Dedicated to my Wife

~ EMILY LEIGH ALLEN ~

To whose inspiration I am indebted for whatsoever of value is contained in this volume, in memory of our beloved daughter, Louise Leigh, who has passed to the great beyond, whose beauty of soul will ever remain life's sweetest legacy.
Thousands of people are constantly asking three questions:

* What is New Thought?
* Wherein does it differ from the orthodox religions?
* What is the line of divergence between New Thought and Christian Science?

The purpose of this volume is to answer these inquiries. To that end, it has been my endeavor, not only to set forth the basic ideas of New Thought, but also to compare its principles and teachings with those of the orthodox religions and Christian Science.

This course has been adopted for several reasons. So many cults are springing into existence whose teachings differ widely from those of New Thought yet are parading under its banner, that it is thought desirable to state its principles and philosophy with such certainty and clearness that its real message may hereafter be understood and that its name may be rescued from those seeking to appropriate it, without warrant.

Great efforts have also been made to blend and combine the philosophy of New Thought with the teachings of the recognized creeds. I leave it to the reader to judge whether such a result is possible or not, when he has finished reading this volume.
The hope and belief are freely entertained that the fundamental distinctions between New Thought and Christian Science have been stated in such a manner that they may be readily understood.

The ethical values of the teachings of New Thought, as compared with those of the orthodox religions, are duly set forth and emphasized, that each may be carefully studied and weighed.

New Thought is largely a restatement of Old Thought, vitalized with new life and meaning from the discoveries of modern psychology and the latest deductions of science. The reader must bear in mind, however, that the Old Thought was suppressed in the Western Hemisphere for nearly two thousand years. For the first time, it is sending its illuminating rays to gladden the Western world.

The effort has been made to set forth the essential teachings of New Thought in a concrete form in one convenient volume, and to that end, I have drawn with considerable freedom from modern science, philosophy and the leading writers on New Thought. The quotations employed embrace some of the best thought of modern times.

It is my earnest hope that this volume may arouse and animate a general interest in the study of New Thought, and awaken a responsive chord to the beauty and sublimity of its teachings.

~ Abel Leighton Allen
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Chapter I:
~ NEW THOUGHT DEFINED ~

\[\begin{align*}
\text{O we can wait no longer,} \\
\text{We too take ship, O soul;} \\
\text{Joyous, we too launch out on trackless seas,} \\
\text{Fearless, for unknown shores, on waves of ecstasy to sail,} \\
\text{Amid the wafting winds,} \\
\text{Changing our chant of pleasant exploration.} \\
\text{O my brave soul,} \\
\text{O, farther, farther sail,} \\
\text{O daring joy, but safe, are they not, all the seas of God?} \\
\text{O, farther, farther sail.}
\end{align*}\]

~ Walt Whitman

New Thought is not, as many believe, a name or expression employed to define any fixed system of thought, philosophy or religion, but is a term used to convey the idea of growing or developing thought. In considering this subject, the word “new” should be duly and freely emphasized, because the expression “New Thought” relates only to what is new and progressive.

It would be a misuse of terms to apply the expression “New Thought” to a system of thought, because when thought is molded and formed into a system, it ceases to be new. When a
system of thought has reached maturity and ceases to grow, expand and develop, it can no longer be defined by the word new.

It follows, therefore, as a necessary conclusion, that no system of New Thought, or no system of thought defined by that expression, now exists or ever can exist. *New Thought is the result or creation of perpetually advancing mind.* The growing mind is not content with the past or its achievements. It is not satisfied with systems of philosophy or religion originating in other ages and handed down through succeeding generations. They do not satisfy the wants of the mind.

Systems do not grow - mind develops. It wants something larger and better; it wants *improvement, growth and development*. It is merely the logical and natural effort of the mind in its struggle for advancement; it is following its basic and inherent law.

As the growing mind applies thought to whatever enters into consciousness, it gains new and enlarged conceptions and, therefore, grows - and what it *thinks* is new. New Thought has been defined as the latest product of growing mind. A distinguished writer has characterized New Thought as *an attitude of mind and not a cult.*

Those who grasp the true meaning and spirit of New Thought or, as it is sometimes called - *progressive* or *unfolding* - thought, do not conceive that a finished or completed system of thought, either philosophical or religious, is a possibility.

All systems of thought change with the flight of time. Decay follows growth. The philosophies and religions of today differ from those of yesterday, and those of tomorrow will be unlike those of today. History alone demonstrates the truth of this statement. This conclusion is inevitable, also, from the very laws that govern man's growth and existence.

Man's body is not the only result of the processes of evolution, growth and development - but his *mind* is, likewise, the product of the same great law. *Man is an evolved and evolving being - physically, mentally and spiritually.*
Change and growth are the silent mandates of divinity. The eternal current ever moves onward. We do not reckon with all of Nature's forces. Back of all, unseen yet all-powerful, is the one universal law or “cosmic urge,” forever pushing and projecting man forward into higher physical, mental and spiritual development.

Through the principle of evolution, physical man was brought to his present state of development. By the same principle, he has come to his present mental and spiritual condition. It is a principle operating throughout the universe.

Evolution is a movement from the lower to the higher; from the simple to the complex; from the inferior to the superior. How can there be a fixed system of thought, a complete philosophy, a perfect theology or a defined religion? For as man grows mentally and spiritually, he moves away from such limitations. As his mental and spiritual visions expand, the very laws of his being lead him to higher and still higher conceptions of philosophical and religious truth. “Through spiritual evolution are we led to God.”

Every system of philosophy or religion is the result of an evolutionary process - the product of the human mind and understanding. When thought changes, when the mind develops, when the understanding is enlarged, philosophies and religions must, likewise, change. This is a self-evident truth. Were it otherwise, systems of thought, philosophies and religions would be greater than the minds that created them and launched them upon the world - the things created would be greater than their creators. Were it not so, systems that have no inherent power of growth would become greater than man, whose very law is growth.

Moreover, fixed systems of thought, either philosophical or religious, are impossible, because they are not the same to any two persons but convey different meanings to each individual. No two persons think alike or have the same conception or understanding of any important subject - least of all of a philosophical or religious subject.
No two individuals are alike or think alike. Duplicates have never been discovered in all the broad domain of nature. Scientists tell us that even the molecules of which our bodies are composed differ one from the other.

No two men in creation think alike.
No two men in creation look alike.
No two men in creation are alike.
No worlds or suns or heavens are alike but are distinct and wear a separate beauty.

No individual can convey his thoughts, ideas and impressions entirely to another. Language, either written or spoken, is but a symbol and at best an imperfect vehicle to convey thought. The meaning of Truth is deflected in its transmission.

Thought is deeper than speech;
feeling deeper than thought;
Souls-to-souls can never teach
what to themselves is taught.

The mental and spiritual visions of man differ as the stars differ in magnitude. The same light does not shine with equal brilliancy on the pathway of each individual. What is light to one may be a shadow to another.

Nor are our ideas changeless and fixed. Our thoughts, conceptions and understandings change with the advancing years, as the soul receives new influx of light. As each morning bathes the earth in new light, so each returning day and every recurring season bring new meanings and understandings to the soul.

The greatest gift from God to man is a growing mind - one that expands from day-to-day, as the light of truth breaks upon it. Were it otherwise, were our ideas fixed and changeless, life would be intolerable and existence a sterile waste. It is the new conception that thrills the soul and broadens the understanding, as the influx of new life brings physical health and growth.
In the search for truth, each ultimate fact becomes a cause; a starting point for the discovery of more truth. Every attainment is the beginning of the next. “Every end is the beginning.”

The discovery of a law of nature is only the forerunner of a more universal law. Thus in the search for truth, the endless tide of progression rolls on, forever conveying to man broader conceptions of truth and carrying him into a higher realization of his relationship with divinity. As man renews his mind and reaches out for larger conceptions of truth, his understanding is enlarged; he gains new viewpoints; his expanded thought is translated and externalized into life; he grows; he advances; he comes into a closer union with God.

Thought is not final. What we last think may be our best thought, but it is not our ultimate thought. It is only the fore-gleams of greater thought. We may not encompass the whole truth, but we can enlarge our conceptions of truth and thus bring ourselves nearer the reality.

