

# The Breeze.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—Acts xvii. 11.

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## EARLY EDUCATION.

Though the voice of instruction waiteth for the ear of reason, yet with his mother's milk the young child drinketh education. Patience is the first great lesson; he may learn it at the breast; and the habit of obedience and trust may be grafted on his mind in the cradle; hold the little hands in prayer, teach the weak knees their kneeling; let him see thee speaking to thy God; he will not forget it afterward. When old and grey will he feelingly remember a mother's tender piety. And the teaching recollection of her prayers shall arrest the strong man in his sin. *Upper's Protestant Philosophy.*

## ON WORLDLY CONFORMITY.

### A PASTORAL LETTER.

Addressed to the Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Ohio. BY CHARLES PLETTE M'ILVAINE, Bishop of the Diocese.

Dear Brethren,—At the last Convention of this Diocese, your Bishop was requested, by a resolution of that body, to address a Pastoral Letter to the congregations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Ohio, on the subject of worldly conformity, with particular reference to "worldly amusements." The immediate cause of that request was the belief that conformity to the world, in certain social indulgences of a peculiarly worldly character, is a very growing evil, in some parts of our Zion; and is a potent cause, as well as a sure sign, of that sad want of fruitfulness under the means of grace, which is certainly an alarming feature of these days. Fully participating in that view, I proceed to comply with the request of that Convention; and I therefore, most affectionately and respectfully, beg your serious, kind, and patient attention, while I set before you certain views of Christian duty which seem to me of very serious importance.

In a Pastoral Letter addressed, last year, by my most respected and beloved brother, Bishop Meade, to the Diocese of Virginia, the following passage occurs; and I quote it as expressing my own mind: "The present, by general consent of all true Christians in our land, is a season of languor and deadness, of worldliness, and especially of great lightness among some professors of religion. The ministers of God take up the old lament with too much truth: 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' For over how few can they rejoice, as those whom they have been the happy instruments of turning to righteousness!"

Whoever has paid any attention to the expressions, which, for some time past, have proceeded from various denominations of Christians as to the state of religion, must have been impressed with the fact that this languor and deadness among its professors, and this want of increase in the number of persons turned to the Lord under the ministry of his word, are subjects of universal complaint. Now unquestionably the root of all this evil is worldliness of mind. Worldliness of mind is simply a spirit of alienation from God and of cleaving to things of time and sense; it is the heart looking for its portion to the "things that are seen and temporal," instead of to those "which are unseen and eternal." As to the nature of this worldliness, which is causing so sad an effect on the Christian Church in our land, you will greatly misunderstand me, my Brethren, if you imagine that I regard the vanities and amusements which the present address is particularly concerned with as comprising the whole or even its most serious part. The power and citadel of worldliness are in the hearts; wherever you find the affections supremely set upon things that are on the earth, instead of "things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," you find essential conformity to the world. Those earthly things may be matters of personal and trifling vanity, or of grave and rightful business; pursued in the pride and pomp of show or in the quiet retirement to which all show is distasteful; but whatever they be, if they become our reliance for the satisfaction of our hearts, if they are allowed to stand in the way of the fixing of our affections supremely on him who claims to be loved and trusted in, and earnestly sought after, as our satisfying portion, we are "of the world" and "not of God." Hence, I am very far from regarding a participation in amusements distinctively worldly, however injurious, as so identified with all worldly conformity that where the former is not seen, the latter may not be found in the highest degree. The man whose heart is engrossed and kept down from God by the pursuit of worldly wealth, and who is thus, in the view of the Scriptures, an idolater, his God being of his own creation, may look upon the modes in which worldliness is indicated in others, such as frivolities of dress, the lightness and expensiveness of fashionable companies and amusements, with aversion. He may be exceedingly plain in manners, and dress, and life; very grave and retired; while that which makes him all this, may be just the intensity of his worldliness. Some men are too proud to be vain. That man may be too worldly to be fashionable; too deep in the current of worldly interests ever to be seen where the froth of worldliness floats. Your line must take soundings far beneath the depth of worldly amusements; if you would measure the depth of his worldliness.

