

THE WORD.

VOL. 7

JULY, 1908.

No. 4

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DOUBT.

DOUBT is a word in common use among the unlettered as well as with the learned. But few among those who keep it so employed stop to consider and look into the principle for which the word stands.

Doubt comes from *duo*, two, in which is involved the idea of duality concerning any thing, and extending infinitely through all things. As doubt is concerned with the idea of two, or duality, it is always accompanied by an indefiniteness, because it is divided or stands between the two. The idea of two comes from substance, which is the root of nature or matter. Substance is homogeneous in itself, but is expressed through its one attribute duality. Duality is the beginning of manifestation through all the worlds. Duality persists in every atom. Duality is in the two inseparable and opposite aspects of the unit, substance.

Each of the opposites indissolubly dominates the other and is in turn dominated by the other. At one time one is in the ascendancy and then the other. Doubt always accompanies the two, causing each to incline toward the other and in turn to be held back by the other. Doubt is only known to us when it is a mental operation, but the idea of doubt is present in all grades of matter, from the beginning of manifestation to the full and complete attainment of knowledge. Doubt is operative through all the manifested worlds; the same in principle, and varying according to the plane of its action.

Doubt has its origin in ignorance. It changes in degree according to the development of the being in which it is present. In man, doubt is that critical state of the mind, in which the mind will not decide in favor of one of two subjects or things, nor have confidence in the other.

Doubt is not an inquiry concerning any subject, nor is it research and investigation, nor a process of thinking; though it often accompanies thought, and arises from investigating and inquiry into a subject.

Doubt is like a cloud which steals over the mind and prevents it from perceiving clearly, and from solving any problem concerning that which is perceived. Like a cloud, doubt increases or decreases in size and density as one fails to act according to his understanding, or is self-reliant and acts with confidence. Yet doubt is a condition of the mind necessary to be experienced and overcome before clearness of mental vision can be attained.

Connected with and related to doubt, as ancestors, teachers, companions, offspring, and servants of doubt, are perplexity, hesitancy, impatience, discontent, peevishness, irritability, turmoil, distrust, incredulity, disbelief, suspicion, misgiving, foreboding, gloominess, moroseness, irresoluteness, indecision, uncertainty, slavery, sloth, ignorance, fear, confusion, and death. These are some of the conditions by which doubt is known.

Doubt is deep-seated in the mind, is in fact synonymous with one of the functions of the mind: that function or attribute of the mind which is known as darkness, sleep. Doubt is one of the factors which have determined the manner of the incarnation of mind from the very first of the long line of incarnations of mind. Doubt has been an important factor in the actions of humanity, has been one of the chief causes of much of the suffering to which humanity is heir and of the conditions in which humanity is at present struggling. Doubt is to-day one of the obstacles to the progress and development of man.

The doubts which confront man at every turn of his daily life and at the important crises of his life have all appeared before, in previous lives under different conditions. They appear to-day as doubts because they were not overcome yesterday. They arise to-day either to impede a man's progress or to be overcome by knowledge through action. The cycle or time of the doubts which arise depends on the development and the age at which a like cycle of doubt assailed the person experiencing it.

There are four kinds or classes of doubt. They relate to the physical world and the three worlds within and around it: physical doubt, psychic doubt, mental doubt and spiritual doubt. These are attributes of different kinds of men whom we meet, and also of the four men of the zodiac which make up and contain each individual man. These four men have been spoken of and symbolized in the Editorial "The Zodiac." See *The Word*, March, 1907 [p. 85 in the PDF editorial "The Zodiac"] (Figure 30).

Physical doubt relates to the physical world and to the physical body, its representative (libra, ♎). As the mind operates through the physical body it is assailed by all of the phenomena of the physical world concerning the action of the physical body in the physical world. So that the mind begins to doubt from the time it first is conscious of its acting in a physical body, and through its physical body becomes aware of the physical world. The animal does not doubt as does the human being. The animal begins to