We all live, move and have our being in an atmosphere of truth. Truth is only assimilated by the individual. It is not susceptible of monopoly or systematization. It is not encompassed by institutions, but its living spirit is present in every manifested form and object of nature.

We hear much at times about systems, established religions and settled creeds. Every institution insists on laying its foundation on a dogma. It has been well-said that when a church is built over truth, truth flies out at the window!

Every creed and every dogma offered to man undertake to show man's true relationship to God. The major premise of every dogma rests upon an idea of God, and yet no two persons can be found with the same ideas and conceptions of God.

Man's idea of God is but an image of himself. The major premise of every creed is the conception some man had of God.

To talk about settled creeds, the indisputable presumption must be indulged that all other men have the same conception of God.

To have a finished system of thought or a definite creed respecting man's relations to God presupposes a perfect and
complete knowledge and understanding of that relation, which is beyond man's comprehension in his present state of development. When he has attained the mental and spiritual growth necessary to comprehend that relationship in its fullness and entirety, he will possess all knowledge and all wisdom. He will be omniscient.

It took the Christian Church until the fifth century to formulate its creeds, and yet for fourteen centuries it has been striving to settle them and mold them into an acceptable system. Has it accomplished it? Are its adherents any nearer an agreement? It is no nearer the coveted goal than it was fourteen-hundred years ago. It is creed against creed, dogma against dogma, and their adherents still continue to look outward for truth.

Man has caught only a few rays from the great light of truth. Even the agencies of external nature transcend and baffle our understanding. We use electricity; it is in our bodies, we see its manifestations, we harness it, we regulate it - but we know not what it is. How light reaches the earth is a puzzle to the understanding.

Because we do not understand these familiar agencies, the meaning of nature's symbols, must we relinquish all efforts to discover their meaning and to find the laws that govern them? Must we desist in our search for truth?

Science is a search for the secrets of nature. It is an attempt to find the laws governing the universe. The laws of the universe are the laws of God. Science, then, in its broadest aspect, is a search for the knowledge of God.

As man delves more deeply into the secrets of nature, the mysteries of the universe, his spiritual visions will expand, and he will have broader and more comprehensive conceptions of God.

Yet we are told that religion must be let alone; that creeds and theologies must not be disturbed; that they are not the subject of inquiry. How futile the attempt to set bounds to the processes of thought. Why should not man seek for a better religion, as he struggles for better government? Thought was the first step
toward civil liberty. Thought is the first step toward the soul's liberty.

Truth is the understanding of the principles underlying the universe. Truth is as illimitable and boundless as the universe, itself.

Principles and laws are changeless, but our understanding of them changes as our minds gain new conceptions of truth and as they grow and develop.

Only as the mind dwells on principles can it advance to a larger understanding of truth and higher conceptions of life. Principles are the landmarks to which all things are tied. When man departs from them, he enters the jungle of uncertainty and confusion.

To gain higher conceptions of the principles and laws underlying the universe is the real work of man. As he comes into an enlarged understanding of these principles, he directs the current of his life in accordance, therewith. He grows into a closer harmony with nature and enters a richer and more satisfying field of experience.

A moral and religious life must be a growing life, an advancing life, a life positively and constantly constructive. Man is either progressing or receding, spiritually and mentally; he cannot stand still. All nature, with her actions and reactions, proclaims this great truth in every moment of life.

All useful discoveries in science have been the result of progressive and continued thought - thought applied to the discovery of the secrets of nature.

Each discovery has been a stepping-stone to the next. The discovery of each law became a light for the discovery of more laws. Each discovery in nature is a benefit to the race - a step forward - and enlarges man's understanding of God.

Man can grow into a knowledge of his relationship with God and reach out toward the divine goal, only as he renews his mind; only as he enlarges his conception of what is within his consciousness; only as he presses forward into a higher spiritual and mental development.
Why should not new conceptions be applied to religion, as well as governments? Religion relates to man's life and destiny. Government regulates man's relation with his fellow-man. Governments have existed as long as religion. They both sprang into existence with the dawn of reason. They traveled side-by-side down the ages. They have changed as man has progressed in civilization.

We do not yet concede the existence of a perfect government. The model government is not yet in sight. The struggle to improve government goes on as relentlessly as ever before in history. The rights of man forever assert themselves. They have been improved and secured only as he created new ideals of government; only as he applied new thoughts and new conceptions to existing governments.

The creeds which attempt to set bounds to religious thought, which endeavor to define man's conceptions of God, were given to the world when scientific thinking was unknown and by men whose conceptions of nature were no better than idle superstitions. The formulators of the creeds, in their blind endeavor to set up a system founded on the Oriental allegory of the Garden of Eden, apparently did not know that truth has no terminals and cannot be defined or circumscribed.

If they had looked into the great laboratory of nature and given thought and study to her processes, they might have there read that nature tells no falsehoods and that her very law is growth, development and eternal progress. They might hug the delusion that creeds are static; that they are fixed and final - but they could find nothing in nature remotely to hint at limitation or set bounds to her modifying processes.

Change is written everywhere in her symbols. Her pulsations of life, growth and decay, the morning and evening, the return of the seasons - all bespeak eternal change. There are no fixtures in all her domain. She has her seed-time and harvest, her summer and winter, her heat and cold. Her pendulum always swings.

Everything vibrates and oscillates through the broad stretches of infinity. Since motion produces change, everything in nature is passing through perpetual change.
Let us apply the analogies of nature to man - for is man not a part of nature? The physical man is changing as the moments speed away. Scientists, at one time, said our bodies were entirely renewed once in seven years. Now they have reduced the time to twelve months or less. Man is constantly putting off the old and putting on the new - but nature ever tends toward perfection.

From the amoeba to man was a long and tedious struggle, but it marks the developing and perfecting laws of nature. Her movements were ever from the lower to the higher, by the ceaseless and tireless processes of evolution to the highly complex and individualized man, conscious of his own personality and existence.

We recognize man as a co-worker with nature and his right to assist her in her efforts toward perfection. He applies thought to her processes and with her aid brings the flower, the fruit, the nut and the animal to perfection. Is not nature a part of God? Are not these symbols, through which God finds expression and speaks to man? Why not “Burbank” religions, creeds and theologies, as well as the fruits and products of the earth?

When man is a co-worker with nature, he is a co-worker with God. He applies thought to the processes and laws of nature - and behold, she smiles back with fatness and plenty! Then let us, with a sublime courage and kindly spirit, turn the God-given mind in each to higher ideas of God, and God will smile back with prophetic glimpses of the eternal peace and beauty of true religion.

All thought is new. What we know, what we understand, we do not think about. It is only the new that creates interest or enthusiasm. It, alone, awakens the mind and soul to activity and effort. The soul is always thrilled with the reception of new truth.

Without enthusiasm, nothing great was ever accomplished. It has ever been the propelling force of man in every important and momentous undertaking. We instinctively turn from the old to the new. It is the law of mind; it is nature's method; it is God's plan of teaching man to grow.
Emerson said, “What is the ground of this uneasiness of ours, of this old discontent? What is this universal sense of want and ignorance, but the fine innuendo by which the great soul makes its enormous claim?”

*Progress is the law of the soul.* Evermore the mind stretches forth toward the infinite, to grasp and reduce to understanding her mysteries, her wonders and her secrets. To bind it to a fixed creed, a defined religion or system of thought, is as impossible as to pluck the Pleiades from the galaxy of the stars.

The mind that can flash its thoughts across billions of miles, from star to star, in the hundredth-part of a second, as the scientists tell us is possible, cannot be fettered by fixed creeds, dogmas or systems, or bend to the authority or edict of an institution.

As we constantly advance to higher and more perfect ideals, we obtain clearer conceptions of the principles of truth; we expand and extend our spiritual horizon. We thus come to a better understanding of ourselves, our powers and forces, and the meaning of our existence.

*Man grows only as he enlarges his thoughts.* How can his thoughts be enlarged, except as he takes on the new? By no other process can he enlarge his conceptions and understanding of life. As his ideals expand, he comprehends more truth; he moves forward; he extends his visions; he grows; he sees beauty, harmony and law in all created things.