But, my Brethren, while I thus endeavour to guard my views from being misunderstood on the one side, as if I supposed that the mere removal of any social indulgences or

amusements of a distinctly worldly kind would be the cure of worldly conformity, I must take care, on the other side, lest I should seem to regard such things as of small importance.—They are not the whole nor the heart of worldliness. They are its expressions; its manifestations; its exercise. They are the heart, working itself out in the life. But, like all other workings of the heart in the outer life, they strengthen what they exercise; they stimulate what they induce; they propagate what they manifest; they add example before man to an inward existence before God. They deform the rightful influence of the professing Christian. They spoil the force of his character as one of God's "peculiar people." They hinder and grieve the strivings of the Holy Spirit with his heart. Though not the root of worldliness, they are wide-spreading branches of the tree by which it bears many of its poisonous fruits, by which it spreads much of its evil shadow, and elaborates much of its own vital nourishment. We do not suppose that their removal from worldly persons would kill the deadly root which is planted so deep in the heart of fallen man, and has wrapped its fibres about his every affection; but it would do much that way. It would subvert a great deal of that which keeps the root in vigour; it would remove a vast deal of that which now hinders the efficacy of the word of God in the sanctification of men; it would remove a great deal of evil example by which professing Christians are led astray, the weak stumbled, the true nature of religion misunderstood, and the influence of the Church, as composed of those who are not "of the world" materially weakened.

In addressing you, dear Brethren, on the particular subject assigned me, namely, worldly amusements, I take it for granted that there is at least so much correctness of mind among you that I need say nothing upon two heads, which in times past, in some parts of our Church, did not permit entire silence with regard to them. I mean the amusements of the horse-race and the card-table. But why are these so universally regarded among us as unbecoming the proper example of a Christian? Is there anything essentially sinful in the mere use of a spotted paper according to a certain rule, or a mere trial of the comparative speed of horses in the presence of spectators? No; but the facility of most hurtful abuses in the one thing, and the certainty of most grievous evils arising out of the indulgence as a matter of popular amusement in the other, are such that I trust there is a universal sentiment among us, that professors of religion should have nothing to do with either. The abuse, you will mark, is considered a sufficient argument against their use; and it is so considered, simply because the use and the abuse are so intimately allied. Bear this in mind while I proceed to other matters which are considered, by many, to be compatible with Christian consistency.

I suppose that one of the evils which the Convention embraced under the general subject on which I was requested to address you, and one which, though it has place only in a few of the more prominent parishes in the Diocese, must not be neglected, is the giving, and attendance upon, large, expensive, fashionable entertainments, in which the thing aimed at is the promotion of the benefits of real social intercourse, or the fulfilment of the claims of hospitality.

Under this head I am conscious of the difficulty of drawing a precise line between what is consistent and what is inconsistent with a Christian's duty. There is unquestionably a measure of social intercourse, of neighbourly assembling of friends at each other's houses, and partaking of each other's bounties, which is good and useful, and in the direct line of Christian duty. And there are other modes of assembling people together, professedly for social pleasures, in which a real social benefit is not in the least an object, and the necessary influence of which is directly opposed to the reality of a social spirit. The company is so large and so miscellaneous, and the object aimed at is so purely the being conformed to the fashions of worldly society, and the expense involved is so disproportionate to the value of the object, and the interruption of domestic habits and the keeping of late hours are so large an item in the account, and the frame of mind intended to be promoted is so precisely that sort of worldly gaiety which wars against the spirit of soberness and watchfulness we are bound to cultivate, that while there is no good professedly aimed at, which may not be much more surely and safely attained by other modes, there are evils in such assemblies, of no little detriment to the community. Where the line runs which shall decide, in each particular instance, how far we may go, and where we should stop, in matters of social intercourse, must be left to every individual, under the guidance of sound general principles, and the honest, prayerful desire to know and do the will of God in all things. Such general principles will be given in the remaining part of this letter, in connection with other points of worldly conformity. But before leaving this, I would earnestly press upon those brethren who live where such entertainments find their congenial atmosphere, a much more serious consideration of duty with regard to them than is often found. There are many who would not give or attend upon a ball, who will give, and go to, entertainments quite as worldly in spirit, in mode, and in influence. Because there is no dancing, they flatter themselves there is