walk as soon as born, but the human is unable to stand or even to crawl and requires long months or even years before it trusts itself on its feet and maintains the equilibrium of the body while walking. The animal human being brings with it the same instincts from its parents as does the dog or calf from its parents. If it were due to heredity alone an infant should be impelled to walk and sport around as readily as a calf or a puppy. But it cannot. This is due to the fact that the human animal is subject not only to the animal instincts and tendencies of its ancestors, but is also subject to an individual entity, the mind; and the newly incarnated mind, not having the confidence of present experience, is unable to walk; it doubts and fears that its body will fall. If thrown into the water for the first time, a horse, or cat, or other animal, will at once strike out for the shore, even though it does not take naturally to the water. It can swim at the first attempt. But a man placed for the first time in midstream, will drown, even though he may have learned the theory of swimming before making the attempt. The element of doubt interferes with the natural animal of the human body and prevents it from using its natural power, and from putting into practice the theory of swimming which it had learned. The natural action of the physical body is often checked by the doubt which arises in the mind. This doubt is carried over in the mind from one life to another, in this physical world, until the doubt is overcome. The physical body is adjusted to the physical world, but the mind is not native to this world; it is a stranger to this physical world and to its body. Unfamiliarity of the mind with its body allows the element of doubt in the mind to dominate its action and to interfere with the control of the body. This applies to all conditions of life and to the circumstances and positions which come to man by inheritance.

Gradually, the mind becomes accustomed to its physical body and is able to control its movements with ease and grace. If, in the regular development of the man, after he has learned the things of the physical world necessary for him to be acquainted with such, for instance, as exercise and discipline of the body, its maintenance and livelihood through a business or professional position, the social customs of the sphere in which he lives, and the literature of the period and he is so familiarized with ordinary usages as to have overcome his former doubts, and if he has learned to have confidence and trust in its position, then the mind has passed the initial stages of doubt and is confronted by the doubt which arises concerning the unknown worlds.

When things from any of the kingdoms of the psychic world impinge upon or are insinuated to the physical senses, doubt arises in the mind that there is an invisible world, within and around the physical, because that mind has become adjusted to and familiar with its physical body, and is educated by and keyed to the physical and the things of the physical world. It doubts that physical action can have its origin in an invisible source. Such doubts relate to the invisible astral or psychic world with its desires and forms. Its representative in man is the *linga-sharira*, or form body (virgo-scorpio, ♍-♏), with its animal instincts and tendencies.

These are the doubts which man has mostly to deal with and contend against in his daily and emotional life. Here are the immediate springs of physical actions. Here are the forces and entities corresponding to, or which are, the causes of physical actions and of such emotions as anger, fear, envy, and hatred, and other sensations such as pleasure and the feeling of foolish happiness. Here are the forces and entities which act on the delicately adjusted psychic body of man. These emotions and sensations are experienced through the physical body with its senses by means of the psychic body. The forces are invisible to physical man, but apparent to the psychic man when, by certain practices, or by means of a "medium," or through disease, the psychic man is sufficiently freed or separated from the coils of the physical body so that its sensations are keyed to the octave above and within the physical world.

All of the doubts which assailed the physical man have here to be met with and overcome, even as they were overcome in the physical body. They are overcome in the psychic world and astral form body only to the degree that they were met with and overcome in the physical.

Within and above the physical and the psychic worlds and their men is the mental world and its incarnated mind (life-thought, Ω - λ).

This is the world in which man lives most and, owing to the necessity for the mind to act with its physical body, it is the world in which he doubts most. From the habitual use or abuse of the physical body, the mind has associated its being with physical life so that it has forgotten real being and itself as a being distinct from its physical body. The mind identifies itself in thought with its body and physical life only, and when the theory is suggested that the mind and the thought is distinct from the physical body, though connected with it, the mind doubts and is inclined to reject such statement.

This doubt is found more frequently among the learned than among the uneducated, because the man of learning is learned in the things only which apply to the mind in its relation to the physical world, and he who habituates himself to thinking of things and subjects which relate strictly to the physical world is disinclined to leave the strata of his thought and grow into a higher plane. The learned man is like a vine, which clings to the object on which it has bound and embedded itself. If the vine should refuse to cling, should be able to leave its rootings, strike into and grow up from a deeper parent soil, it would cease to be a vine. If the learned man could become released from the ruts of other minds, and by his thoughts should reach into and grow up from the parent stuff from which other minds have grown, then, like the plant, he would not have to grow on other growths and be obliged to follow their leanings as his own, but he would be an individual growth and have the right to reach up in the free air and receive the light from every side.

