

ADDRESS

ON THE

IMPORTANCE AND BEST METHOD OF CULTIVATING THE
MORAL FACULTIES:

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE EDUCATION CONVENTION

OF

INDIANA.

BY ANDREW WYLIE, D. D.

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ADDRESS.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

The subject assigned me is, "The importance and best method of cultivating and training the moral faculties."

That you may the better judge of the truth and pertinence of the remarks to be offered, it will be necessary to have a clear conception of what is meant by "The Moral Faculties." I shall, therefore, call your attention, in the first place, to an analysis of these faculties.

The first, and principal of these is Conscience: the rest hold the place of auxiliaries to it.

Conscience is not a simple power; it embraces in it, at least, three things, a perception, an emotion, and a sentiment or feeling.

1. A perception. Whenever we pronounce, concerning an action, that it is right, or wrong, we have, in the view of the mind, what may be called the moral quality of the action. This is the object of the perception. So, when we look at the objects around us we perceive their visible qualities, and pronounce this to be black; the other, white; this thing to be round; that, square. Conscience is the power in the soul by which it sees things in the moral world; as the eye is the organ by which things are perceived in the natural world. If any should choose to call the acts of conscience by some other name, I have no objection: or, if any should choose, as some do, to make conscience to consist in nothing but the judgment employed about morals, still I have no objection. Only let it be observed, that the mind is not precisely in the same state, when it contemplates the logical or physical properties of things, that it assumes when it contemplates their moral properties. No degree of perspicacity in performing one of these functions will avail the mind in its attempts to perform the other. When we pass from Geometry, or any branch of Physics, into Morals, we immediately feel ourselves in a different region.

The perceptions of conscience are all intuitive. You may, by proof, demonstrate that a man is my benefactor; but that he is, on that account, entitled to my gratitude, is what you cannot prove. It is an axiom.

It is not, either, from the tendency of actions to produce happiness

or misery, to the actor, to those affected by the action, or to the community, or to the whole universe, that conscience pronounces it to be right, or wrong. The quality is in the action itself, not in the tendency. All right actions are, indeed, useful; all wrong ones, injurious: but their character, as right, or wrong, is distinct from the good or evil consequences which naturally flow from them. The Deity may deprive a wrong action of its power to hurt; but he cannot, by that means, make it right. The serpent, deprived of his fangs, is still a serpent.

Power can affect things existing. Things conceived *entia rationis* are beyond its reach. The tendencies of all things might be changed. Virtue and vice are immutable. A benefit conferred makes it right that the beneficiary should feel, and, on occasion, exercise gratitude towards the benefactor. This is a truth in morals which all men perceive, perceive immediately and without proof, and perceive to be unchangeable.

Men differ not in their moral perceptions; but in that part of the process which takes place in the mind while preparing to exercise its perceptions—that part of the process in which, so to speak, the case is made out for adjudication. Here is the place where the mind proves false to itself: where passion and prejudice and interest play off their sophistry, presenting in the case something which does not belong to it, leaving out something which does, magnifying, diminishing, misplacing, discoloring things. If we were to conceive it the province of the Lawyer to make out a statement of the facts of the case for the decision of the Judge, and that of the Judge to make the decision, without troubling himself with any inquiry about the facts, we would have an exact parallel to illustrate the matter under consideration.—The Judge would represent conscience: the Lawyer the will employing attention, memory, fancy and other powers in making up the case for adjudication. Hence, a decision which is true and just, in the abstract, becomes false and unjust, in the application.

This is a point of great practical moment in the subject before us.

2. Conscience implies an emotion; of delight, when what we contemplate is morally right: of loathing and disgust, when it is morally wrong.

3. A sentiment, or opinion of merit in the performer of the action, if virtuous: of demerit, if vicious.

A single additional remark here. There are degrees in moral qualities: and the higher the degree, the clearer is the perception and the more intense the emotion, and the sentiment connected with it. There are cases wherein we simply approve and there are cases where our whole soul glows with delight and admiration: cases in which we simply censure, and cases in which indignation and abhorrence *transport* us.

AUXILIARY POWERS.