no harm. I would affectionately remind them that there is many a door besides that of the ball-room, over which it would be well if they could read, before they enter, the Apostle's injunction: "Be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." And I would suggest that the difficulty of any one's drawing a precise line which may guide in all cases, as to what entertainments he may unite in, so far from being an excuse of looseness of practice in this particular, is the very reason why all conscientious persons should be the more on their guard, should feel the more responsibility for the course they adopt, and should, for the greater safety, keep the further within the known territory of Christian consistency.

Let me now turn to two subjects, in which there is no difficulty of discrimination—the theatre and the dance. The only line I would draw in regard to these, is that of entire exclusion.

To be concluded in our next.

## MASTERY OVER THE MIND.

From Dr. Abercrombie's "Culture and Discipline of the Mind."

Among the phenomena presented by human character, none will strike you as more remarkable than the various objects which men propose to themselves in life. In all, a certain vision of happiness seems to float over the scene; but how various are the courses by which the phantom is pursued,—and how many enter upon the pursuit without proposing to themselves any definite course at all. They never seem distinctly to put to themselves the question, in what the imagined enjoyment consists, and what are the elements by which it is constituted. One expects to find it in wealth,—another in power,—a third in rank,—a fourth in fame, while not a few are found to seek it in a mere round of excitement, perishing with the hour which gave it birth. Thus a large proportion of mankind pass through life, pursuing an imagined good which too often eludes their grasp,—or which, even after it has been attained, is found incapable of giving satisfaction. They live upon the opinions of other men, and are thus left at the mercy of a thousand external circumstances, by which the good they had so long pursued is blasted in the enjoyment. They enter upon life, without forming any definite conception of what the great business of life ought to be,—and, when they perceive that it is drawing to a close, they look back with astonishment to find that it has passed over them like a dream,—that they cannot say for what purpose they have lived,—or perhaps are compelled to acknowledge that they have lived in vain.

But life presents another aspect, when we view it as a scene of moral discipline;—when we look not at its pains and its pleasures, but its high duties and its solemn responsibilities,—and at the discipline of the heart, from which springs a true and solid happiness which external circumstances cannot destroy. All, then, is defined and clear. The object is definite, and the way to it is marked as by a light from heaven. Each step that is gained is felt to be a real and solid acquirement; and each imparts a sense of moral health, which strengthens every principle within for further progress. I know that I carry your best feelings along with me, when I thus call your attention to that course of life, which alone is adapted to its real and solemn importance,—which alone is worthy of those powers of our intellectual and moral nature, with which we have been endowed by Him who formed us. In the culture of these is involved not only a duty and a responsibility, but a source of the purest and the most refined enjoyment. For there is a power which is calculated to carry a man through life, without being the sport and the victim of every change that flits across the scene;—this power resides in a sound moral discipline, and a well-regulated mind.

The foundation of all mental discipline, in the words of an eminent writer, "consists in the 'power of mastering the mind.'" It is in having the intellectual processes under due regulation and control,—and being thus able to direct them, upon sound and steady principles, to the acquisition of useful knowledge, and the discovery of truth. Here we are, in the first place, reminded of that remarkable power which we possess over the succession of our thoughts. We can direct the thoughts to any subject we please, and can keep them directed to it with steady and continuous attention. In the due culture of this power consists a point in mental discipline, of primary and essential importance. By the neglect of such culture, the mind is allowed to run to waste amid the trifles of the passing hour, or is left the sport of waking dreams and vain delusions, entirely unworthy of its high destiny. There is not a greater source of difference between one man and another, than in the manner in which they exercise this power over the succession of the thoughts, and in the subjects to which these are habitually directed. It is a mental exercise which lies at the foundation of the whole moral condition. He who, in early life, seriously enters upon it, under a sense of its supreme importance; who trains himself to habits of close and connected thinking,—and exerts a strict control over the subjects to which his thoughts are habitually directed,—leading them to such as are really worthy of his re-

gard, and banishing all such as are of a frivolous, impure, or degraded character,—this is he who is pursuing the highest of all earthly acquirements, the culture of the understanding, and the discipline of the heart. This due regulation, and stern control of the processes of the mind, is, indeed, the foundation of all that is high and excellent in the formation of character. He who does not earnestly exercise it,—but who allows his mind to wander, as it may be led by its own incidental images or casual associations, or by the influence of external things to which he is continually exposed, enlarges his highest interests both as an intellectual and a moral being. "Keep thy heart with all diligence," says the sacred writer, "for out of it are the issues of life."