Hence New Thought is a synonym for growth, for development, for perpetual and eternal progress. It recognizes the *superior* and *excellent* in man; it deals not with limitations; it sets no bounds to the soul's progress, for it sees in each soul transcendental faculties, as limitless as infinity itself.


These inquiries do not create surprise, since for centuries past men have been told that a belief in certain formulas were the first step in a religious life. They have become habituated to
creeds, beliefs and churches of authority and therefore, deeply impressed with the thought that, without them, religion must decline and cease to have any vitality and strength.

*New Thought may be said to possess one fixed creed - that of an eternal search for truth.* It is anchored to that one thought. It believes in truth, but it does not accept every conception of truth as final. It realizes that attainment of truth is a process of evolution, growth and development. Man can acquire truth only as he is mentally and spiritually prepared to receive it.

*New Thought is anchored to the idea of finding the good and the beautiful in life; the development of latent possibilities in man* - and that law reigns supreme in the universe. Anchored to these principles, New Thought moves forward in its quest for more truth, in its search for greater light that leads upward and onward, toward a unity with God. It has not come to eradicate the old, except as the old fades away before the advancing light of the new. *However, we have been told that it is dangerous to put new wine into old bottles, lest the bottles may break....*

*New Thought is constructive - not destructive.* It is not here to tear down - but to build up. It employs addition - not subtraction. Its symbol is plus - not minus. It recognizes that the universe is supported upon the enduring foundation of changeless principles and fixed laws; the result of an infinite and divine intelligence.

It realizes, also, that man may grow into a knowledge and understanding of those principles and laws, only as his conscious ideals grow from day-to-day. Its goal is the understanding of life, of man, and a conscious unity of man with God.

If its adherents differ, it is only in methods and not in the end sought. It does not enjoin methods. There are many avenues leading to truth. The arc-light sends out a myriad of rays, but they all lead to the one light.

The adherents of New Thought worship the omnipresent God; the indwelling God, in whom we live, move and have our being. They do not conceive of God as distant or separated from man, but as a universal spirit, permeating all nature - finding its highest expression in man.
No better conception of the God of New Thought can be expressed than was given by Pythagoras to the world, six centuries before the Christian Era. Listen to the great message:

God is the universal spirit
that diffuses itself over all nature.
All beings receive their life from him.
There is but one only God, who is not,
as some are apt to imagine,
seated above the world,
beyond the orb of the Universe;
but being himself all-in-all,
he sees all the beings
that fill his immensity;
the only principle,
the light of heaven,
the father of all.
He produces everything.
He orders and disposes of all things.
He is the reason, the life and motion of all things.

New Thought teaches that the revelation of God to man is a continuous process through nature, through reason; the whispering of intuition through the events and experiences of life. The objects of nature convey their message, only as they awaken the divine impulse within; the desire to come into harmony with God.

Molding our lives more and more into the Divine likeness is the essential thought in any worthy religion; as Plato taught - the highest aspiration of man is the “free imitation of God.”

To teach man to come into a conscious realization of the divinity within and the unity of man and God, so that out of the sublimity of his soul, he can say, with the Gentle Master, “The Father and I are one,” is the supreme purpose and meaning of New Thought.
§

Chapter II:

~ ORIGIN OF THE CREEDS ~

No! such a God my worship may not win,
   Who lets the world about his finger spin,
A thing externe; my God must rule within,
   And whom I own for Father, God, Creator,
Hold nature in Himself; Himself in nature;
   And in his kindly arms embraced, the whole,
Doth live and move by his pervading soul.

~ Goethe

That there may be a better understanding and clearer comprehension of the fundamental principles of New Thought and wherein it differs from the recognized systems of Orthodox theology, I shall undertake to institute a comparison between some of its teachings and the doctrines of Orthodox religions. This plan of statement is adopted, because in no other manner can the distinctions and divergences between the principles of New Thought and those of the recognized theologies be so accurately measured and determined.

At this time there seems to be an imperfect and mystified conception and understanding in the minds of many persons - adherents both of New Thought and the Orthodox religions - of the real message of New Thought and what it represents and
teaches. This is not surprising, since the Christian religion - although its followers claim for it a different origin and to be founded on different ideas and conceptions - adopted in a more-or-less modified form many of the ceremonials and rituals and some of the teachings of the ancient pagan religions and persistently adhere to them and treat them as essential, even to the present day. It is not, therefore, anomalous that there should be a tendency among the followers of both New Thought and the Orthodox adherents to combine some of the philosophy of New Thought with the dogmas and creeds of the Orthodox religions.

The plan of comparing the principles of the philosophy of New Thought with those of the Orthodox religions is adopted, not for a critical purpose, but with a view to finding the initial and important points of difference between the two and clearly differentiating them, so that they can be more readily and clearly comprehended.

Ecclesiastical authorities, both in the past and present, have not encouraged a critical or careful research and study of the foundations upon which theological structures are built. The theologian has been able to vault over great gaps in history with the nimbleness of an athlete, but the inquiring and careful layman might not be able to accomplish the same feat. In the Catholic Church the adherents have been told, in unmistakable language, that they must accept the dicta and authority of the Church as conclusive and final.

In the Orthodox branches of the Protestant churches a critical review of the origin of the creeds is not encouraged, and particular beliefs and dogmas are enjoined as paramount and absolutely necessary to salvation and that any doubts, thereof, would unmistakably incur the Divine displeasure. With them, the search for truth is of less importance than the acceptance of certain beliefs.

This may be called an incredulous age, but it is, nevertheless, a reasoning, thinking and investigating age. Mind is at last becoming free. It is asserting itself as never before. It is refusing to be bound by the edicts and commands of authority, which we shall discover in a later page was invented for the sole purpose
of silencing the reasoning and investigations of man.

In this twentieth century, too, men are asking why they must be bound by fixed beliefs, which the reason rejects - and why it is wrong to question them. Man finds himself endowed with reason and is conscious of his reasoning faculties - the one quality and divine gift that raises him above the animal - and asks why he may not exercise those powers in the investigation of religious questions, as well as all others. Men are asking these questions:

Why are the exponents of the creeds so persistent in enforcing their beliefs upon others? Why are they so uncharitable to those who differ, when the mind cannot accept their beliefs? Why the manifestation of so much displeasure at what are called “unbelievers?”

Many worthy persons are deeply grieved at what seems to be a growth of independent thought. They look upon modern progressive thought as an evidence of a decline in religion. They worship creeds in the name of religion. They reject truth in the name of creeds. They see in ceremonials and forms the highest expression of religion. They worship the old and distrust the new. They assume that a change of thought cannot be productive of any good, but must result in the subversion of all religious thought. They assume that it will lead man from all true considerations of a religious life.

All religion is based on man's conception of God. Because my conception differs from yours, is it fair to quarrel with me because of that? That our views of an infinite God differ should cause no surprise. It does not follow, because men question existing beliefs, that they are not deeply religious themselves. That they are thinking at all about religion is evidence that they are, in fact, religious. That they are not satisfied with the old is evidence that they are trying to find a better and more satisfying religion.

Man ought not to be blamed for seeking the religion that best satisfies the wants of his own soul. Carlyle said, “We will understand that destruction of old forms is not destruction of everlasting substances; that skepticism is not an end, but a beginning.”

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It has been well-said that man never really understands a truth until he has contended against it. In this age of intellectual and religious liberty, we ought to be able to discuss, in a dispassionate manner, all subjects to which the mind is directed, whether religious or secular.

In that spirit, let us proceed to a study of New Thought and the Orthodox religions, and find the important lines of divergence:

*He who will not reason is a bigot;*

*He who dares not reason is a slave.*

The theology of all so-called Orthodox churches - the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic and the various branches of the Protestant Church - is fundamentally and in all essential points the same. Their basic principles are the same, and they draw their life and inspiration from the one identical source.

The Reformation was not caused by any important differences between the fundamental creeds and doctrines of the Church.

When Protestantism broke away from the Catholic Church, it was not because it disputed the underlying principles of the Church, but mainly and essentially because of certain abuses and practices it was claimed had grown up in the Catholic Church. The sale of indulgences and like practices contributed largely to the separation.