First, Interest. Every man, on reflection, will find that he considers himself charged with a trust respecting himself and his own individual happiness, which he has not and cannot have, with regard to any other individual. He is concerned in the care and management of his own affairs, and this concern is not the product of any reflection, that this is his duty, or that it is proper for him so to feel, but it is, as it were, a part of consciousness itself. A man, by consciousness, feels that he is himself and not another; much in the same way he feels, that his pains and pleasures concern himself and not another, and that, consequently, whatever may, in future, produce pain or pleasure is a matter for *him* to look to, and concern himself about. This feeling of interest is prior in its origin, probably, to a sense of duty: yet in persons come to years of reflection it may justly be considered a part of it. Every man, who reflects, feels that he owes it, as a part of his duty, owes it to himself, not to neglect his own interests. But, taking it in the other view, and considering duty and interest, as I am inclined to do, as distinct and not the same, we must allow, that man was made to move on, in the line of rectitude, under the joint influence of both principles. Conceding, therefore, that conscience, or a sense of duty, holds, in our moral constitution, a place of superior importance over interest, yet, it is not in the nature of man to exert himself with all that zeal and alacrity, when prompted by duty alone, that he feels when interest and duty both impel him to action.

If the entire system of Being, according to the sublime conception of Edwards, were, in the strictest sense of the word, *a community*, in which each particular member were bound to regard himself only as a member, divesting himself of all personal regards; still, it would be his duty to pay a special attention to his own affairs, because, being nigher them, he could superintend and manage them to better purpose

than those of any other, or than another could his. But this scheme, however magnificent in conception, is manifestly not the one, which the Author of Nature has adopted. He has evidently designed to promote the good of the whole human race—for in our speculations it is needless to go further—on the principle that each member of the race should have a special, and, in some respects, an exclusive, regard to himself and his own interests, only so, as not to interfere with the rights of others. I say, in some respects, exclusive; for our appetites and tastes, are wholly, and many of our feelings and active principles are, principally, of this nature. Every one must feel for himself, think for himself, act for himself; in much the same, though not, indeed, in exactly the same sense, in which it may be said, that he hungers and thirsts, eats and drinks, for himself. Were it otherwise—were men divested of all those principles and feelings of which *self* is the centre, mankind would resemble Epicurus's atoms moving loosely among themselves without connexion or order. As it is, they resemble the actual universe, the matter of which is conglomerated into masses, each mass having its individual centre and its several orbits; while all are held together by the all-pervading operation of a principle which unites them as a whole.

Divine Revelation confirms this view of the subject, by the appeals which it every where makes to our desire of happiness.

It ought not to be ascribed to human depravity, that men are so much led by their personal interests. The fact is, they do not value these interests enough. They injure themselves more than they injure one another. In truth, no man can be injured by another so much as by himself. Another may kill his body: his soul is invulnerable to any power but his own. Self-love leads us astray, not because it has too much vigor, but because it does not see well. Give it light, and then, full scope. Self-denial, which is a virtue of high importance, is as necessary to *happiness*, as it is to complete the excellence of a good moral character. It never sacrifices interest in the long run: it only requires us to forego present gratification for some greater good in prospect. And does not self-love require the same? Advantage, for a time, and in some particular juncture, may seem to accrue from doing wrong: but, on the whole, no one ever will be the loser, by the performance of his duty, or the gainer by neglecting it.

Next in order, it is proper that we notice Sympathy; because, being intended to operate as a check upon self-interest, it may be more advantageously viewed in connection with it. Sympathy disposes to feel in common with others; as self-interest makes us feel what is proper to ourselves. It transfers our consciousness to another breast, identifies us with him, and makes his cause our own. It concentrates upon one great object the energies of a multitude, and is more easily excited, as well as operates more powerfully, where numbers are concerned. As, in the progress of a conflagration, each several piece of the combustible pile, taking fire from other pieces around, communicates it, in turn, augmented by the heat which itself evolves, till, at length, the whole, glowing throughout with the accumulated force of so many pieces, presents the appearance of a pyramid of flame, roaring and raging in the wind which itself creates; while the spectators, at a distance, gaze with mingled admiration and dismay, sensible how vain are all human efforts to check the victorious element: so it is, when the force of sympathy spreads some strong sentiment among a great people. Then private interests, opinions, feelings, are all sacrificed, or forgotten. One grand movement draws every thing into itself. It seems as if the partitions that separate individuals were all dissolved, and men actually flowed together, heart to heart, soul to soul, strength to strength, mind to mind, and body to body, and means to means, like the commingling of many waters in the great ocean. Then it is, that the spirit of revolution goes abroad, and, with more than the strength of a Titan, heaves a continent or sinks a continent into the abyss. Then it is, to speak without a figure, that the PEOPLE act in their might. Then their oppressors are brought to account for their long arrears of crime; their fetters broken, their sceptre shivered and trampled under foot.