Now, it cannot be too anxiously borne in mind, that this great attainment is, in a remarkable degree, under the influence of habit. Each step that we take in the prosecution of it will facilitate our further progress,—and, every day that passes over us, without making it the object of earnest attention, the acquirement becomes the more difficult and the more uncertain;—and a period of length arrives, when no power exists in the mind, capable of correcting the disorder which habit has fixed in the mental economy. The frivolous mind may then continue frivolous to the last, amusing itself with trifles, or creating for itself fictions of the fancy, no better than dreams, and as unprofitable: The distorted mind may continue to the last eagerly pursuing some favourite dogma, while it is departing farther and farther from truth: And the vitiated and corrupted mind may continue to the last the slave of its impure and degrading passions. Such is the power and such the result of mental habits;—and let us ever bear in mind how such habits are formed. They arise out of individual acts of the mind; and we have not the means of detaching what number of such acts are necessary for forming the habits,—and at what period these may acquire a mastery, which shall permit the highest interests of the mind. We cannot determine how many instances of frivolity may constitute the permanently corrupted mind; or what degree of inattention to the diligent culture of the powers within, may be fatal to the best interests of the man, both as an intellectual and a moral being. Hence, the supreme importance of cultivating in early life, the mastery of the mind,—and of watching with earnest attention the trains of thought which we encourage there, as we cannot determine at what period a habit may be formed, the influence of which shall be permanent and irremediable.

When we take this extended view of that which constitutes sound intellectual culture, we perceive that it does not consist in the mere acquirement of knowledge, however extensive that knowledge may be; for this may be an exercise of memory alone. We feel that there is a culture of the higher powers of the mind, of greater difficulty, of greater importance far, without which knowledge is vain. This is a due regulation of the various mental faculties themselves, so that each may perform its proper office upon the knowledge we have acquired; that the various powers within may observe a healthy relation towards each other; and that from the whole may result a due influence upon our motives and principles of action, as moral and responsible beings. Without attention to these considerations, a man may accumulate a mass of knowledge, which yields him no real advantage;—he may have gone the round of the sciences, commonly so called, while he has made no progress in that higher department, the knowledge of himself.

The great principle of self-government, therefore, consists in calling ourselves to account, both for what we know, and for what we do, and for the discipline which we exercise over the processes of our minds. It consists in questioning ourselves rigidly, what progress we are making in important acquirements,—what are the subjects which chiefly occupy our attention,—whether these are such as are really of adequate value, or whether, amid undue devotedness to some favourite pursuit, others of higher importance are overlooked and forgotten; or whether, under a habit of listless vacuity, and inactivity of mind, we may be allowing the best of our days to creep on, without eager attention to any solid acquirement at all. It consists in questioning ourselves, in the same manner, what opinions we have formed, and upon what grounds we have formed them, whether they have been received from others without examining for ourselves, or after a slight and partial examination, directed, it may be, by some previously formed prejudice,—or whether they have been deduced from a full and fair examination of all the facts which ought to be taken into the inquiry. It consists, finally, in scrutinizing our mental habits, our moral feelings, and our principles of action;—what are the subjects to which our thoughts are most habitually directed; what the motives which chiefly influence our conduct;—what the great objects which we propose to ourselves in life; what place among these have the principles of selfish indulgence, personal distinction, or mere human applause;—and what place have those exalted principles which spring from a higher source, and rise to that elevation from which they spring,—a spirit of devotedness to Him who made us,—and views and feelings which point to an existence beyond the grave.

## SELF-INSPECTION.

From the above.

