

# THE WORD

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## MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

*It does not seem reasonable that two or more contradictory opinions can be right concerning any truth. Why are there so many opinions concerning some problems or things? How then shall we be able to tell which opinion is right and what the truth is?*

The abstract One Truth cannot be proven or demonstrated to the human mind, nor could the human mind understand such proof or demonstration were it possible to give it, any more than the laws, organization, and work of a universe can be proven to a bumble bee, or than a tadpole can understand the building and operation of a locomotive. But although the human mind cannot understand the One Truth in the abstract, it is possible to understand something of a truth concerning any thing or problem in the manifested universe. A truth is a thing as it is. It is possible for the human mind to be so trained and developed that it may know any thing as it is. There are three stages or degrees which the human mind must pass through, before it can know any thing as it is. The first state is ignorance, or darkness; the second is opinion, or belief; the third is knowledge, or a truth as it is.

Ignorance is the state of mental darkness in which the mind may dimly perceive a thing, but is quite unable to understand it. When in ignorance the mind moves in and is controlled by the senses. The senses so cloud, color and confuse the mind that the mind is unable to distinguish between the cloud of ignorance and the thing as it is. The mind remains ignorant while it is controlled, directed and guided by the senses. To get out of the darkness of ignorance, the mind must concern itself with the understanding of things as distinguished from the sensing of things. When the mind tries to understand a thing, as distinguished from sensing the thing, it must think. Thinking causes the mind to pass out of the state of dark ignorance into the state of opinion. The state of opinion is that in which the mind senses a thing and tries to find out what it is. When the mind concerns itself with any thing or problem it begins to separate itself as a thinker from the thing about which it concerns itself. Then it begins to have opinions about things. These opinions

did not concern it while it was satisfied with the state of ignorance, any more than the mentally lazy or sensuous minded will busy themselves with opinions concerning things which do not apply to the senses. But they will have opinions concerning things of a sensuous nature. Opinion is the state in which the mind cannot clearly see a truth, or the thing as it is, as distinct from the senses, or objects as they appear to be. One's opinions form his beliefs. His beliefs are the results of his opinions. Opinion is the middle world between darkness and light. It is the world in which the senses and changing objects commingle with the light and shadows and reflections of the objects are seen. In this state of opinion the mind cannot or does not distinguish the shadow from the object which casts it, and is not able to see the light as distinct from shadow or object. To get out of the state of opinion, the mind must try to understand the difference between the light, the object, and its reflection or shadow. When the mind so tries it begins to distinguish between right opinions and wrong opinions. Right opinion is the ability of the mind to decide as to difference between the thing and its reflection and shadow, or to see the thing as it is. Wrong opinion is the mistaking of the reflection or shadow of a thing for the thing itself. While in the state of opinion the mind cannot see the light as distinct from right and wrong opinions, nor the objects as different from their reflections and shadows. To be able to have right opinions, one must free the mind from prejudice and the influence of the senses. The senses so color or influence the mind as to produce prejudice, and where prejudice is there is no right opinion. Thought and the training of the mind to think are necessary to form right opinions. When the mind has formed a right opinion and refuses to allow the senses to influence or prejudice the mind against the right opinion, and holds that right opinions, no matter if it may be against one's position or the interest of one's self or friends, and clings to the right opinion before and in preference to all else, then the mind will for the time being pass into the state of knowledge. The mind will then not have an opinion about a thing nor be confused by contradictory other opinions, but will know that the thing is as it is. One passes out of the state of opinions or beliefs, and into the state of knowledge or light, by holding to what he knows to be true in preference to all else. He learns to live by knowledge instead of living as theretofore, by ignorance and opinion.

The mind learns to know the truth of any thing by concerning itself with that thing. In the state of knowledge, after it has learned to

think and has been able to arrive at right opinions by freedom from prejudice and by continued thinking, the mind sees any thing as it is and knows that it is as it is by a light, which is the light of knowledge. While in the state of ignorance it was impossible to see, and while in the state of opinions it did not see the light, but now in the state of knowledge the mind does see the light, as distinguished from a thing and its reflections and shadows. This light of knowledge means that the truth of a thing is known, that any thing is known to be as it is truly and not as it appears to be when clouded by ignorance or confused by opinions. This light of true knowledge will not be mistaken for any other lights or light which is known to the mind in ignorance or opinion. The light of knowledge is in itself proof beyond question. When this is seen, it is because thinking is done away with by knowledge, as when one knows a thing he no longer goes through the laborious process of reasoning about that which he has already reasoned about and now knows.

If one enters a dark room, he feels his way about the room and may stumble over objects in it, and bruise himself against the furniture and walls, or collide with others who are moving as aimlessly as himself in the room. This is the state of ignorance in which the ignorant live. After he has moved about the room his eyes become accustomed to the darkness, and by trying he is able to distinguish the dim outline of the object and the moving figures in the room. This is like the passing from the state of ignorance into the state of opinion where man is able to distinguish one thing dimly from another thing and to understand how not to collide with other moving figures. Let us suppose that the one in this state now bethinks himself of a light hitherto carried and concealed about his person, and let us suppose that he now takes out the light and flashes it around the room. By flashing it around the room he confuses not only himself but also confuses and annoys other moving figures in the room. This is like the man who is trying to see the objects as they are as distinguished from what they have appeared to him to be. As he flashes his light the objects appear different than they were and the light dazzles or confuses his vision, as man's vision is confused by conflicting opinions of himself and others. But as he examines carefully the object on which his light rests and is not disturbed or confused by other lights of other figures which may now be flashing, he learns to see any object as it is, and he learns by continuing to examine the objects, how to see any object in the room. Let us now suppose that he is able by examining the

objects and the plan of the room to discover the openings of the room which have been closed. By continued efforts he is able to remove that which obstructs the opening and when he does the light floods into the room and makes visible all objects. If he is not blinded by the flood of bright light and does not again close the opening because of the light which streams in and dazzles his eyes, unaccustomed to the light, he will gradually see all objects in the room without the slow process of going over each separately with his search light. The light which floods the room is like the light of knowledge. The light of knowledge makes known all things as they are and it is by that light that each thing is known to be as it is.

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