Intimately connected with sympathy, and often blended with it, in its operations, is the principle of Imitation. It is a part of our constitution, which influences us through life, but most powerfully, in youth, while the character is forming. By it we become assimilated, not merely in language and manners, but, to some degree, in temper and spirit, with those in whose society we are placed.

Emulation, we may notice, in the next place. To excel is its object. It makes, of the attainments of others, a mark on the scale of

merit, higher than which it makes an effort to reach. It seeks to surpass a competitor, without regarding him as an enemy. It is, indeed, often attended with ill will and unfair dealing; but not necessarily so. An honorable man scorns to take advantage of his rival. To suppress the workings of emulation, for the reason that is liable to be corrupted into envy, or apt to generate hatred, when stimulated into excessive exercise, is unwise. If every thing were to be banished from the human character, or from the human condition, which is liable to such abuse and perversion, essential injury would be done to both. Neither the mind of man, nor his abode, would be benefitted by extinguishing the *fire*, which imparts spirit and vigor to the one, and comfort to the other. We know what man can do, by seeing what he has done; and we are animated to unusual efforts by a generous rivalry with those around us. The wise teachers of antiquity, among the rest Paul, an inspired apostle, and Longinus, "the prince of critics," unscrupulously appealed to the emulation of their pupils and followers. The fact that great and illustrious men have always appeared together, like constellations in the sky, can only be accounted for by their efforts to surpass each other. The gymnasia, schools and public games of Greece were established and conducted avowedly with the view of stimulating the principles of emulation to its highest pitch; and all the world knows and admires the wonderful effects which the system produced. Philosophize as we may, we never shall be wiser nor stronger than Nature, whose hand has implanted in our breasts the principle in question; and thus has rendered idle all our attempts to pluck it up. To cultivate and improve it is the task assigned to us.

Next, among the moral principles auxiliary to conscience, we may notice a sense of the ridiculous. This finds legitimate employment in exposing, as objects of contempt and derision, such absurdities of character and conduct as cannot be touched by the graver and more serious sort of argument. It has been said, that mankind will not be laughed out of their vices. Neither will they be argued out of them, much less scolded, or frowned out of them. What then? Shall we lay aside sober argument, grave censure, along with ridicule, and every human means of improving the character? No surely; "*Est quodam prodire tenus, si non datur*

ultra." We may do something, by reason and argument, with such as are prepared to listen to reason and argument; to others, such as have suffered their moral feelings to grow torpid by low, sensual habits, I see no reason why the "satyric thong" should not be applied so as, if possible, to sting them into sensibility.

*"There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle, like a standing pool,
Who do a wilful stillness entertain,
On purpose to be dressed in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
As who should say, I am Sir Oracle:
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark."*

With such pompous blockheads it is difficult to argue on this, or indeed, any other moral subject. With them it suffices, instead of all arguments, to say, that the Saviour never laughed. But, supposing this allegation to be true,—for it is a mere allegation without proof—does it follow, because the Saviour never resorted to ridicule, that the feeling which it awakens is an improper feeling? His example is not in all points, set for our imitation. But it is so far from being true, that the Saviour never resorted to ridicule; even in those fragments of his discourses that the fishermen have recorded, that I undertake to affirm, that whoever will attentively peruse these discourses, without finding specimens of the most poignant ridicule and satire he would not be apt to find them even in the works of Swift or Cervantes.

There are subjects and occasions, on which the employment of ridicule would indeed be shockingly improper; but, there are others which call for it, and good sense will neither employ it in the one case, nor be offended with its exercise in the other. That this keen weapon has sometimes been employed in attacking religion, is no argument against its legitimate use. If the assassin uses deadly weapons to assail the innocent, this is no good reason why they should not be allowed to use them in self defence.