In regard to the discipline of the mind, as well as the external conduct, the rule proposed by Bishop Butler is of high efficacy and universal application. It consists in simply asking ourselves, before proceeding to any act, or any course of action,—is this I am going to do right, or is it wrong,—is it good, or is it evil? This rule is so simple, and so obvious, that most people, probably, think they act upon it;—but this they will find has been done in a very loose and inefficient manner, when they come, in every instance, distinctly to put the question and distinctly to answer it. The practice of doing so, in every step of life, will grow into a habit of mental discipline, of vital importance to the highest interests of the moral being. It ought to be exercised, not in regard to our actions alone, but also in regard to the processes of the mind,—the direction of the attention, and the regulation of the thoughts. These will be found to be as much under the influence of a voluntary power, as is our external conduct;—and the due and habitual exercise of this power, is, in both cases, of equal and indispensable importance to a sound moral condition.

A leading defect in many characters, and one which lies at the foundation of much and serious imperfection, both intellectual and moral, is the want of this habit of self-inspection and self-interrogation. This deficiency is not confined to the listless and vacant mind, which allows life to glide over it and frivolities and waking dreams. It may be found in those who are intensely and actively occupied with external things. It may be found alike in the laborious student, who is eager in the pursuit of knowledge,—and in the active man of the world, who, engrossed with the affairs of the living scene, which is moving around him, has neglected the wondrous scene that is passing within,—has never cultivated the rigid scrutiny of his own intellectual and moral condition. The truth, indeed, seems to be, that after a certain period of life, few have the habit of thus sternly to look within. For, a high degree of moral courage is required, to free the disclosure which awaits the mind, when it is thus turned towards upon itself;—a disclosure, it may be, of the result of years and years that have passed over it in listless inactivity, which yields nothing to reflection but an empty void, or in the eager pursuit of objects which are seen to be worthless; or in the acquirement of habits which are felt to be destructive to the health of the mind;—the disclosure, it may be, of important duties neglected, and important pursuits overlooked; and the conviction that life is drawing to a close, while its great business is yet to begin. Few have moral courage to meet this disclosure; and when it is met, with an attention in some degree adequate to its supreme interest, the impressions which it yields are encountered by the force of confirmed moral habits, which seem to claim every faculty and feeling of the mind as theirs by hopeless bondage. Hence the supreme importance of cultivating in early life the habit of looking within; the practice of rigidly questioning ourselves as to what we are, and what we are doing,—what are our leading pursuits, and what our mental habits; what are our plans and prospects for life, and what influence, over the whole of our moral discipline, have the solemn realities of a life which is to come. What I have called the power of mastering the mind, consists, if I may use a strong mode of expression, in compelling it to listen to such a course of interrogation as this, and compelling it to return distinct and definite answers. Each hour that, in early life, is spent in such an exercise, is fraught with results of greater value than all that the world can give. The exercise is gradually confirmed into mental habit; and, under the influence of a power from on high, the consequences are likely to be such as reach beyond the narrow limits of time, and extend into eternal existence.

## HINTS TO MOTHERS.

Concluded.

Look at facts.—What first led the pious and eminently useful John Newton to the knowledge of the truth? The instructions of his mother, given at the early period of four years, fastened upon his conscience, and led him to a Saviour.

Can you estimate the effect of his labour? Not till you can compute the usefulness of Buchanan and Scott, who were converted by his instrumentality—till you can see the full blaze of that light which the former carried into the heart of heathen India, and witness the domestic comfort and brightening hopes occasioned by the labours of the latter. Who taught young Timothy, an early labourer in the vineyard of Jesus Christ, the first lessons of religious truth? Who led Samuel, a prophet and a judge in Israel, while he was yet going, to the house of the Lord, and dedicated him to the service of the God of heaven? A praying mother.

