

## IN REFLECTION

THROUGHOUT NAPOLEON HILL'S WRITINGS, there is a strong spirituality present, informing his methods and his morality. In many places in the present book, *Outwitting the Devil*, this religious foundation for his belief system is perhaps at its most explicit.

Some of his statements about evil and fear, about "indefiniteness" and "drifting," derive from an American religious tradition that dates back, at least, to the Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson in the mid-nineteenth century. Currents in American spirituality in Hill's day (during the writing of this book in the late 1930s) included Norman Vincent Peale, Emmett Fox, and, in popular inspirational fiction, Lloyd C. Douglas. The very personal Christian evangelism of Aimee Semple McPherson and Billy Sunday were also still omnipresent in the media and public consciousness of the era.

For Hill, however, the stature of some of the titans of industry and finance of the time achieved a kind of religious validation and served to inspire his own thought and action, and he urged others to look to these men—and all were men—as models of successful moral behavior that yielded personal success as well as general good.

The Great Depression was, for Napoleon Hill, in great measure a moral failure. What would he say about our current crises in financial markets—the near collapse of the banking system in 2008 and the subsequent severe recession that has