Taste, with all those refined perceptions and sensibilities which give rise to what Mr. Addison has called "The pleasures of Imagination," have a great moral influence on the character, and deserve therefore, to be ranked with the moral powers. The Author of our being has provided for the gratification of these feelings, by the mag-

nificence and beauty which adorn the theatre of his works, in the midst of which he has placed us. He has made "all nature beauty to the eye, and music to the ear." Whatever there is in the melody of sounds, in soft or brilliant colors, elegant forms, exact proportions, to delight the eye or the ear; or to charm the imagination; whatever there is in those scenes of vastness and glory, whether on earth or in the heavens, which strike the mind with something like a religious awe and veneration, as if we stood in the august presence of the Power that made the universe, tends not only to enlarge the sphere of our innocent enjoyments, but to make impressions upon the character, which in their tendency, are decidedly friendly to moral purity and refinement.

Imagination holds the middle space in the constitution of the mind, between the intellect and the heart, and through it ideas are constantly passing from the former to the latter; borrowing, in the passage, whatever shape and color the wonder-working power may impart to them. The amazing influence of association—one of the laws which govern the imagination—is manifested in all the doings of men. By means of it, murder, robbery and every other atrocious crime that shocks humanity, have been concealed by the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war;" while religion, which ought to enliven and exalt the mind, is presented in such connections, and in such a form, as to awaken nothing but disgust.

We pass next to the affections. These have persons for their object. Now, we have no duty to perform, but where persons are to be affected by the performance. And as every duty terminates on a person, where affection goes along with the performance of the duty, what otherwise would be regarded as a burden, is felt to be a pleasure. See, for example, the fond mother!—that impersonation of Heavenly tenderness and guardianship—how cheerfully does she deny herself of rest and almost every gratification, that she may not be wanting in any office of kindness, to the helpless little being that nature hath committed to her charge! In all those relations which nature hath established, she has, in the same way, made easy the performance of the duties which are proper to them. Now, we must, to be successful, follow out the scheme which nature has suggested, and in which she has gone before us. The scheme of morals contained in the sacred Scriptures does this, and it is, so far as I know,

the only scheme in the world that does it—a proof, by the way, that it is from the same source with nature.

It is obviously the intention of Divine Revelation, to call into exercise the moral principles of our nature by means of the affections. By it we are taught that God loves us, as his creatures ; that he made us to be happy ; endowed us with high capacities of enjoyment, and placed us in a world stored by his bounty with abundance of means suited to these capacities. In the doctrine of our redemption, his kindness is still further and more surprisingly illustrated, by the opening of a way for our restoration to his favor, through the interposition of a Mediator graciously appointed to suffer in our stead, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.” And we are actually brought unto God, attracted and drawn to him by the cords of an affection the purest and most indissoluble, whenever a belief in this great doctrine has its proper affect upon our hearts. And if we truly love God, we will of course, love for his sake, all the creatures he has made, and be ready to do them good, especially those to whom he has given a nature like our own—made of the same flesh and blood with ourselves. Thus, throughout the entire system of our moral relations, we are drawn by the sweet influence of affection to the performance of our duty, as by the force of a moral instinct which, without doing violence to ourselves, we cannot disobey. He who does not, as a child, love his parents ; as a beneficiary, his benefactor ; as a citizen, his countrymen ; as a man, his fellow men ; violates his own nature, as really, and sometimes as painfully to himself, as though he inflicted torture on his own person and made use of his right hand to wound and mutilate his left.

From the foregoing *imperfect* analysis of the moral powers—for time would not permit to pursue it any further—the best methods of cultivating and training them may be easily deduced. The remaining branch of the subject assigned me, I must leave wholly untouched : that part I mean, which relates to the *importance* of such culture and training.

