

PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGY.

MIND.

Few are able to explain what is meant by the term Mind. Yet it is a part of us of which all may and should possess a just and adequate idea, for on the intelligent use of the mind depends the rate of our moral and intellectual growth and, to a great extent, our relations with others. Materialists maintain that Mind has no existence apart from the brain cells, and that thought consists solely in the stimulation of these by impact from outside through the channels of sense. This belief connotes the destruction of the mind at the death of the physical body. The new psychology teaches that the life of the Mind is continuous with that of the Immortal Self, though it must not be identified with the latter. The Mind is the instrument of the Self, and to regard it as the Self is to identify the organist with his organ.

The Mind is fundamentally dual. The higher mind is that concerned with *abstract* thought, intellect and intuition. At the present stage of evolution this mind is undeveloped in the majority. The lower mind is the *concrete* mind, that in which the mental activities are directed to external objects. It is often referred to as the dense mental body, or the brain mind.

The matter which aggregates round the atomic vibratory centre is known as mind-stuff; it interpenetrates all the other kinds of matter, and its boundaries are those of the universe. It is responsive to those vibrations which come from the Self in the aspect of Knowledge, the Mind being a reflection in atomic matter of this aspect of the Self. This atomic matter, or mind-stuff, is of many qualities, and in each individual it has its own range and rate of vibration. The finest grade composes the higher mind, while the mental body is built of mind-stuff ranging from the coarsest to a fine grade, these latter two respectively corresponding to the solid states of matter and the lowest ether of the physical world. Hence the appropriateness of the adjective dense when applied to a heavy, slow-working mind.

As experience is gained and the consciousness of the Self is increased, it feels the mind, more or less, as a limiting, hampering medium of expression; and the more highly developed the Self, the more dissatisfied he feels with the instrument which is his only means of making himself known to others. The mind has been likened to thick gloves put on by a man for a special purpose, in which his delicacy or power of touch is hindered. It has been said

that happiness depends on the ability to express ourselves. There is much truth in this, for a large proportion of earth's suffering is due to our inability to make ourselves understood. But many of the commoner barriers to self-expression may be removed by the study of our minds. *The Mind is the result of past thinking*, and we ourselves are responsible for its powers and defects, its strength and weakness. Our hopefulness lies in the fact that it is not stationary; always it is being modified by thoughts. Though it may be a cause of discouragement to us we cannot rid ourselves of it, or alter it suddenly by any effort of will; only very slowly can we improve it.

The existing atoms and vibrations which constitute the mind are modified by an impression received from outside, or they modify it. Incoming vibrations combine with those of our own minds, and the result is in terms of that combination. According to the type and colour of our minds is the impression made on the Self as the result of receiving vibrations from another mind. We may take an illustration from light: If we look at a green object through a red glass it will appear to us to be black, because the vibrations which give us the sensation of red are cut off by those yielding the sensation of green, so the eye is deceived into seeing the object as black. A blue object, looked at through a yellow glass, also appears as black.

The individual mind is a coloured medium which causes an object to appear a different colour from that it presents to the naked eye, though that, too, modifies the vibrations it receives. The Self is quite unconscious of this influence of his mind, as it is only through this that he can see. Thus the mind presents us with a combination of itself and the external object—never the latter alone. It is said that Turner's magnificent sunset scenes were due to this phenomenon, and this gives point to the protest of a critic who told him that she had never seen such skies as he painted. The "artist's eye" is the result of the special quality and rate of vibration of the mind-stuff through which the Self cognises this world. So with the mind of the scientist, the statesman or soldier. Each receives a different impression of the same things.

The practical application of this tends to make us humble, cautious, more ready to receive new ideas, more self-analytical than critical of others. It is the vibratory activity of others that is responsible for our likes and dislikes. If it expresses itself in a way complementary to our own—as in the coloured-

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