

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Legitimate Scope and Natural Limitations of Mental and Metaphysical Healing



uring the last generation people have perceived more or less clearly the fallacies of “Old School” medicine and surgery. They have grown more and more suspicious of orthodox theories and practices. From allopathic “overdoing” the pendulum has swung to the other extreme of metaphysical nihilism, to the “underdoing” of mental and metaphysical systems of treating human ailments.

Some of these systems and cults of metaphysical healing have met with success and wide popularity and this is looked upon by their followers as a proof that all the claims and teachings of these cults and isms are based upon absolute truth.

However, a thorough understanding of the fundamental Laws of Cure, as I have explained them in this volume, will reveal in how far their teachings and their practices are based upon truth and in how far they are inspired by erroneous assumptions.

Let us then apply the yardstick and the weights and measures of Nature Cure philosophy in testing the true value of the claims of metaphysical healers.

For ages people have been educated in the belief that almost every acute disease will end fatally unless the patient is drugged or operated on. When they find to their surprise that the metaphysical formulas or prayers of a mental healer or Christian Scientist will “cure” baby’s measles or father’s smallpox just as well as, and possibly better than, Dr. Dopem’s pills and potions, they are firmly convinced that a miracle has been performed in their behalf and straightway they become blind believers in and fanatical followers of their new idols.

They simply exchange one superstition for another: the belief in the efficacy of drugs and surgical operations for the belief in the wonder-working power of a metaphysical formula, a self-appointed savior or a reason-stultifying and will-benumbing cult. They have not been taught that **every acute disease is the result of a healing effort of Nature** and therefore fail to see that it is vital force, the physician within, that, if conditions are favorable, cures measles and smallpox as easily as it repairs the broken blade of grass or heals the wounded deer of the forest.

“That is exactly what we say,” exclaim healer and scientist. “Have unlimited faith in the God within and all will be well.”

True, faith is good, but faith and works are better. Though we cannot heal and give life, we can in many ways assist the healer within. We can teach and explain Nature’s Laws, we can remove obstructions and we can make the conditions within and around the patient more favorable for the action of Nature’s healing forces.

When the Great Master said: “Go forth and sin no more, lest worse things than these befall you,” he acknowledged sin, or the transgression of natural laws, to be the primary cause of disease, and made health dependent upon compliance with the Law. The necessity of complying with the Law, in all respects and on all the planes of being, is still more strongly emphasized in the following:

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

The skeptic and the superficial reader may reply: “This saying is utterly unreasonable. Stealing a penny is not committing a murder; overeating does not break the law of chastity; how, then, is it possible to break all laws by breaking any single one of them?” There is, however, a deeper meaning to this seeming paradox which makes it scientifically true.

Self-Control, the Whole Law

Obedience to all laws on all planes of being depends primarily on self-control. Self-control is, therefore, in a sense, the whole law, for man cannot break any one law unless he breaks first this fundamental Law of all Laws. This implies that the demoralizing effect of sinning or law-breaking, on any one of the planes of being, does not depend so much upon the enormity of the deed as upon the loss of self-control. Continued weakening of self-control in trivial

things may therefore, in the end, prove more destructive than a murder committed in the heat of passion. If there is not self-control enough to resist a cup of coffee or a cigar, whence shall come the will-power to resist greater temptations?

Truly, lack of self-control in small things is the “dry rot” of the soul. Is it not, then, somewhat unreasonable to expect God or Nature to strain and twist the immutable laws of Nature at the request of every healer in order to save us from the natural consequences of overeating, red meat eating, whisky drinking, smoking, tobacco chewing, drugging and a thousand and one other transgressions of natural laws?

In spite of the finest-spun metaphysical sophistries, we continue to burn our fingers in the fire until we know enough to leave it alone. Herein lies the corrective purpose of that which we call evil—suffering and disease. The rational thing to do is not to deny the existence of Mother Nature’s punishing rod, but to escape her salubrious spankings by conforming to her Laws.

What about the “Cures”?

As in medicine, so also in metaphysical healing, men judge by superficial results, not by the real underlying causes. The usual answer to any criticism of Christian Science or kindred methods of cure is: “That may be all right; but see the results! Nobody can deny their wonderful cures,” etc.