The vine clings to its object; it cannot do otherwise because it is only a vine-plant, a vegetable growth. But man is able to detach his thought from and grow out of the growths of learning because he is a man-plant of spiritual origin whose duty and destiny it is to grow out of the sensuous kingdoms of nature and into the luminous sphere of spiritual knowledge.

The man of mere learning and pedantry does not grow beyond his learning because of doubt. Doubt, and fear which is the foster-child of doubt, beset him the more he depends on learning. Doubt causes him to hesitate. He hesitates too long; then fear seizes him and thrusts him back into the jungle of learning which he fancies to be the end of all mental effort, or else he continues to doubt until he doubts everything, including his learning and his doubts.

The mind which does contemplate itself as a mind acting in the mental world, which is distinct from the physical world, is always assailed by doubt. The problems with which the mind contends such as: the difference between and relation of God and nature, man's origin, duty in life, ultimate destiny, are those which have confronted all minds attempting to act freely in the mental world.

The doubt concerning any of these questions, or of the possible freedom of the mind from the senses, has a tendency to darken the mental vision. If the mental vision is darkened, the mind loses confidence in its own light. Without light it cannot see or solve the problems, nor see its path, and so it falls back into the sensuous fields of thought with which it had become familiar.

But the mind which has confidence in its free action dispels the darkness of doubt. It sees its own course of action through the world of thought which it has created. Gaining confidence and mentally seeing its own thoughts and the thoughts of the world, it sees that the forms of the psychic world are determined by the thoughts of the mental world, that the confusion of desires and the turmoil of emotions are due to the confusion of thoughts and the conflicting cross-currents of thought, that the cause of the forces and beings having entity as forms in the psychic world is determined by the thoughts generated by the mind. When this is realized, all doubts concerning the causes of the emotions and sensations are cleared away, one's actions are plainly seen and their causes known.

The doubt concerning the spiritual world and spiritual man has to do with the immortal entity who broods over and contacts physical man by means of the incarnated mind. As the representative of the spiritual world, of God, of the Universal Mind, spiritual man is the human higher mind, the individuality in its spiritual world (cancer-capricorn, ☾-♄). Such doubts as assail the incarnated mind are: that it may not persist after death; that inasmuch as all things come into the physical world by birth and pass out of the physical world by death, so it also will pass out of the physical world and will cease to exist; that thoughts might be a product of or a reaction from physical life, instead of being the cause of physical life. A still more serious doubt is, that even though the mind should persist after death, it will pass into a state corresponding to that of earth life, that life on earth in fleshly bodies will have ended for ever and that it will not return to earth life.

The mind doubts the existence or the possible existence of there being a spiritual world of knowledge in which are the ideas of all phases of existence, from which thought takes its origin; that this persistent world of knowledge, with its immortal ideal forms, is due to the fancy of a human

mind rather than that it is the statement of a spiritual fact. Finally, the incarnated mind doubts that it is the same in essence with the Immortal Mind and with the Universal Mind. This doubt is the most serious, destructive and darkening doubt of all, because it tends to separate the mind which is incarnate and which is subject to the vicissitudes of transitory conditions, from its eternal and immortal parent.

Doubt is an occult sin. This occult sin of doubt is the doubt in one's spiritual being. The penalty of this doubt is spiritual blindness and inability to see spiritual truths in anything even when they are pointed out.

The cause of the doubt of the different men is the undeveloped darkness of the mind. Until the darkness is dispelled or transformed by an interior light, man will continue to doubt and will remain in the condition in which he here finds himself. The doubt of immortality by growth is fostered in man's mind by those who would dominate and control his life by the control of his mind. Fear is held before the mind and made the twin phantom of doubt. Men allow themselves to be priest-ridden, to be kept in mental darkness and whipped into submission by the twin lash of doubt and fear. This applies not only to the mass of the ignorant, but also to men of learning whose minds have been run by early training into certain grooves, and who thus limited fear to venture beyond their grooves and doubt their ability to grow out of them.

Doubt breeds doubt. The man who continually doubts is a misery to himself and a pest to all around him. Continued doubt makes of man a whimpering, whining weakling who hardly dares to act, fearing the consequence of his action. Doubt may turn a searching and inquiring mind into a scourge, whose delight it is to argue and bicker, to throw gloom over or upset the beliefs of those with whom he comes in contact, concerning the hope or confidence in a future life, and, in the place of faith and hope, to leave discontent, dissatisfaction and despair. Doubt begets doubt in the mind of one who is dishonest and insincere and who is suspicious of the motives of others, who finds fault with everything, who slanders and defames and who tries to infect all with the doubt fostered in his own mind.