When Luther separated from the Catholic Church, he still clung to the theological ideas of the separation of God and man, original sin, the vicarious atonement, that none outside the Church could be saved, the doctrine of transubstantiation in reference to the sacraments, the denial of the freedom of the will - all of which, as we shall hereafter find, were first promulgated by the Church while under the dominion of the Latin bishops. He announced the doctrine of justification by faith and greatly magnified the functions and importance of Satan - so much so that we are told that he once hurled an inkstand at the phantom he called the devil!

John Calvin declared that God was outside the framework of the universe and denounced the idea of an immanent God. He
adopted from the Catholic Church all the doctrines of a vicarious atonement, including that of election, which was first announced by Augustine in the fifth century, A.D. The creeds of both the older and newer churches after the Reformation continued substantially the same, and they remain the same today.

The creeds of the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic and the several branches of the Protestant Church are based on the following fundamental ideas and declarations:

_First_, that man was estranged from God and became a fallen being by reason of Adam's sin in partaking of the forbidden fruit, when the serpent said to Eve, “Your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” _Second_, that by reason, thereof, man became, by nature, sinful and lost; _third_, that because of his lost condition, it became necessary to have a vicarious atonement to reconcile God to man; _fourth_, that God brought forth Jesus for that purpose; that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary and became the vicarious atonement for man's redemption; _fifth_, that Jesus was crucified, was buried and resurrected and ascended into heaven and there sits on the right hand of God, to judge the quick and the dead; _sixth_, that a belief in all this is necessary and essential for man's salvation and a life of happiness in a future world; that if man will repent of his sins and believe this, his offenses will all be blotted out, and he will be saved in heaven.

The three basic ideas are: the fall of man; the vicarious atonement - and an absolute belief in these propositions. This statement might be enlarged and amplified, but in the end, we should come back to the same propositions. This will, no doubt, be accepted by theologians as a fair and impartial statement of the underlying principles of the creeds of all the so-called Orthodox denominations.

It is true, the Catholic Church, in addition to the dogmas above expressed, still holds to the doctrines of the authority of the Church, Apostolic succession, priestly intervention, etc., which some of the Protestant churches have omitted from their creeds. But in substance, the theologies of the Orthodox Protestant and Catholic churches are the same.
The adherents of New Thought cannot accept these views of Orthodox theologians, for two reasons. First, because they do not rest upon any adequate or sufficient historical basis; secondly, because these dogmas find their only support in the theory and supposition of the separation of God from man - which the advocates of New Thought cannot admit or concede.

How many modern Christians know anything of the origin and history of the creeds and dogmas to which they yield implicit faith and obedience? They have been unqualifiedly accepted, without inquiry, doubt or investigation. For fifteen centuries, every doubt and inquiry about their origin, their reasonableness and truth have persistently been frowned upon by priest and theologian, alike. They have held up doubt as a deadly offense and investigation as treason to the authority of the Church - that is, divine authority. They said, “Believe what we tell you, or we will burn you as a heretic at the stake.” Such superstitions still grip the minds of millions who call themselves free.

Many illusions vanish, when we take a survey of history and look into the origin of beliefs and the dogmas upon which they are based. We hear much, even in the twentieth century, about the early history of the Church; its beliefs, its doctrines and revelations - with the plain inference, if not with the positive statements, that they were all given to the early fathers of the Church by the Apostles, themselves. To support that claim, the theory of Apostolic succession was invented as a valuable and necessary expedient.

As a starting-point in this inquiry, it is well to remember that there is a vast hiatus in the early history of the Church, and no historical data of any value exist to bridge it over. Between the Apostles and the first of the so-called fathers of the Church, there is an interval upon which no historical light is shed. From the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, to the middle of the second century, more than two generations lived and passed from the stage of existence, and yet that whole period furnishes no authentic history of the early Church. During that interval, there is not a word of Church history that can be drawn from writers.
who have been designated as Apostolic fathers. The first mention of the doctrine of Apostolic succession was by Cyprian, about the middle of the third century.

It is proper to keep in mind that St. Augustine, in the fifth century, first formulated the modern doctrines of the Church, invented many of its creeds and dogmas, and adopted the Latin idea of establishing a Church to govern and rule the world. From that date, Roman theology governed the Church and gave to the West its creeds and dogmas.

Greek thought prevailed in the first centuries of the Church - Clement, Origen and Athanasius being among its most able exponents. It was mainly their thought that shaped the theology of the early Church. They lived nearer the age of the Apostles than the Latin theologians, and it is a reasonable inference that, if the creeds and dogmas later announced by the latter had had any existence in their day, they would have heard of them and given them to the world.

It is interesting to modern progressive thinkers who teach the immanency of God - that God is a universal intelligence, expressing himself in all nature, indwelling in man - that the early fathers of the Church taught the same great truths. Like the Stoic philosophy which, on the very eve of its decline, produced such men as Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius - they taught that God is indwelling in nature; that the world was directed and controlled by an immanent life of whose “beauty and glory, outward nature is the direct manifestation” and that the spirit of man expressed the highest revelation of the actual presence of the divine.

They said man was created in the spiritual image of God; that because he was made in the spiritual image of God, it is the law of his being that he may rise into the likeness of God and respond to the divine call; that the law of God is not found in external commandments but is written in the consciousness of man, himself.

Nowhere did they teach the fall of man or that he was separated from God, or that God was displeased with his conduct. They saw in Jesus the normal man; the master idealist
of the race; the exemplar set before man as a pattern toward whose perfection he should strive and aspire in the experience of life.

The theology of St. Augustine reversed all this and made Adam, and not Jesus, the normal man. And this is the view of the Orthodox theologies, even to this day - Protestant and Catholic, alike. The Greek fathers also taught that the mission of Jesus was to reveal man to himself and illuminate his soul with a consciousness of man's own divine nature.

They did not speculate on the origin of evil and knew nothing of the doctrine of total depravity, of a vicarious atonement, endless punishment, infant damnation, election, Purgatory and many other beliefs and dogmas that are still clung to by both Catholic and Protestant, and regarded by them as essential to salvation.

To them, the resurrection was the immediate standing up again in the greater fullness of life - a spiritual resurrection, not a resurrection of the body. They said the only revelation is within human consciousness and not in anything external to man's nature; that the kingdom of God, as Jesus taught, was within; that it is not through grace, coming from without - but by a voluntary preparation of the soul in the discipline and education of life, that man comes into a harmonious and conscious relationship with God.

These views were presented with substantial unanimity by Clement, Origen and Athanasius and reflected the prevailing theological sentiments from the latter part of the second century until the latter part of the fourth. Although Clement proclaimed the immanent and universal God indwelling in man and knew nothing of the fall of man and a vicarious atonement, yet the Catholic Church saw fit to canonize him as a saint and revered him as such, until the close of the fourteenth century, when his name was stricken from the calendar of saints under the pontificate of Clement VIII. It would be interesting to know in which instance the Catholic Church manifested its infallible wisdom - when it placed a halo around his name as a saint or when it discovered his teachings were contrary to the doctrines
of the Church, and on that account struck his name from the calendar of saints.

Soon after the passing of the Greek theologians, the Church came under the influence of Latin theology. The Greek loved philosophy; the Roman loved power. The Greek revered truth and saw in the visible objects of nature God's symbols and gave their meaning to man. The Roman cared little for philosophy but loved to exercise his genius for purposes of dominion, conquest, splendor, power and obedience. It took as its prototype the Roman government, whose genius was conquest, power and slavery. Roman theology was formulated to that end.

It found its champion in Augustine - the so-called St. Augustine, who flourished and wrote in the fifth century A.D. It is to him that both the modern Catholic and Protestant churches of the Orthodox faith owe the origin, existence and establishment of their present dogmas and creeds.

He taught that man is wholly separated from God. He was the author of the doctrine of original sin and the total depravity of man - the only basis upon which a vicarious atonement could be sustained. He also invented the doctrine of predestination. His fertile mind also formulated the dogma of eternal punishment, as well as the idea of Purgatory after death. He promulgated the doctrine of Apostolic succession, which was first invented, as we have seen, by Cyprian.