Let us see whether there really is anything wonderful or supernatural about these cures or whether they can be explained on simple, natural grounds.

In another chapter we explain the difference between functional and organic disease and show how in diseases of the **functional** type the life force or healing force, which always endeavors to establish normal conditions and the perfect type, may work unaided up to the reconstructive healing crises and through these eliminate the morbid encumbrances from the system and reestablish normal structure and function.

It is in cases like these that metaphysicians attain their best results simply because **Nature helps herself**.

On the other hand, in cases of the true **organic** type, where the vitality is low and the destruction of vital parts and organs has progressed to a considerable extent, the system is no longer able to

arouse itself to self-help.

In such cases, faith alone is not sufficient to obtain results. It must be backed and assisted by all the natural methods of treatment at our command.

Healers Work with Laws that They Do Not Understand

In our critical analysis of “Old School” methods we found that by far the greater part of all chronic ailments is due to drugging and to surgery. People commence doctoring for little troubles, which are aggravated by every dose of medicine and every surgical operation until they end in big troubles.

Is it marvelous that such patients improve and that many are cured when they are weaned from drugs and the knife?

Metaphysical healers unwittingly do their best and most beneficial work because they induce their followers not to suppress acute diseases and healing crises by drugs and surgical operations, thus allowing them to run their natural course in harmony with the fundamental law of Nature Cure, which states that every acute disease is the result of a cleansing and healing effort of Nature. People will refrain from the suppressive drug treatment under the influence of metaphysical teachings, which appeal to the miracle-loving element in their nature, when they cannot be convinced by common sense Nature Cure reasoning.

Thus metaphysicians assist Nature **indirectly** by noninterference and directly by soothing fear and worry, by instilling faith, hope and confidence. Frequently they also aid Nature by prohibiting the use of tobacco, alcohol and pork, and by regulating otherwise the life and habits of their followers.

Let us consider the problem from another point of view. Let us assume, for argument’s sake, that the average person passes in the course of a lifetime through a dozen different diseases. He recovers from eleven of these, no matter what the treatment. It is only the twelfth to which he succumbs. Yet, whosoever happened to treat the first eleven diseases claims to have cured them and, perhaps, to have saved the patient’s life when, as a matter of fact, he recovered very often in spite of the treatment and not because of it.

These explanations account for the seemingly miraculous re-

sults of metaphysical healing. If healers and Christian Scientists were to explain their cures by the laws and principles of Nature Cure philosophy, mystery and miracle would be taken out of their business.

“Faith Without Works” Is Dangerous

To believe that God or Nature will overcome the natural effects of our ignorance, laziness and viciousness by wonders, signs and metaphysics, or to deny the existence of sickness, sin and suffering, must lead inevitably to intellectual and moral stagnation and degeneration. I am a thorough and consistent optimist and New Thought enthusiast, but I do not overlook the fact that in this, as in everything else, there lurks always the danger of overdoing and of exaggerating virtue into fault.

The greatest danger of this revulsion from old-time pessimism to modern optimism lies in the fact that the Higher Thought enthusiast may cut from under his feet the solid ground of reality; that he may become a dreamer instead of a thinker and doer; and that he may mistake selfish, emotional sentimentalism for practical charity and altruism.

This unhealthy “all-is-good, there-is-no-evil” emotionalism leads only too often to weakening of personal effort, a deadening of the sense of individual responsibility and thereby to mental and moral atrophy; for any of our voluntary functions, capacities and powers which we fail to exercise will in time become benumbed and paralyzed. Unprejudiced observers who come in close contact with metaphysicians cannot help perceiving the pernicious effect of their subtle sophistries on reason and character.

A chronic invalid who had been under the treatment of a faith healer for several years exclaimed, when we gave her our various instructions for dieting, bathing, breathing exercises, etc.: “How glad I am that you give me something to do! I fear I have been imposing too long on the goodness of the Lord, expecting Him to do my work for me.” Often afterwards, while recovering from lifelong ailments, she expressed her happiness and contentment in that she herself was doing something which in her opinion was rational and helpful because it assisted Nature’s healing efforts.