Though the seed thus sown in childhood may not spring up and bring forth fruit while under the maternal eye, yet we must not conclude that it is lost. A Clergyman recently met a seaman in the street of a neighbouring city, and pressed upon him the duty of attending to the concerns of his soul. The hardy mariner burst into tears and exclaimed, "Stop, stop, don't talk to me so; it is just as mother talked to me when I was a boy." A mother's counsel had followed him through all his wanderings, and still the words of her who prayed

for him retained their hold on his conscience. The time has come when it is esteemed a greater honour to be the mother of a Brainard or a Martyn, than of a Cesar or a Napoleon. And suppose the mothers of these men, whose characters, though so widely different, are so universally known, should, from their unchanging state, look upon those sons whom they have nourished; what would be the view presented to them? Who would not choose to have given birth to the Christian heroes? It is not for this short state of existence only that you are to train your children. The little group that now cluster around you are destined for immortality. When the world on which they stand shall have passed away, and its pleasures and its honours shall be forgotten, then they whom you have introduced to this state of being will begin to live. Their characters are now forming for eternity, and you are aiding to form them.

Though you may not design it, though you may quiet yourself, that if you can do them no good, you will not do them injury; yet you exert an influence which is felt, and will be felt when your head is laid in the dust. Let, then, this appeal to a mother's feelings be heard, let it come to your own bosom, and ponder it in your heart.

Do you know the way to a throne of mercy; and can you kneel before it, and forget the children of your love? Can you watch their closing eyes, and not commit them to your God? Can you labour that they may enjoy the good things of this fleeting world, and not pray that God would prepare them for that upon which they will soon enter? You see them growing up around you without hope and without God in the world; though you may be unable to do more, can you refuse to pray, that he who in a peculiar manner extends the arms of mercy to those in the morning of life, would take them to his embrace, and prepare them for his kingdom?

You have seen the hand of disease fasten upon them, and have passed days of anxious toil, and nights of sleepless solicitude, to arrest their malady; and have cried from a bursting heart, "Oh, spare my child!" You have seen the object of your tenderest affection sinking in the arms of death, and with a heart rent with anguish have said with the nobleman, "Come down ere my child die." And when the last duties of parental affection were performed, and the grave had closed over the child; of your bosom, you have perhaps looked back to the time when it was under your care, and mourned that you thought no more of its immortal part, that you prayed no more for its precious soul.

If you have passed through scenes like these; if you have thus felt; then remember those now in life and health, and improve the opportunity now given you.

The time of your exertion is very short. Soon your children will arrive at that period of life when a mother's influence will be very feebly felt, unless it has been early exerted. Would you find in them a rich source of consolation when your head shall become white with years, and your body be bending to the grave; then you will now commit them to him who can sanctify and save the soul. Should you go down to the grave, and leave these objects of your love in a cold, unfeeling world, what better can you do for them than to secure the friendship of one who stetheth closer than a brother, and whose love is stronger than death? The tender tie which now binds you to them will soon be dissolved; you can not resist the stroke which shall tear them from your bosom. You may have felt the pang—your heart may have been filled with sorrow. O then, if you ever pray, if your soul ever went out to your Father and your God, in humble petitions; tell him of your children who know him not: when you know what it is to wrestle in secret with the God of Jacob, give him back in faith your children. Then you may hope, through grace, to say, in that other world to which you are going, "Lord, here am I, and the children thou hast given me."

Should this little tract fall into the hands of a mother who has never prayed for those to whom she has given life: Prayerless mother! spare, oh, spare your child; stop where you now are, on the threshold of eternity, and remember, as you gaze on that countenance which smiles in your bosom, that you have never prayed for its soul, which will live for ever. Have you a mother's feelings, and can you still neglect it?

Oh! give me poverty, give me pain; leave me friendless and forsaken by the world—but leave me not to the embrace of a prayerless mother—leave not my soul to the care of one who never raised her weeping eyes to heaven, to implore its blessings on my head.

Are you a mother, and can you close your eyes upon the scenes of earth, and remember that you never raised, even in your silent breathings, the desires of your heart to heaven for a child, perhaps your only darling?

In some lonely hour when the labours of the day are ended, and you have reformed the last net of kindness for your sleeping babes; kneel, if you never have before, kneel before Him who seeth your heart in that silent hour, and utter one short prayer; "O broken petition of penitence, faith, and love to the Saviour of sinners, for your dear children."—Tract published by the Cork Religious Tract and Book Society.