Tertullian, the Roman lawyer who lived in the early part of the third century, in his "Prescription of Heresy" first proclaimed the idea of the absolute authority of the Church. The following language is ascribed to Tertullian at a later date, "It is a fundamental human right, a privilege of nature, that every man should worship according to his own conviction. It is no part of religion to coerce religion. It should be embraced freely and not forced." Nevertheless, his original argument was so valuable that the Church adopted it bodily and made use of it, even down to the present.

Augustine found the idea of absolute authority convenient to silence questioners he could not satisfy and to dispose of inquiries he could not answer; hence he proclaimed the authority
as supreme over the wills and consciences of men. With him, none outside the Church could be saved, and unbaptized infants and heathen were eternally lost. The necessity of baptism, sacraments, inspiration of the Bible, priestly mediation and other dogmas originated with Augustine. In other words, they were invented by him as conveniences in making the Church a dominating power in the world.

It might be of interest to the Orthodox Protestant to stop and contemplate the point that all the important tenets of his creeds had their origin with Augustine; that he also promulgated the doctrine of the authority of the Church, which subordinates the wills and consciences of men to its control, as well as priestly mediation and other cherished doctrines of the Catholic Church. “But,” someone says, “What authority have you for these bold assertions? What proof have you of these startling statements?”

In good faith, it may be answered that all these statements are supported by historic data of the highest order. If our Orthodox friends wish to read them in concrete form, they can find them in a volume written by a man, Orthodox in every respect, a professor in an Orthodox theological institution.

In a volume entitled, "The Continuity of Christian Thought," written by Alexander V. G. Allen, professor at the Episcopal Theological School of Cambridge, all the foregoing statements and many interesting facts relating to the early Church may be found.

Let us read from the volume some of the thoughts of Athanasius, who lived from 296 to 373 A.D.:

The revelation of God is written in the human consciousness; the ground of all certitude is within man, not in any authority external to his nature. In order to know the way that leads to God and to take it with certainty, we have no need of foreign aid, but of ourselves, alone. As God is above all, the way which leads to him is neither distant nor outside of us, nor difficult to find. Since we have in us the kingdom of God, we are able easily to contemplate and conceive the King of the Universe - the salutary reason of the universal Father. If anyone asks of me, “What is the way?” I answer, “It is the soul of each and the
intelligence which it encloses.”

The sublimity of these thoughts cannot be harmonized with the dogmatic utterances of an Augustine. They leave no room for the dogma of the separation of God from man, a necessary premise for the hypothesis of a vicarious atonement. The teachings of Athanasius would find ready response with the most advanced of modern, progressive thinkers.

Let us quote further from the same volume:

None of the individual doctrines or tenets which have so long been the objects of dislike and aversion to the modern theological mind formed any constituent part of Greek theology. The tenets of original sin and total depravity, as expounded by Augustine and received by the Protestant churches from the Latin Church - the guilt of infants, the absolute necessity of baptism in order to receive salvation; the denial of the freedom of the will; the doctrine of election; the idea of a schism in the divine nature, which required a satisfaction to retributive justice, before love could grant forgiveness; the atonement, as a principle of equivalence, by which the sufferings of Christ were weighed in a balance against the endless sufferings of the race; the notion that revelation is confined within the book, guaranteed by the inspiration of the letter or by a line of priestly curators in Apostolic descent; the necessity of miracles as the strongest evidence of the truth of a revealed religion; the doctrine of a sacramental grace and priestly mediation; the idea of a church as identical with some particular form of ecclesiastical organization - these and other tenets, which have formed the gist of modern religious controversy, find no place in the Greek theology and are irreconcilable with its spirit.

Again, the same authority says, “Clement does not speculate on the nature or origin of evil. He knows nothing of the later dogma of the fall of man in Adam, nor of Adam as the federal representative of mankind.”

The same author further observes that the Rev. J. M. Neale, in the preface of his translation of the Eastern Liturgies, remarks that he finds no trace in them of the modern theory of the atonement, as it has been held in Latin and Protestant churches,
according to which the sufferings of Christ were an equivalent for human punishment.

To show that Grecian theological thought was predominant in the Christian Church until the Augustine era, it is interesting to note that St. Augustine, himself, once advocated the doctrine of the immanent, the omnipresent, universal God - ideas directly at variance with those he afterward proclaimed, when he conceived the idea of establishing an ecclesiastical hierarchy to rule the world.

At one time in his career, apparently without difficulty, he wrote as follows. “For God is diffused through all things. He said himself by the prophet, 'I fill heaven and earth,' and it is said unto him in a certain Psalm, 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven - thou art there; if I make my bed in hell - behold, thou art there,' because God is substantially diffused everywhere.”

At a later date, Augustine, without difficulty, could separate God from man and supply priestly intermediaries without number, as ecclesiastical middlemen between man and God.

In the same volume, we read, “For a thousand years, those who came after him [Augustine] did little more than reaffirm his teaching, and so deep is the hold which his long supremacy has left upon the Church, that his opinions have become identified with divine revelation and are all that the majority of the Christian world yet know of the religion of Christ.”

It is evident that these creeds and beliefs could not have been perpetuated through fifteen centuries, save for that convenient dogma that the wills and consciences of men must be subordinated to ecclesiastical authority and that other doctrine, observed and fostered by Orthodox Protestantism, that a belief in certain formulas is necessary to salvation and that all reasoning and inquiry about their truth must be effectually and forever stalled.

An historical review of the creeds and a religion professedly based upon the teachings of the Gentle Master reveals many strange situations and anomalies. The creeds of the Christian Church originated among dissensions, and they have bred
contentions, strifes and quarrels from their beginning to the present.

We read in Galatians that all was not peace and harmony between Paul and Peter. Their unseemly quarrel was presumably due to a profound jealousy on the part of Peter, over the fact that circumstances had not brought Paul into the company and society of Jesus during his sojourn in Palestine.

Perhaps one of the serious faults of humanity has been unduly to value and emphasize the lives and characters of those who lived in the distant past. We find Tertullian, in the early part of the third century, condemning heretics and asserting the authority of the Church. At the great council of the Church at Ephesus, A.D. 431, violent quarrels ensued over the question whether Christ had two natures or one, and similar questions. Let a modern historian tell the result:

A bishop was kicked to death by another bishop in the course of their arguments, and one-hundred and thirty-seven corpses were left in a church to attest the convincing reasons by which the most ruffianly side proved its Orthodoxy. At the fifth general council, by a decree, the Church expressed its gentleness as follows, “Whoever says that the torments of the demons and impious men will at length come to an end, let him be damned. Anathema to Origen, Adamantius, who taught these things.” Even the former head of the Church did not escape their fury.

The various creeds are as widely separated and no nearer a union than at any period since the first creed was promulgated. Their peace is outward, only. Their love and respect for each other are no greater than when the Roundheads contended against the Cavaliers.

My Orthodox friend - is it a pleasant picture to contemplate? Are these contentions, strifes and differences to continue forever? Why this tenacity over the shading of creeds and beliefs? Why this jealousy over speculative theories?

The philosopher, looking for a cause for every effect, is prompted to make this inquiry, “Does any part of the entire structure stand on a foundation of truth?”
Chapter III:
~ NEW THOUGHT & THE CREEDS ~

As wider skies broke on his view,
God greatened in his growing mind;
Each year he dreamed his God anew,
And left his older God behind.
He saw the boundless scheme dilate
In star and blossom, sky and clod;
And as the universe grew great,
He dreamed for it a Greater God.

Those who worship the immanent God, the indwelling God, cannot accept the theological opinions of the Orthodox churches, for the further reason that they are all based on the dogmas of the fall of man and his separation from God and on miracles and other medieval conceptions. From a careful analysis of the propositions embraced in the Orthodox theology, it follows as a necessary and logical conclusion, that each one hinges upon the other - and they must all stand or fall, together.

If man never incurred the displeasure of God and never was estranged from him - or in other words, never fell - then it follows that there was no necessity, occasion or reason for a vicarious atonement to establish his relationship with God. In other words, if man never was separated from God, no vicarious
atonement was necessary to restore peace and harmony between him and God.