We believe firmly and fully in the influence of mind over matter,

in the fact that vibrations of the physical plane by continuity create corresponding vibrations on the mental and psychical planes and vice versa. We know that, in accordance with this law, anything which affects the mind or the moral life of a person affects also his physical condition; but instead of hypnotizing the minds of our patients by law-defying, reason- and will-benumbing dogmas and formulas, we strengthen and harmonize their mental vibrations by appealing to reason, by teaching and explaining natural laws instead of obscuring and denying them.

The more intelligent the patient, the more amenable he will be to such normal suggestions based on scientific truth and on the dictates of reason and common sense.

While nonresistance to Nature's healing efforts is better than suppression by drugs or the knife, there is something more helpful and rational than the negative attitude toward disease on the **physical plane** assumed by metaphysical healing cults. **That something is intelligent cooperation with Nature's cleansing and healing efforts.**

Where the "Old School" fails by sins of commission, the Faith Schools fail by sins of omission. Many patients are sacrificed daily through fanatical inactivity, when their lives might be saved by a wet pack or a cold sponge bath, by an internal bath, rational diet, judicious fasting, scientific manipulation or some other simple yet powerful remedy of natural healing. To permit a patient to perish in a burning fever, depending solely upon the efficacy of prayers, formulas and mental attitude, when wet packs and cold sponging would in a few minutes reduce the temperature below the danger point, is manslaughter, even though it be done in the name of religion.

Incidents like the following are common in our practice: A little girl in the neighborhood of our institution was taken with diphtheria. The mother, an ardent Christian Scientist, called in several healers of her cult, but the child grew worse from day to day, until the false membranes in the throat began to choke her to death.

A boarder in the house, who was a follower of Nature Cure, finally induced the mother to call upon us for advice by threatening to notify the City Health Department. Within an hour after the application of the whole-body packs and the cold ablutions, the blood was sufficiently drawn away from the local congestion in the

throat into the surface of the body, so that the child breathed easily and freely, and from then on made a splendid recovery.

Another instance: A man had been suffering from sciatic rheumatism for fifteen years. He had swallowed poisonous drugs to no avail. For several years he had been under Mental Science treatment, but the suffering had grown more intense.

When he applied to us for help, we found that the right hip bone (the innominate) had slipped upward and backward. A few manipulative treatments replaced the bone where it belonged, and the sciatic rheumatism was cured.

In this case, the combined concentration and prayers of all the metaphysical healers on earth would not have succeeded in replacing the dislocated hip bone, which required the full strength of a trained manipulator.

Metaphysicians could not have accomplished this feat any more than they could have moved, by their mental efforts, a hundred-pound weight from one place to another. Mechanical lesions of that kind (and there are many of them) require mechanical treatment.

Another factor which makes converts to metaphysical healing cults by the hundreds and thousands is the get-rich-quick instinct in human nature, the desire to get something for nothing, or with as little effort as possible. Herein lies the seductive pull of old-time drugging and of modern metaphysics. "It does not matter how you live; when you get into trouble, a bottle of medicine or a metaphysical formula will make it all right." That sounds very easy and promising, but the trouble is—it does not always work.

Our forefathers were too pessimistic; higher thought enthusiasts are often too optimistic. While the former poisoned their lives and paralyzed their God-given faculties and powers by dismal dread of hell's fire and damnation, our modern healers and Scientists have drifted to the other extreme. They tell us there is no sin, no pain, no suffering. If that be true, there is also no action and reaction, no Law of Compensation, no personal responsibility, no need of self-control, self-help or personal effort.

The ideal of the faith healer is the ideal of the animal. The animal trusts implicitly, it has absolute faith; guided by instinct, God, or Nature, it follows the promptings of its appetites and passions without worrying about right or wrong. It acts today as it did ten

thousand years ago.

In man, **reason** has taken the place of instinct; we must think and manage for ourselves. We are free and responsible moral agents. If we deny this, we deny the very foundations of equity, justice and right. It behooves us to use the talents which God has given us, to study the laws of our being and to comply with them to the best of our ability, so that enlightened reason may take the place of animal instinct and guide us to physical, mental and moral perfection.

