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RIGHT AND WRONG THINKING AND THEIR RESULTS

**The Undreamed of Possibilities which Man may achieve
through his own Mental Control**

By AARON *MARTIN CRANE

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PREFACE

Some years ago this book was born into thought by the perception of its fundamental principle, and it has been growing ever since. During the intervening years this principle and its allied ideas have been presented more or less fully in the form of independent class lectures to many groups of persons. It is with hesitation that it is now offered to the public in its present form, because it is still growing; but having seen the great advantages which have come to many from the practice of its principles, there arose the earnest desire to extend the opportunity for similar help to greater numbers.

The first lesson to be learned in the school of life is to understand one's own personality or individuality, so as to estimate it at its true value, and to be able to use it for good and to avoid using it for evil. A man should know all that can be known of the power which he is every day wielding simply by being what he is and by thinking, looking, speaking, and acting as he does. It is one's duty to make the most and the best of what is in him; and he is best equipped for this who knows himself most thoroughly. The object of this book is to aid toward the accomplishment of this end.

There appear to be two influences in this world of ours, the good and the bad or the harmonious and the discordant, which permeate all mankind and shape and control all human actions. Wherever there are two, if one is removed, the other remains; if the discordant is removed, the harmonious will be left. Good, the absolutely harmonious, must be the enduring and essential because it is from God. Then an important part of the work of every one is to remove the evil or discordant and thus uncover the good. This includes the whole scheme of reformation, improvement, and progress.

Much of this book is devoted to external matters which man can detach from himself and throw away. By shaking out of his mind every cumbering thought of discord and error he may disclose to view the real man in all the perfection which his Creator bestowed upon him, and thus rise to that divine height of purity and perfection which has heretofore been deemed inaccessible.

There is another topic, higher and even more attractive than this, which deals with the divine perfection inherent in man and in all creation; this is to be the subject of another book which is planned to follow this one.

AARON MARTIN CRANE.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. Introduction

II. Relation of Thinking to Bodily Action

III. Intended Actions

IV. Actions not Intended

V. A General Proposition

VI. As seen by Others

VII. Mutual Reactions of Mind and Body

VIII. Influence of External Incidents

IX. The Rule

X. Discordant Thoughts

XI. HOW TO CONTROL THINKING

XII. Substitution

XIII. Immediate Action

XIV. Persistence

XV. Not always Easy

XVI. Effect of the Physical Attitude

XVII. All One's Own Work

XVIII. Destruction of Discordant Thoughts

XIX. SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

XX. Moral Discrimination

XXI. A Little Analysis and its Application

XXII. Habit

XXIII. The Relation of Thinking to Health

XXIV. Recapitulation of Principles

XXV. The Worry Habit

XXVI. Business Success

XXVII. Undivided Attention

XXVIII. Importance of Early Training

XXIX. Three Notable Examples

XXX. The Penalty for Sin

XXXI. A Story and its Lesson

XXXII. The Story of a Contract

XXXIII. The Story of a Note

XXXIV. A Discussion of the Stories

XXXV. Sensitiveness

XXXVI. Sympathy

XXXVII. Suggestion

XXXVIII. Hypnotic Control

XXXIX. Environment

XL. Each is Responsible for Himself

XLI. Thought Control is the True Self-control

XLII. Man the Architect of Himself

XLIII. Possibility of Perfection

XLIV. The Teaching of Jesus

XLV. A Last Word

I. RIGHT AND WRONG THINKING AND THEIR RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding the immense amount of attention which has been directed in a broad general way to mind and its action, and although the constructive and creative ability of mind through thinking has been so long and so universally acknowledged, yet we are just now beginning to recognize the close and direct personal relation which thinking bears to man. The limits of the power of mind have never been clearly perceived, but recognition of their extent continually enlarges as knowledge and understanding increase.

The differences between ignorant and enlightened, between savage and civilized, between brute and man, are all due to mind and its action. All the multifarious customs and habits of mankind, whether simple or complex, though often attributed to other causes, are, from first to last, the direct results of thinking. The unwritten history of the evolution of clothing, from its rude beginnings in the far-distant and forgotten past through all the ages since man first inhabited the earth, though at first glance seemingly simple, yet, as a whole, is wonderfully complex and astonishing in its particulars. Its story is only the story of the application of mind to the solution of a single one of the vast multitude of problems connected with human requirements.

It is true that our factories and palaces, our temples and our homes, are built of earthly material, but mind directed their fashioning into the vast multitude of forms, more or less beautiful, so lavishly displayed by architecture in city and country. The multitudinous products of constructive art which are scattered in lavish profusion over the whole earth are marvelous exhibitions of what mind has done; and these are being multiplied daily,

All the mechanical triumphs of every age are products of mental effort. Without these men would be in the condition of the animals. It has been said that he owes his supremacy over the lower creatures to his ability to construct and use tools, but this also depends entirely on his superior ability to think. The steam engine is one of these tools; and the story of its creation and of the vast amount of mental effort which has contributed to its evolution can be written only in its larger parts because of the amount of time that has been expended upon it, the magnitude of the work, and the minuteness and complexity of its details.