It is also apparent that, if man was never in a lost or fallen state or condition - was never separated from God - the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus, the Gentle Seer of Galilee, was a useless and needless requirement; nay, a cruel tragedy.

It follows, also, that if man was never separated from God, the necessity for a belief in the vicarious atonement cannot possibly exist.

These conclusions seem to follow logically from a fair, candid and careful consideration of the various propositions embraced in the Orthodox scheme of man's redemption. It will be observed that the whole Orthodox plan is based on a dualistic conception of man's relation with God - in other words, that God dwells apart from man, separated by a gulf and that Jesus is the only intermediary to bridge that chasm.

The moral effect of the doctrine that man was estranged from God and is by nature weak and sinful, when viewed from the standpoint of modern psychology, as well as some of the tendencies that flow from the belief in a vicarious atonement, blotting out of man's iniquities and the unethical influences flowing from such teaching, will be considered in subsequent chapters.

Perhaps no other thought of God has produced so much discord in the human race as the dualistic conception of God and man - the dogma that separated man from God. The Church, instead of uniting men, has separated them. If its teachings are true, why is this so?

*Truth leads to harmony. Truth is harmony.*

*Falsehood leads to strife. Falsehood is strife.*

When man was told of his total depravity, God's displeasure with him on account of the act of his first ancestor and his entire separation from God, he instinctively looked for a mediator to plead with God for a restoration of that lost relationship. This gave rise to the idea of priestly mediation and furnished the priesthood an opportunity to inject and wedge itself in between man and God, interpret God's will to man - and it has held that
vantage point over man for fifteen centuries.

No great teacher ever separated God from man. Man was never separated from God, except in consciousness only, as he believed it. His theological teaching caused him to believe it. He felt his degrading position in the great scheme of nature. When the idea of total depravity once took possession of his mind, he became the easy prey of those who desired to control him. Is it strange that man has, at times, been weak and vacillating, when his theology made him an outcast?

As Emerson wisely observes, “That which shows God within me, fortifies me. That which shows him without me, makes me a wart and a wen.”

Never was a more ingenious idea invented for the control of man than his separation from God; that he had lost the divine image and was a spiritual mendicant; a wanderer over the face of the earth, without compass and without chart. Out of the theological mists and miasma of the past has come duality. Under the glare of a spiritual sunlight will come unity - unity of life, unity of intelligence, unity of man and God.

The adherents of New Thought entertain different ideas and conceptions of man's relation to God. Their views are widely divergent from those of the Orthodox theologian, and these differences are fundamental. By no process of reasoning or logic can they be made to harmonize or blend. They represent the extreme opposite poles of thought; the one holding to the dual conception of God and man - the other, the unity of God and man.

Those who accept progressive ideas, as taught by New Thought, accept evolution as nature's method of creation; that, so far as they can observe, the laws of evolution are operating throughout the universe and that all animate life on this planet is under the dominion and control of these laws. Evolution may now be regarded as universally acknowledged among scientists and by all educated men, in every part of the world.

Evolution, like every new idea and discovery, was compelled to fight its way to recognition, because it was thought it would disturb the then-existing idea of creation, as taught in Genesis.
But a few years' time has wrought a great change in thought, regarding the truth of evolution.

When the writer was a student at the Ohio Wesleyan University, evolution was universally frowned-upon and stigmatized as an atheistic doctrine tending to undermine the foundation of the Christian religion. On one occasion, a distinguished bishop was brought to the institution to preach a sermon to the students against it, who warned them not to be deceived by its false teachings. Darwin and Huxley were then regarded as the arch-enemies of religion. But it is a happy circumstance that this is all changed and that all thoughtful men now accept evolution as a recognized truth and nature's method of creation.

The adherents of New Thought conceive of man as the result and product of evolution; that he was evolved from the lowest form of animal life; that he is now the acme of all her operations, representing the highest and most perfect type of all intelligent and sentient beings. They conceive that, in the long travail through the countless ages from man's beginning, there may have been periods when his progress was slow, when his advance was halted, even intervals when his steps were backward - but on the whole, and as one grand triumphal progression, man's growth has been steadily, persistently and eternally onward and upward, to his present mental and spiritual stature.

Whittier said:

*Step by step since time began
We see the steady gain of Man.*

They do not regard man as sinful or weak by nature, or that he was ever a fallen being, or that he was ever separated or estranged from God, or that he ever lost the divine ideal.

They conceive of man as created, not in the physical image, but in the moral, intellectual and spiritual image of God.

They cannot agree with the Orthodox conception that God ever demanded a vicarious atonement for the redemption of man or that an infinitely tender and just God would exact such a requirement - much less of so pure and noble a soul as Jesus of
They cannot think that God condemned the entire race forever for one act of their common ancestor, when that one act was an effort to step forward and move upward in the evolution and progress of man; an effort to rise above the animal and become a man. Such a conception debases God and gives him lower moral qualities than man.

They look upon the account of man's disobedience and expulsion from the Garden of Eden, related in Genesis, as a bit of Oriental imagery; an allegory, the Oriental method of teaching, designed to teach another lesson, rather than the forced interpretation given by the theologian. The Western theologian has employed Western ideas to interpret an Oriental document; hence, he has not caught its meaning or truth.

Alas, how much error and wrong have crept into the world to harass and bewilder man, from an interpretation of allegories as facts and offering them to the world as truths.

“But,” someone asks, “Do the advocates of New Thought believe in and accept the divinity of Jesus?”

Yes. They go even farther than their Orthodox friends in accepting that divinity - they do not require the performance of miracles as a necessary step to prove the divinity of that Gentle Soul. They see divinity in every act of his life. Whoever, in the sincerity of his soul, could utter the Sermon on the Mount, requires no other proof of his divinity. They see divinity, also, in every man; slumbering, perhaps, and only waiting to be called forth into development and expression.

With most of us, the Christ within is asleep in the ship, and only as the winds and waves of life beat therein, threatening us with shipwreck and destruction, do we find courage to wake the Gentle Master to still the raging tempests. If the sole divinity of Jesus is denied, the divinity of all men is affirmed.

Jesus taught the unity of life; the unity of God and man. He understood the great secret of life and developed the divine principle in himself, so that in the consciousness of truth, he could say, “I and the Father are one.” He is the one great masterful ideal, toward whose perfection man should continually
and forever strive.

The advocates of New Thought conceive of the vicarious atonement as a plan which permits the individual to shift his responsibility to another and, therefore, as an evasion of the law of cause and effect, that:

"Whatsoever a man soweth; that shall he also reap."

Let this thought sink deep into your soul.

Neither do they agree that a belief in a particular creed is a prerequisite to man's eternal welfare. The thinking man cannot set aside the results of reason and the voice of intuition to adopt a particular belief, because he is so bidden, when the voice of his own soul conveys a different meaning. Jesus had little or nothing to say about belief, but he had much to say of life and methods of living. They regard man as possessing the potential attributes of divinity within himself and that he is conscious of these divine qualities which make him man; that it is man's privilege, duty and function to develop those qualities, attributes and possibilities in the great school and discipline of life. They concede that, as God by his creative processes brought man to his conscious state, so it is man's business and duty to perfect himself. This is the true meaning and purpose of life.

Character is the true vision of the soul; the ideal set before man; the goal of all his endeavors. They do not recognize or accept miracles, according to the Orthodox conception and belief, as possible in a universe governed, controlled and operated under universal law. They look upon what many people regard as miracles, coming as special interpretations of God or otherwise, as the result of law; as having no existence, except as creations of the imagination of man.

They cannot conceive of any reason for bringing any person into the world by immaculate conception, but regard nature's method of producing man as entirely holy - for nature, herself, is holy. They regard the accounts of the various immaculate conceptions of the several saviors of the world, recorded in history, as traditions and nothing more; probably having their origin in the ancient myth that the sun was born of the dawn, and the dawn was a virgin.
It has been said that any distrust of the permanence of law would paralyze the faculties of man.

In one sense, everything in nature, from leaf to planet, is a miracle; not in the sense that they are not controlled by universal law, but only in the sense that we do not understand them. Man, himself, is the standing miracle of creation. Walt Whitman said:

*Seeing, hearing, feeling are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle; and a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.*

Nevertheless, they are all under the control and operation of universal law.

