

THE WORD

NOVEMBER, 1915.

Copyright, 1915 by H. W. PERCIVAL.

MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

What is Memory?

Memory is the reproduction of impressions by qualities, attributes, or faculties inherent in *that* on which impressions were made. Memory does not produce a subject or thing or event. Memory reproduces the impressions which were made by the subject or thing or event. All processes necessary to the reproduction of impressions are included in the term memory.

There are four kinds of memory: sense memory, mind memory, cosmic memory, infinite memory. Infinite memory is the being conscious of all states and occurrences throughout eternities and time. Cosmic memory is the reproducing of all happenings of the universe in its eternity. Mind memory is the reproducing or reviewing by the mind of the changes through which it has passed since its origin. There is no practical advantage derived from inquiring into the nature of the infinite and cosmic mind memory. They are here mentioned for the sake of completeness. Sense memory is the reproducing by the senses of impressions made upon them.

The memory which is used by man is the sense memory. He has not learned to use and does not know of the other three—mind memory, cosmic memory, and infinite memory—because his mind is trained to the use of sense memory only. Sense memory is had by the animals and plants and minerals. As compared with man, the number of senses working to produce memory decreases in the animal and plant and mineral. The sense memory of man may be called personality memory. There are seven orders of memories which make up the complete personality memory. There are seven senses in the complete personality of man. These seven sense memories or orders of personality memories are: sight memory, sound memory, taste memory, smell memory, touch memory, moral memory, “I” or identity memory. These seven senses make up the one kind of memory that man has in his present state. Thus personality memory is limited to the time from which the one who remembers reproduces to himself his first impressions of this world,

to the reproduction of the impressions made in the moments preceding the present moment. The manner of registering the impressions and the reproducing of the impressions registered through the sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, moral and "I" senses, and the intricate processes and interminglings of these to show the detailed work necessary to "a memory," would be too long and tiresome. But a survey can be taken which may be interesting and give an understanding of personality memory.

The art of photography illustrates sight memory—how impressions from objects are received and recorded and how the impressions are afterward reproduced from the record. A photographic instrument is a mechanical application of the sense of sight and the action of seeing. Seeing is the operation of the mechanism of the eye and its connections, for recording and reproducing impressions revealed and made by light. In photographing an object, the lens is uncovered, and turned toward the object, the aperture of the diaphragm is set for the admission of the right amount of light, the focus is determined by the distance of the lens from the object to be photographed; the limit of time for exposure—of the sensitized film or plate ready to receive the impression of the object before it—is given, and the impression, the picture, is taken. Opening the eyelids uncovers the lens of the eye; the iris, or diaphragm of the eye, automatically adjusts itself to the intensity or absence of light; the pupil of the eye expands or contracts to focus the line of vision of the near or distant object; and the object is seen, the picture is taken by the sense of sight, while the focus is held.

The processes of sight and photographing are alike. If the object moves or if the lens moves or the focus changes, there will be a blurred picture. The sense of sight is not one of the mechanical apparatus of the eye. The sense of sight is a distinct thing, a being distinct from the mere mechanism of the eye as the plate or film is distant from the camera. It is this sense of sight, distinct from though connected with the mechanism of the eye, which records the impressions or pictures of objects received through the mechanical apparatus of the eye.

Seeing is the taking of the records which may be reproduced by sight memory. Sight memory consists in throwing or printing upon the screen of vision the picture or impression which was recorded and fixed by the sense of sight at the time of seeing the object reproduced. This process of sight memory is illustrated by the

printing of pictures from the film or plate after it has been developed. Each time a person or thing is remembered a new print is made, so to say. If one has not a clear picture memory it is because that in him which is sight, the sense of sight, is undeveloped and untrained. When one's sight sense is developed and trained, it may reproduce any scene or object by which it was impressed with all the vividness and realism present at the time it was seen.

Photographic prints even, if taken in color, would be poor copies or illustrations of sight memory when it is well trained. A little experiment may convince one of the possibilities of his sight memory or of the other sense memories which make up his personality memory.

Let one close his eyes and turn them toward a wall or table on which are many objects. Now let him open his eyes for a fraction of a second and close them, he having in that moment tried to see everything on which his eyes were turned. The number of things he sees and the distinctness with which he sees them will serve to show how undeveloped is his sight memory. A little practice will show how it is possible for him to develop his sight memory. He may give a long time or short exposure, to see what he can see. When he draws the curtains over his eyes some of the objects which he saw with his eyes open will be dimly seen with his eyes shut. But these objects will get dimmer and finally disappear and then he cannot see the objects and at best has only a bare impression in his mind of what he had seen with his sight memory. The fading out of the picture is due to the inability of the sight sense to hold the impression made by the object. With exercise of the sight or picture memory to reproduce present objects with the eyes closed or to reproduce past scenes or persons, picture memory will be developed, and may be so strengthened and trained as to produce astonishing feats.

This brief outline of sight memory will serve to indicate what the other sense memories are and how they work. As photography illustrates the sight memory, the phonograph is illustrative of the recording of sounds and the reproduction of the records as sound memories. The sound sense is as distinct from the auditory nerve and the ear apparatus as the sight sense is distinct from the optic nerve and the eye apparatus.

Mechanical contrivances may be produced to copy the taste sense and smell sense and touch sense as the camera and phonograph are counterparts, even though poor copies and copies unknowingly—of the human organs connected with the sight and sound senses.

The moral sense memory and the “I” sense memory are the two distinctively human senses, and are due to and made possible by the presence of the undying mind which uses the personality. By the moral sense the personality learns the laws of its life, and to reproduce these as moral memory where the question of right and wrong is concerned. The “I” sense memory enables the personality to identify itself in connection with any event in the scenes or environments in which it has lived. At present the incarnated mind has no memory beyond the personality memory, and the memories of which it is capable are those only which have been named and which make up the personality as a whole, which is limited to what can be seen, or heard, or smelled, or tasted, or touched, and which feels right or wrong as concerned with itself as a separate existence.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]

In the December Word [see the *December 1915 Moments with Friends PDF*] will be answered the question, “What causes loss of memory,” and “What causes one to forget his own name or where he lives, though his memory may not be impaired in other respects.”



THE
WORD FOUNDATION, INC.

A Non-Profit Organization Established in 1950
P. O. Box 17510 • Rochester, NY 14617 • USA

www.thewordfoundation.org