

Why and How to Improve the Mind

Sir William Hamilton, the famous professor of metaphysics in Edinburgh University, says, "What we mean by mind is simply that which perceives, thinks, feels, wills, and desires." It is also defined by others as "the intellectual or rational faculty of man." We all understand its meaning and need no learned philosopher to tell us manifold capacities or value. It is astonishing to find so many qualities or conditions of the human mind mentioned in the Bible. We read of minds as pure, sound, sober, steadfast, ready, right, fervent, lowly, meek, willing, spiritual; and also as corrupt, blind, double, chafed, defiled, reprobate, hostile, wicked, hardened, alienated, carnal, vain, wandering, and despicable. Great is the contrast between these, and surely they cannot coexist in a human being. The mind is one of God's best gifts to man, and we are responsible for its use. A field may be very fertile in soil, but left to itself will only produce weeds; but if carefully cultivated will yield richest harvests.

Many a man has splendid native talents, but if undeveloped there will be produced only "the leafless desert of the mind, the waste of feelings unemployed." Man's body may be naturally strong, but it needs careful attention as to food, exercise, discipline, rest, or it will be dwarfed, feeble, useless; so of the mind, it must be nourished, regulated, exercised, or it will fail in its possibilities and purpose. However stalwart the human frame may be, the mind is not thereby assured of growth unless carefully developed. However small in stature the body may be the mind can be gigantic if properly trained. It is said that Isaac Watts was once very unkindly twitted for being physically very small, and this cruel thrust called out these significant lines:

"Were I so tall to reach 'the pole
Or grasp the ocean with my span,
I must be measured by my soul;
The mind's the standard of the man."

However poor, humble, or lowly, the advantages of education in schools and colleges may be obtained, if one is willing to work hard night or day to secure benefits of priceless value.

"This education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

It has been estimated that a bar of iron valued at five dollars if made into horse-shoes will yield over ten dollars. If converted into steel and made into knives, blades it will yield considerably over three thousand dollars, and if made into watch-springs will yield two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Who can estimate the value of a mind carefully trained and developed? Alas! alas! there are very many young people squandering valuable time in idleness, frivolity, or in useless efforts, whereas they might be obtaining an education whereby noble results could be attained.

The writer knows a young man who with determination worked hard in an evening school and by closest application of mind fitted himself, for in useless which gave him nine hundred dollars a year; by extra studies he was qualified to fill a place yielding three thousand dollars a year. His ability led him on till he earned four thousand five hundred dollars yearly, and later established himself in professional life. What he accomplished others can likewise do.

"Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The famous Kohinoor diamond in the British crown, when first known in Delhi,

India, in 1526, weighed three thousand one hundred and seventy-two grains, but by unskillful cutting was reduced to seven hundred and forty-four grains. Its royal owner had the careless lapidary imported from his country. When it was brought to London in 1851 it was recut, and now only weighs four hundred and twenty-four grains. The total loss by cutting was two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight grains. However valuable a diamond may be, what is that to the priceless value of a human mind?

By reading, study, observation, discipline, and the blessing of God the mind may become a precious possession to man, and by its use the world may be enriched and God may be glorified. By the frugal use of valuable time great results may follow in the improvement of the mind. The word of God gives instruction for its development and culture. Peter thus enjoins his readers, "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind." Paul writes, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

To be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "Be careful for nothing (not over-anxious); but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep (guard) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Let us also carefully heed this vital admonition of the apostle: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Valuable are the lessons taught in the Book of Proverbs as indicated at the beginning of this paper; where wisdom is personified and is calling loudly to the sons of men to hearken to her voice and to avoid the paths of evil and to follow the ways of peace and holiness. Carefully study these helpful verses and rich will be your gain. Of vast importance to every young person are these words: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied and the years of thy life shall be increased."—*Ps. John Gordon, in Service.*

Wingham District Sunday School Convention

The Sunday School Convention of the Wingham District met in the Lucknow Church, on Wednesday afternoon and evening, September 18th. Afternoon Session.—Rev. David Wren, M.A., presiding. Rev. Dr. Oaten took the opening exercises after which Rev. David Wren gave a very enthusiastic and helpful address, "Sunday School Work: Retrospective and Prospective." In this address strong emphasis was placed upon the "Standard of Excellence" recently adopted by the General Board. "Supplemental Lessons in the Sunday Schools" was dealt with by Rev. I. W. J. Kilpatrick, of Belgrave. He recommended their use because they afforded an opportunity to get a general knowledge of the Bible not obtained in the regular use of the International Lessons. Mr. F. Buchanan, Superintendent of the Wingham Sunday School, led in the discussion on the preceding subject. He was very much in favor of the Superintendents of the Sabbath Schools taking upon the Supplemental Lessons before the whole school. In the general discussion that followed the difficulty seemed to be

that the teaching of two themes in one lesson period would not permit treating either one properly. The great lack of general Bible knowledge in this day was much lamented.

"The How, Why, On Whom, of Evangelism in the Sunday School" was the subject of a most excellent paper by Mr. Hartley Menzies. He emphasized the fact that the question of Evangelism in the Sunday School was not your business or mine, but *ours*. It was every man's job. Melvin Siemmon spoke on "Teacher Training Classes." He outlined the course taken up in the Training Classes, pointed out its many advantages, and strongly advised each school to organize one, even at the sacrifice of something else. As the teachers have but half an hour a week to present the lesson to their class, they ought to prepare themselves in the very best possible manner to make that half hour most profitable and helpful to their various classes. Rev. A. P. Brace, of Toronto, then led a Round Table Conference, introducing the aim and purpose of the Sunday School, the building, and its equipment. He strongly emphasized the use of the lantern as a very helpful adjunct to Sunday School work. He touched very briefly on the importance of keeping the school open the year round, of Cradle Roll, Home Department, and Teacher Training Classes. The thought might be successfully conducted even in rural schools.

The type of teaching was also introduced, as well as the teacher and his qualifications.

The evening session was presided over by Rev. J. W. Hibbert, Chairman of the District.

The Rev. A. J. Langford, of Kincardine, spoke on "The Problems of the Sunday School Teacher, and Methods in Preparation."

The speaker emphasized that while Christian life is one great essential to a teacher, to be successful this life must be expressed in a definite method. Not all of us can be ideal teachers. Most of us are the two-talented folk. He thought every teacher ought (1) Knew your scholars, their temperament, likes and dislikes, that you may be able to give them the message best suited to them; (2) Know your lesson, keep individual needs of scholars before you in preparation; (3) Know how to present your lesson, by getting at main truth in lesson and making the class group at least one or two points thoroughly, rather than trying to cover it all and leaving vague impressions. Prepare your list of questions. Let the scholars talk, and do not try to spoon feed them.

The Rev. A. P. Brace talked on the "Home Side of the Sabbath School Work." God's ideal of teaching is at home. If the home had done its part the Sunday School would not be organized and carried on in the same way it is to-day. Parents ought to care more as to how their boys spend their Sunday. They should begin early to train their children for God. Begin at home to solve the social problems. If parents would say "come" to Sunday School instead of "go" more good would be accomplished.

A very hearty discussion was enjoyed by the many delegates present. The Convention was in every sense a very successful one, and much good no doubt will result therefrom.

"My husband is particularly liable to seasickness, captain," remarked a lady passenger. "Could you tell him what to do in case of an attack?"

"Taint necessary, mum," replied the captain. "He'll do it."—*Mariner's Advocate.*