It is a fundamental idea of New Thought that the universe, in all its parts, is governed by universal law; that from the smallest atom up through the infinite planetary systems, law reigns supreme; that the law of compensation prevails and holds its sway over every thought and act of man - *that whatsoever he sows, that shall he also reap.*

This law is written in luminous letters on the very dome of the universe. It stands before man's face, so that none can escape it, and none can deny it. This law is as inexorable in the mental, moral and spiritual world as in the physical universe.

Modern science, reaching out toward a solution of ultimate questions, is now proclaiming the universal reign of law - the unity of all substance and the existence of universal intelligence in nature.

The adherents of New Thought conceive of a universal mind or divine intelligence, pervading and permeating the universe, manifesting in all forms of creation; that there is also a unity of life and that each individual is a part of that intelligence and that universal life and spirit.

The visible forms of nature are the expressions of that divine life and intelligence, and the same life and intelligence that seek expression in the bud, the grass blade, the flower, the bird and animal are also seeking expression in man. This awakens in man a kinship with all created things.
In man, this life and intelligence find their highest manifestation and expression. He stands at the summit of all created beings - the most finished product in the great evolutionary struggle. A conscious being, aware of his own kinship with God, he walks the earth erect and can say, “I am divine.”

Someone has said, “God sleeps in the rock, smiles in the flower and comes to consciousness in man.” This unity of life, this divine intelligence, pervading all nature and rising to its highest expression in man is the basic fact in the philosophy of New Thought.

The ultimate purpose of all true religious teaching is to produce a realizing sense of this consciousness in man. This consciousness enlarges the vision of man's soul and awakens in him a knowledge and true estimate of the boundless possibilities within himself.

Pope caught a vision of this great truth:

All are but parts of one stupendous whole  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;  
That changed through all, and yet in all the same,  
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame,  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees.

Someone says, “All that has been said about New Thought is but a restatement of the old pantheistic philosophy.”

For the sake of argument, suppose we concede it. What then? If pantheism means that God is omnipresent in the universe, in nature; both spirit and substance; subject and object; being all-in-all, the visible and invisible; that the universe is a living whole, expressing itself in infinite variety - are you still opposed to pantheism?

When you see in nature the manifestation of an intelligence; in every cell and bud, the interplay of forces producing movement and repose, unity and variety; the recurring seasons; the planets obeying a hidden law; growth and decay; the conservation of energy; actions and reactions, all producing a perfect equilibrium - does it not suggest to you an infinite life, a
supreme intelligence and that all is God, and God is all?

Is not a spiritual pantheism more desirable than an absentee God - a God of finite proportions, dwelling in some distant part of the universe? We must have one or the other. Which shall it be?

The highest conception of religion, as taught by New Thought, is to unfold and develop the soul into harmonious relations with divine intelligence and thus come into spiritual unity with God.

As the effect of the Orthodox religions is to separate God from man, and New Thought conceives of God as within man - their ideals of prayer are not the same. The one prays to an absentee God; the other to the God within.

True prayer is not debasing the soul in the presence of divinity. It is lifting the soul up. The divine intelligence is conscious of man's innermost thoughts, before they are uttered.

Real prayer is not asking selfish favors. It is bringing the conscious mind into touch with the universal or divine mind. It is going into the closet and closing the door; that is, shutting out consciousness of external things, as Jesus taught, and there communing with infinite intelligence, in secret.

I like the prayer of Socrates:

Give me inward beauty of soul,
    and let the inward and outward man be at one.

Emerson says:

Prayer that craves a particular commodity,
    anything less than all good is vicious.
Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life
    from the highest point of view.
It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul.
It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good.

“Be still and know that I am God” is the voice of the soul in the true attitude of prayer. Goethe speaks of prayer as God seeking for himself and meeting himself in man. Someone has defined prayer as “the intercourse between oneself and our ideal companion.”
Prayer is lifting up the soul to him who “has no eye, and yet He is looking at us; no ears, and yet He hears us; no face, and yet His smile greets us.”

True prayer is lifting the soul into an atmosphere where one feels the glow, the beauty and harmony of the infinite presence, and over his soul play vibrations from the source of eternal truth and love.

God does not come at the sound of a bell or the blare of trumpets, but silently, as the dew is distilled upon the grass-blade, bringing life, growth and beauty to the plant; so unheard and unannounced, God comes to refresh the soul with his unseen presence and power.

The votaries of New Thought do not depend upon one book or all books for their ideas, conceptions and knowledge of God. To them, that book only is inspired which inspires man and awakens in him higher purposes in life and a closer unity with God.

The author of every book that speaks the truth was first inspired. If God at any age of the world inspired the author of a book, no reason can be conceived why he should not inspire others in every age - even this. Why should not God speak to Emerson, as well as to Moses - or to Walt Whitman, as well as to St. Paul?

To attribute the authorship of a book to God or to divine inspiration is not an act of wisdom, unless in every line and precept it breathes a pure morality and sets the highest ideals before man. The mistakes, low standards of morality, unethical teachings and unworthy examples are thereby unduly emphasized.

It is the consensus of opinion among profound thinkers that many things contained in the Bible might have been omitted, with resulting profit to the race. It records that some of God's chosen people, those held up to the world as the highest exponents of wisdom, freely indulged in the custom of taking many wives and concubines. In the same volume are accounts of trickery and deceptions in business matters; cruelties and conduct in wars, that would not be tolerated in this or any other.
civilized age - and the God of the Jews apparently gave it all his approving smile.

Every man pictures God according to the qualities of his own thought. If he is material and gross, he worships a gross God. If he is spiritual, he worships a spiritual God. Every man's God is a reflection of himself.

We read much in the Bible of an anthropomorphic God. Much there is written of an angry, revengeful and jealous God. These are not commendable traits in man - how much less must they be in a God? Such examples set low ideals for man.

It has been said, “He that knows but one Bible, knows none.” There is perhaps much truth in the statement. The Vedas and Zend-Avesta contain many truths later found in the Hebrew Bible. How many who accept the Bible literally and as the inspired word of God ever read those ancient Bibles?

We can find much wisdom outside of written books. The book of nature is always an open volume, and we may read God's thoughts and secrets from its pages and thereby get wisdom and understanding. The rocks and trees and running brooks preach sermons more eloquently than the human voice and teach profounder lessons than were ever read in books or taught by man to man.

In the book of nature, we catch glimpses of eternal beauty, of an ever-pervading harmony, of infinite power, of universal order, of an abiding and constant love. In that book, man's kinship with divinity is revealed.

The music of his voice is heard,
In every message of the bird;
This carpet of the good green grass,
Where softest feet of springtime pass,
It is the cover of his book,
Wherein we only need to look,
To read how patient we should be,
That have his gifts of grass and tree.

“The spiritual principle within men can know and interpret nature, because the link that binds together all parts of nature into one, organic, correlated whole is, itself, a spiritual principle.
My mind can understand nature, because nature, herself, is the revelation of mind; the manifestation of a principle; the expression of one root idea.”

To him whose soul is attuned to nature's laws, God appears in the starry vault of night, in the mellow glow of the sunset, in the flower by the wayside, in the music of the child's voice and in the majestic qualities of man. We do not all read these meanings and discover these beauties and harmonies in nature's symbols. Nature gives us back only what we lay at her feet. If we come to nature with an unseeing eye, we see not; if we listen to her message with a dull ear, we hear not; if we call to her with listless purpose, she answers not.

Till one appears who hears,
all nature, silent is;
silent forevermore,
breaking its waves of force
upon an unanswering shore,
Till one appears who hears.

Nature is God's true revelation. All supposed revelations given directly to man, translated into language and handed down through the centuries, convey at best only an imperfect and indistinct substitute for the original message.

Language is imperfect. Thought is changed in its transmission. The message is not the same to the recipient as the giver, nor does it convey the same meaning to two individuals.

If we turn to the Hebrew Bible for a guide in our quest for an ideal of God, we find language rich in metaphor, expressing different conceptions of deity, reflecting the varied and diverse views of those who thus conveyed their thoughts to the world.

