

**THE INNER LIFE
SERIES. HEALTH
AND THE INNER LIFE**

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The Inner Life Series. Health and the Inner Life by Horatio W. Dresser

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HORATIO W. DRESSER

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AND THE INNER LIFE**

By HORATIO W. DRESSER

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HEALTH AND THE
INNER LIFE

AN ANALYTICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY OF SPIRITUAL
HEALING THEORIES, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE
LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF P. P. QUIMBY

BY

HORATIO W. DRESSER

Author of "The Power of Silence," "Man and the Divine
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HEALTH AND THE INNER LIFE

INTRODUCTION

THERE are three general points of view from which one may regard the mental life of man in its relation to the body. In the first place, the mind may be regarded from below, as if it were a mere product of matter. From this point of view, every event in man's mental history is a result of physical processes; every thought, feeling, or volition springs from, and is dependent upon certain conditions of the brain. What is called "consciousness" is a product or accompaniment of bodily life; matter alone is ultimately real; mind has no significance apart from it. The "soul" is an invention of human thought, devised to account for the higher phases of cerebral productivity. This is the point of view of typical old-time materialism.

From the second point of view, mental states and bodily processes are regarded as if they existed on the same level. This may mean that physical events are taken to be merely parallel with psychic states, with no interchange. Or, it may imply belief in the interaction of mind and brain. Biologically

speaking, it involves a theory of mental development corresponding to physical evolution. Most scientific theories of the relationship of mind and matter belong under this head. In some respects it is also the point of view of popular thought.

In the third place, the observer is supposedly located within the mental life, looking out through "the windows of the soul" upon all the world. This position is not explicitly the point of view of any recognised school of thought, yet it is implied in many popular and unscientific beliefs. It is also the standpoint of those who maintain that the brain is merely the physical instrument of the soul. Such a position need not imply the complete independence or supremacy of the soul. But it may reasonably include the conviction that, on occasion, the soul is roused into masterful activity and is thereby enabled to initiate new lines of action. Many works of genius and occasional triumphs of the will seem to imply that the soul is superior, not merely as an observer of the bodily life going on below, but as an actual master of adverse conditions. Inspired by the study of such instances, contemporary theorists frequently point out that man is a soul with a body, not a body with a soul. It is even said that the soul is potentially master of every portion of bodily life, that in the long run the body becomes what the soul makes it.

Whatever one may think of the extravagant and other unscientific beliefs which belong under this head, it is clear that both for theoretical and for