In the domain of the fine arts more than elsewhere the creations are intimately connected with mental action and are distinctly marked as products of mind. Music, vocal and instrumental, the single singer or the multitude in the chorus, the one instrument or the great orchestra, the country boy whistling among the woods and hills or the grand opera

in magnificent halls — music everywhere, in all its varieties and types, is a product of mental activity and is a most subtle as well as most powerful expression of the mind of the composer. The dreams of the sculptor which have been revealed in marble, those of the painter in the figures on his canvas, the beautiful in all artistic creations or expressions, are the direct result of the finest thinking of the finest minds. What a world of them there is in existence! Yet the crumbling ruins of the past point to greater worlds of them which have been destroyed by man and time.

Even a yet more important product of mind is the literature of the world; in quantity, overwhelming; in variety, bewildering; in quality, whether ancient or modern, such as to excite the interest wonder and admiration. There is no greater monument to the mind of man than the things which that mind has produced in science, philosophy, religion, and letters. This has grown like those ancient monuments to which every passer-by added a stone, and it will continue to grow so long as the human race exists.

Civilization with all that the word implies in every one of its unnumbered phases, its origin, continuance, progress, and present condition, is directly and exclusively a product of mind; and man owes to mind and its action all there is in the external world except the earth and its natural products. All religious, political, and social organisms have their root in mind, and they have assumed their present forms in consequence of the profoundest thinking of untold generations of men. To the same source man owes his own position, which is superior to all else on the earth and “only a little lower than the angels.”

Notwithstanding the recognition of all these facts, it has remained for the scientific men of the present day, through their own intellectual attainments and discoveries, to enlarge immensely upon this recognition and to show the complete supremacy and universality of mind in another domain. The horizon is rapidly widening in the direction of the mind's relation to man himself; and, as a result of the more recent discovery of facts, man is beholding undreamed of possibilities which he may achieve through his own mental control. From the vantage ground already gained, mental and moral possibilities are rising to view in the near distance beside which the attainments of this and all past ages shrink into insignificance.

Only in these more recent years has it been clearly perceived that mind action is first in the order of occurrence, and that it is the absolute ruler of man himself as well as of all these wonderful works which mind has created. Mind is the motor power and governs everything, everywhere; but man can control mind, and therefore, by that control, he may be the imperious dictator of his mind's entire course, and, rising thence to the highest pinnacle of possibility, he may become the arbiter of destiny itself.

II. RELATION OF THINKING TO BODILY ACTION

MIND is that which thinks. Thinking is mind action. Thought is the result of mind action. This is a statement of what mind does, but it is neither a description nor a definition of mind. We know about mind only through our consciousness of its action, but because of this consciousness we know what we mean when we speak of mind and say it is that which thinks.

In seeking for the sources of activity we find that in all human actions thinking is first in the order of occurrence; that is, man does not act unless he has first thought.

A word, even the most idle or habitual, noticed or unnoticed, must exist in the mind in the form of a thought before the vocal organs can utter it. Thinking may precede utterance only by a space of time.

It may be well to note definitely that thinking is not itself a thing, but is only an action. Mind is the thing, just as the hand is the thing, and its motion is only its action. Too short to be measured, nevertheless the thought of the word was in existence in the mind before the word could be spoken; and the same is true of every other action. This statement is necessarily correct because an expression, whatever its form, is always the utterance, or outward indication or manifestation, of some intention, emotion, thought, or feeling, and can never precede what it expresses; hence an act never precedes nor outruns thinking, but must always follow it.

The mechanic first plans, and then he constructs in accordance with his thinking. The architect may find defects in what he has built and pull it down to build in accordance with another plan, but such incidents only afford added illustrations of the truth of the proposition. He had to think before he built; the destruction was the result of thinking that followed the building; it preceded the pulling down, and either thinking preceded the rebuilding. "If there is one thing more than another which seems to the plain man self-evident, it is that his will counts for something in determining the course of events." But willing is the result of choosing, and both choosing and willing are modes of thinking.

This order of occurrence is fully illustrated in the simple act of lifting the hand. Contraction of the muscle causes the motion of the hand; an impulse from the nerve causes the contraction of the muscle; some action in the brain sends the impulse along the nerve; thinking is the motive power, and without it there would not be any action of brain, nerve, or muscle. These are only parts of a machine; over them all is the power of mind without which the machine could not move; just as without the fire there could not be any steam in the boiler, and without the steam there could not be any motion of the piston, and without the motion of the piston the machinery of the factory could not move.

Frequently something outside of the mind causes the mind to act; but had the mind not acted, there would have been no bodily action, or had the mind acted differently, the

bodily action would have been different also. It was the mental act which caused the bodily action and gave to it its peculiar character. But the mind may act independently without any provocation or stimulation exterior to itself, and the motion of the body will occur just the same, showing that mind action alone is the essential in the process.

