not to be stopped. But by the attempt to cure in the way of the healer they are stopped often and are sent back to the place they came from, and thus once more are planted in the mind as unexpended causes sure at some other time to come out again, whether in this or in another life. This is one of the greatest of dangers. It will in many instances lead to insanity.

The next fallacy is in the system of affirmations and denials. To assert as they do that there is no matter, that all is spirit, and that there is no evil but that all is good, and that "this my body is pure and sweet and free from trouble", is philosophically and as a mere use of English false in every respect. "Spirit" and "Matter" are terms that must exist together, and if one is given up so must the other disappear. They are the two great opposites. As the Bhagavad-Gita says, there is no spirit without also matter. They are the two eternities, the two manifestations, one at one pole and one at the other, of the absolute, which is neither matter nor spirit but wholly indescribable except as said — it is at once spirit and matter. Likewise Good and Evil are two opposites mutually existing, the one necessary in order to know the other, for if there were no evil we should not know what to call the good. One might as well say that there is no darkness but that all is light. By these foolish affirmations all relativity is abolished, and we are asked to abandon all proper use of words in order to satisfy those who wish to show that optimism in all things and at all times is the right position. The "Christian Scientist" goes further and says God is all good, the argument being in fact nothing at all but a play on the word god. It would not work in Spanish, for there good is *bueno* and god is *dios*. This assertion calmly refuses any admission of the patent fact that if God exists he must be evil as well as good, unless we revert to the old Catholic idea that the devil is as strong as God. And even if we say that God made the devil and will one day stop him, the evil is a part of God unless in some respects he is not responsible for the world and beings. But the last affirmation, that one's body is sweet and pure and free from disease, is degrading as well as false. It may be true that bodies are illusions, but they are not the illusions of single individuals but of the great mind of the race, and therefore they are relatively real — as they are now constructed — for the minor beings who make up the race. No one has the power to escape from this great illusion of the total mind until he has risen to an actual conscious realization of that mind in all its departments. The affirmation has its refutation in itself, for if one person can thus destroy this relativity so far as he is concerned by merely affirming against it, how is it that the illusion still remains for and has sway over the remaining millions? Still more we know that the body is a mass of things that are not good nor pure, and that in the abstract sense of these affirmations the most unnoticed physiological operations are actually disgusting.

The line of demarcation between black and white magic is very thin, but it is quite plain when one sees the art of healing by means of such high forces as are claimed by these schools practised

for purely selfish ends or for money in addition. There is danger in it, and all theosophists ought to look well that they do not fall themselves or cause others to.

The great danger is from the disturbances that are brought about by the practise. It is a sort of yoga without any right knowledge of method; it is blind wandering among forces so subtle and so violent that they are liable to explode at any moment. By continuing in the way taught a person actually from the first arouses latent currents of the body that act and re-act on the astral and physical and at last bring about injury. I have in mind several cases, and some of them those of actual insanity due wholly to these practises. Of these I will say more at another time, and may be able to present a record that will astonish those who, merely to cure some ailment that medicine is fully able to deal with, go aside instead and play with forces they have no knowledge of, and put them also into the hands of others still more ignorant, all the while deluding themselves with the idea that they are dealing with high philosophy. The philosophy has nothing to do with it except to act as a means to centre the thought so that inner currents may come into play. The same result might be brought about by any system of talk or thought, no matter how erroneous.

FOOTNOTE:

1. Rept, of Conv. 1890. (return to t