Doubt is that indefiniteness which causes the mind to hover between, and never to decide for, one thing or the other. A gloom is thrown over the mind as a result of the oscillating between two or more states and not settling or deciding on any. So we find miserable men who never decide on anything, or, perchance, if they should decide, they fail to act because of some doubt or fear that arises concerning the decision. This uncertainty of mind and refusal to act makes the mind less able to decide and act, but rather encourages sloth and ignorance and breeds confusion.

Nevertheless, there is a purpose for doubt, a part it has to play in the development of man. Doubt is one of the initiators of the mind into the realms of light. Doubt guards all roads to knowledge. But doubt must be overcome by the mind if that mind wills to pass consciously into the inner worlds. Doubt is the guardian of knowledge which prevents the fearful and weak-minded from passing beyond its own place. Doubt forces back the mental infants who would like to grow without effort, and become wise

without knowledge. As darkness is necessary to the growth of animals and plants, so also is the darkness of doubt necessary to growth.

The doubtful mind who has not learned right judgment nor correct action is shown at critical moments in life. Such, for instance, as when one who stands confused as two carriages approach from opposite directions. He looks first one way, then the other, undecided as by which way to escape the danger. This indecision by which doubt is attended, seems to compel a strange fatality of wrong action, as such a one not unfrequently runs under the horses' feet.

The one who puts off deciding between two positions offered him, owing to his doubt of right choice, is usually seen to have let the best opportunity go. Opportunity never waits. Opportunity is ever present though constantly passing. Opportunity is a procession of opportunities. The doubtful man bewails the opportunity just gone, and which he has lost, but the time spent in bewailing his loss and blaming somebody, prevents him from seeing the opportunity then present, but again not seen until it too has just gone. The continued indecision and failure to see opportunities causes one to doubt his ability to choose or to act. One who continually doubts his thoughts and actions causes a present gloominess, awkwardness, and despondency, all of which are opposed to confidence in action. Confident action guides the hand which throws a ball straight to the mark. By the hand in its action, by the walk, by the carriage of the body, by the poise of the head, by the glance of the eye, by the sound of the voice, the mental condition of the doubter or the one who acts with confidence may be seen.

Doubt is the dark and indefinite thing with which the mind struggles and becomes strong as it overcomes it. Knowledge comes or is grown into as doubt is overcome, but doubt is overcome only by knowledge. How then shall we overcome doubt?

Doubt is overcome by confident decision followed by the action which the decision indicates. The examination as to which is the most preferable of two subjects or things is not the blind confidence of ignorant action, nor is it doubt, though doubt enters and will prevail when the mind refuses to decide in favor of either. Doubt never decides; it always interferes with and prevents decision. If one would overcome doubt, concerning the choice between two objects, or in deciding any question, he should, after a careful consideration of the question, decide and act accordingly, without doubt or fear as to the result. If one so deciding and acting has had little experience his decision and action may prove to be wrong and, in fact, in such case, it usually is wrong. Nevertheless, he should continue to examine into the next subject or question and decide and act according to his decision, without fear. This decision and action should be taken after a careful examination of the mistake made in the previous wrong decision and action. To slink back into indecisive doubt after one's action has proven wrong, though it was believed to be right at that time, is a setback to the mind and prevents growth. One should recognize his mistake, acknowledge it and correct it by continuing to act. His mistake should benefit him by enabling him to see through it.

By continued decision and action, a recognition of one's mistakes and an earnest endeavor to acknowledge and correct them, one will solve the mystery of right action. One will learn to decide and act and will solve the mystery of right action by a firm faith and belief that he is in essence one with the Universal Mind or God, through his individuality, the human higher or divine mind, and that his real conscious being comes from that source and will illuminate his thought. If one ponders over this thought, holds it constantly in mind, decides with it in mind and acts according to the decision, he will in no long time learn to decide wisely and to act justly, and through right judgment and just action he will come into the inheritance of knowledge which is bequeathed by his parent god, as soon as he has earned it.