If we grant all that may be claimed for the influence of external things upon the mind, it still remains that the mind is the power behind all else in moving the body and that without it there would not be any motion. Additional and final proof of the truth of this proposition is found in the fact that if we remove the mind, as in death, the body cannot move. The nerves, muscles, tendons, and bones are parts of the machine — wonderful though inert — which the mind uses. In itself alone no portion of this machine has any more power than a crowbar when it is not grasped by the hand of the laborer. "All acts are due to motive, and are the expression design on the part of the actor. This is as true of the simplest as of the most complex actions of animals, whether consciously or unconsciously. The action of the Amoeba in engulfing in its jelly, is as much designed as the diplomacy of the statesman, or the investigation of the scientist." But motive is a kind of thinking or a state of mind, and thus this statement by Cope, while it includes all the actions of the entire animal kingdom under one general proposition, declares that they are all due to mind and its action. The investigations of physiologists show how surpassingly wonderful is the force of mind when acting in connection with motion of the hand, even when looked at from a material point of view. The forearm, considered mechanically, is a lever. The distance to the fulcrum from the point where the power is applied is, we may say, an inch. The distance from the fulcrum to the point where the weight lies in the hand is, say, fifteen inches. Then, in accordance with mechanical laws, the power put forth by the muscle to raise the weight must be fifteen times as much as the weight itself. An ordinarily strong man can raise a weight of fifty pounds. This means that the mind, acting through the muscle, in this instance exerts a force equal to fifteen times fifty, or seven hundred and fifty pounds. This is the force, represented in pounds, which the mind exerts in such a case.

But this is not all. If this same muscle which has operated under the force of seven hundred and fifty pounds should be removed from the arm and one end of it should be supported from a beam, a weight of fifty pounds attached to the other end would tear it asunder. This shows that the mind not only exerts a force of seven hundred and fifty pounds in lifting the weight, but at the same time a nearly equal force in holding the muscle together. A similar condition exists in connection with every muscular movement of the body.

There is an intimate and most wonderful relation between mind action and the action of the brain and nerve tissues, and between the nerve tissues and the various bodily organs. This relationship is such that certain actions of the mind set the nerves and muscles into activity. No one knows how the mind affects the brain to control it, nor how the nerve affects the muscle either to contract or to relax it. No one knows what the medium is between the mental and physical systems, nor even whether there is a medium. We only know that after the mind acts in its appropriate way these other actions follow in a certain order.

There is an extensive literature on this subject which sets forth many different theories and explanations. Some insist that no connection whatever exists between mind and matter, and therefore they claim that it is too much to say that these actions stand in the relationship toward each other of cause and effect; yet, practically, all admit that there will be no muscular or other bodily action if the mind does not act. This admission is sufficient because it sets forth exactly the condition which exists in connection with other cases of acknowledged cause and consequence. Thus, astronomers say that the sun causes the revolution of the planetary bodies, but they have never been able really to show that any connection exists between the sun and those bodies, nor to give any satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon.

Even if it be granted that the relationship is not that of cause and consequence, but merely uniform sequence, the sequence follows substantially the same form and order as cause and consequence. It makes small practical difference whether we call it a chain of sequences or a chain of causes and consequences. Therefore it is sufficient for the purpose of this discussion to say that mental action is the cause of bodily actions for the reason that bodily actions always follow appropriate mental actions, and never occur without their initiative.

It is universally admitted that the facts of sensation prove the action of the body on the mind, and in like manner the facts of volition just as conclusively prove the action of the mind on the body. For instance, pain may be claimed to cause a movement of the body; but between the pain and the movement was the mind action perceiving the pain and directing those bodily actions. With this direction and adaptation pain has nothing whatever to do. It may be said that man eats because he is hungry, and that in this he is governed by physical sensation; yet the consciousness of that sensation is a mental act of perception without which he would not eat, nor would there follow any of those complicated actions connected with digestion and assimilation. Thus analyzed it appears that it is mind action which sets the whole train in motion.

In the normal person the mental control of muscular action is wonderfully developed. The muscle moves in exact obedience to the mental command, as seen in the delicacy and accuracy as well as the strength and force of the movements. Note the forming of a letter with a pen on the written page, the strokes of the artist's brush upon his canvas, the exactness of touch of the musician's fingers upon the keys when he produces the precise tone that is required for the expression of his music — everywhere that delicacy and exactness are desired in the muscle they are produced by the mental action. It is called the result of training the muscle; in fact, it is training the muscle to obey the mind. If the mind has such control over muscular action, why may not its control over the other functions of the body be equally influential?

It may also be well to note right here a distinction that has often been overlooked. The movement of the arm is not the result of will power. A man may will his arm to move as much as he pleases, but unless the mind itself acts in a manner different from simply willing the arm to move — unless the mind thinks something entirely distinct in character