We can read therein of an anthropomorphic God, a God of revenge, a jealous God, a God who disliked a part of his children and made others his chosen people, a God of limited powers, an omnipotent God, a provincial God, a distant God and an
indwelling God. The ideals are but the expression of finite minds; the blind struggle of men attempting to write down and transmit to man their impressions and conceptions of an infinite God.

But nature ever speaks with the same symbols. As often as we wander from the narrow path, under the spell of phantasms and illusions, so often does she recall us from our somnambulisms, and bring us back to truth and reality.

We do not plant in autumn, because nature has taught us the winter is at hand. Every recurring season and every phenomenon of nature has its message of truth. Man caught his first ideas of law, of order, of beauty, of movement and repose from an observation of the symbols and operations of nature.

Nature first furnished and displayed the symbols of geometry. Man first saw the squares, the right-angled and equilateral triangles in the starry heavens above. Nature is the fountain and prototype of all law. She furnished the law of cause and effect - the most valuable law ever vouchsafed to man.

Nature has her own methods of imparting knowledge, and the nearer we follow them, the more wisdom we display. She does not reveal all her meanings and mysteries. She conceals, as well as reveals. She spreads her symbols before man and leaves a work for him to perform. She supplies an innuendo and bids him interpret and translate its meaning.

Nature is the manifestation of the divine; the expression of the infinite God. We may learn of nature, but we cannot master her meaning. Forever, the infinite stretches away before us. Eternity alone will suffice to encompass and master her secrets.

Here man can observe the wisdom of divinity. Man is ever the learner, but never the master. If man were master of all nature's meanings, her mysteries and secrets, his ideals would be destroyed; his vision would be lost. If man understood God and could fathom the mysteries of the universe, he would become tired of God and weary of the universe; he would weave his dreams about a greater and more mysterious God. He would reach out toward the infinite for new mysteries - a new universe, that he might learn their hidden secrets.
Stagnation is decay and death; advancement is life, is growth. *There is no joy like that of eternal progression.* It is the flowering pathway that stretches before man and lures him toward a haven of eternal peace. That alone satisfies the soul. It is the divine wanderlust of man.

The adherents of New Thought entertain not the least glimmer of doubt of the conscious identity of the soul after the change we call “death.” This conclusion does not rest on written revelation, so much as on the inner revelation of man. It is written in man's nature. The soul feels it and speaks its own divine message.

*The soul is divine - and that which is divine is eternal.* This life is but a threshold of a larger and fuller life. This conclusion is borne out by many facts, experiences, reasons and in the whisperings of intuition. Profound thinkers in these days agree on the unity of life; that we are part of the great life current of the universe; that the soul has divine attributes and is a part of the Great Divine Soul.

These ideas found expression in many ancient religions and philosophies and find a receptive chord in the human understanding.

*“The kingdom of God is within you,”* so-spoke the Gentle Seer of Galilee. Science is now voicing the same great truth - *that which is divine cannot cease to live.*

There are times when we feel a conscious harmony with God and nature, and the soul's vision brings us unmistakable glimpses and presages of a future life. It is the utterance of the divine to the divine in man.

Science teaches that nothing in the physical universe is lost. “Atoms are indestructible; force is indestructible; the soul is indestructible,” says Flammarion.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in commenting on this ever-recurring question, observes that there is a unity running through the universe and a kinship between the human and the divine. Here are some of his further conclusions:

*Meanwhile, what has our experience been here? We have not been left solitary. Every newcomer to the planet, however*
helpless and strange he be, finds friends awaiting him; devoted and self-sacrificing friends eager to care for and protect his infancy and to train him in the ways of this curious world. It is typical of what goes on throughout conscious existence; the guidance which we exert and to which we are subject now is but a phase of something running through the universe. When the time comes for us to quit this sphere and enter some larger field of action, I doubt not that we shall find there, also, that kindness and help and patience and love, without which no existence would be tolerable - or even at some stages, possible.

Let us listen to Addison speak across the years:

Among other excellent arguments for the immortality of the soul, there is the one drawn from the perpetual progress of the soul to its perfection, without a possibility of ever arriving at it. How can it enter into the thoughts of man that the soul, which is capable of such immense perfection and of receiving new improvements to all eternity, shall fall away into nothing, almost as soon as it is created?

Carlyle says:

Pierce through the time element, glance into the eternal, believe what thou findest written in the sanctuaries of man's soul, even as thinkers in all ages have devoutly read it there; that time and space are not God, but creatures of God; as it is a universal here, so it is an everlasting now. Know of a truth that only the time shadows have perished or are perishable; that the real being of whatever was and whatever is and whatever will be is even now and forever.

The soul is divine - the real in man. It is the revealer of its own truth; it speaks its own language, the fact of its own eternal existence. “It cannot wander from the present, which is infinite, to a future which is finite.”

A confident reliance on the soul's continued existence is innate in man. It is a universal belief. It is not there to mock man in this universal hope. Nature is not so unjust or cruel. Our vision may not span the gulf that separates us from the unknown, but an unseen power brought us safely to the earth, and an abiding trust tells us that it will safely bear us away and care for
our every need.

*He who unerringly guides the bird along*

*the pathless coasts and trackless wastes,*

*“in the long way that I must tread alone,*

*will lead my steps aright.”*

This faith was planted in man for a high moral purpose. It is necessary for man's spiritual growth, for the development of character. It is the potent influence that makes man more than the animal, that leads him along the upward path to the highest moral and spiritual endeavor.

Let us listen to the message of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps:

> *Whatever this globe was put here for,*
>  *it was not for failure.*
> *Whatever the unit was made for,*
>  *the race was not made for hopelessness.*
> *However black the past,*
>  *however blind the present,*
>  *a bright future is a philosophical necessity.*
> *What has the king, the priest or the prophet*  
>  *of your dreary creed to look to,*
>  *compared with the promise*  
>  *open to the obscurest human soul*  
>  *that knows itself a deathless thing?*

Let us turn to Addison once more:

*If man considers his being as circumscribed by the uncertain term of a few years, his designs will be contracted into the same narrow span he imagines is to bound his existence. How can he exalt his thoughts to anything great and noble, who only believes that, after a short term on the stage of this world, he is to sink into oblivion and to lose his consciousness forever?*

The late Senator Ingalls, in pronouncing a eulogy on the memory of his departed friend, spoke these memorable words:

*If the existence of Burns was but a troubled dream; if his death, oblivion - what avails it that the Senate should pause to recount his virtues? Neither veneration nor reverence are due the dead. They are but dust.*
No cenotaph should be reared to preserve for posterity the memory of their achievements. Those who come after them are only to be their successors in annihilation and extinction. If in this world we have only hope and consciousness, duty must be chimera. Our pleasures and passions should be the guides of conduct, and virtue is, indeed, a superstition, if life ends at the grave.

Such is the conclusion which the philosophy of negation must accept at last. Such is the felicity of those degrading precepts which make the epitaph the end. If the life of Burns is a taper that is burned out, then we treasure his memory and his example in vain, and the latest prayer of his departing spirit has no more sanctity to us who sooner or later must follow him, than the whisper of winds that stir the leaves of the protesting forest, or the murmur of waves that break upon the complaining shore.

New Thought is in harmony with the latest utterances of science and philosophy, regarding the unity of life; that it pervades and animates all nature and all created beings. Only as we recognize this fact can we find a rational and substantial basis for the brotherhood of man.

To the extent that we realize and understand that the same life, the same divine current that flows through our being is the life-current in all men; that we have the same divine source and are governed by the same universal law, shall we be able to grasp the true meaning and significance of the brotherhood of man.

When we look beyond the outer form and see a divine soul in every man and can say with Walt Whitman -

*I shall meet the real landlord*
*and know that the great cosmic soul*
*is in and over all, seeking expression....*

~ THE MESSAGE OF NEW THOUGHT ~

- can we truthfully and sincerely address our fellowman as Brother.
The heart in thee is the heart of all; not a valve, not a wall, not an intersection is there anywhere in nature, but one blood rolls uninterruptedly, an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and truly seen - its tide is one.

* * *

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