And here I have one remark to make, which, though it is merely of a negative character, I consider of so much importance, that I shall devote to its illustration a considerable portion of what remains of this discourse. It is this, that in the culture and training of the moral powers, no small part of our care ought to be employed in

what, at first view might seem to amount to just nothing at all, I mean, avoiding to throw any obstructions in the way of nature, which might either retard their growth or give to them a wrong direction. Analogy suggests this caution. In cultivating the productions of the soil, man's labor does little more than remove obstacles out of nature's way. The life-giving influence is hers. Not a particle of it belongs to man. He sometimes becomes too officious, and of course mars nature's work. Let him stand out of the way! "*Laissez moi faire*;" is nature's command to him, when he would obtrude himself into the manipulations of her great laboratory. So in the moral world. There is a department in it, to be sure, allotted to man, but it is a very humble department; that of means. Efficiency is in nature alone, or to speak religiously, in God. Let us examine, first, the appetites. Appetite misleads neither brute nor man, when nature is left to herself. But, do we leave nature to herself, in our treatment of the appetite of our children? On the contrary, do we not urge it and goad it, by every sort of stimulant that art can invent? Appetite itself, especially in the young, gives sufficient relish. To the thirsty is there any beverage so pleasant as pure water? To the hungry palate, does any thing taste sweeter than plain bread? Well do I remember how, in early life, I used to enjoy on a frosty morning, as I went from the the cup-board to the barn-yard, my slice of simple bread; and how the expecting cattle seemed to enjoy with equal relish their portion (the straw,) of the same vegetable whose precious fruit had yielded the choicer portion to me. Did time permit, I might refer you to what the wise ancients have said on this subject, particularly Xenophon, in his remarks upon the Persians, both while they retained their primitive simplicity of manners, and afterwards when they became corrupted and enervated by the refinements of luxury. But I cannot afford time to treat the subject so much at large. Suffer me to say, however, what a thousand observations made in passing through life, have amply confirmed, that scarcely any thing more hinders the development of both the intellectual and moral powers, than the practice, now almost universal, of pampering the appetite in youth. It gives the brute, in man, a start of the rational; and oftentimes, such a start, that the latter never comes into view at all; but the boy, and afterwards the man, exhibits nothing but brute—all brute, stupid brute, and not unfrequently, a rampant vicious brute.

Another obstruction to the proper growth and development of the moral powers, is the influence of bad example. This takes like infection, by means of sympathy and imitation, instinctive principles which operate with great intensity in youth. It is of little consequence how pure may be the precepts and instructions given by parents and other instructors, if their examples be of an opposite character. To expect that the young will imbibe the spirit of the precepts and instructions, and repel that of the antagonist example is the very madness of folly. The character of those who fill the delicate and highly important office of teachers in the community ought ever to be regarded as a matter of the highest interest. It is not enough that they be neither weak, nor wicked; dunces nor profligates. They must have native talent, as well as respectable acquirements; be possessed of energy of moral principle, as well as suavity of temper and an amiable deportment. But it is not enough to protect the morals of the young from the example of incompetent or unworthy teachers: they must be guarded against the influence of bad company of all sorts. Of all things pertaining to the culture and training of the moral powers this is the most difficult. No where, so much as here, do the anxious parent and faithful teacher feel themselves so much at a loss. The business of life requires us to have intercourse with men whose morals we cannot approve. But no one whose manners are licentious, whatever may be his standing in other respects, should be encouraged, or even allowed, to appear on terms of chosen companionship with those who have youth under their care. Nil dictu foedum, visuque, hæc limina tangat. Intra quæ puer est."

The society to be found in public seminaries, is often exceedingly corrupting. Better far, that a child, rather than be exposed to its influence, should forego the advantages of a public education entirely. But, on this part of the subject, we cannot now enlarge. In truth, no vicious youth ought to be permitted to remain in a seminary of learning. An education, could he acquire it, would only augment his power of doing mischief to himself and others. But really he cannot acquire it.

Nothing, scarcely, tends more to corrupt and pervert the moral feelings, than the application of too much stimulous, or stimulous of a wrong kind, to the desires. Under this particular, I can stop only

to *name* some things that are exceedingly common and highly injurious: such as feeding the desire of knowledge with gossip—the desire of praise, with excessive or misapplied commendation—the desire of esteem with vain and gaudy decorations—the desire of power, by entrusting *them* with it, who do not know how to use it—the desire of society, by too frequently resorting to shows and public places—the desire of superiority, by allowing it to exult over the weak and the helpless, and the desire for money, by all those ways of speaking and acting which show that we consider it the main object of human pursuit.

I have reserved, for the last place, that which has had more to do in corrupting and misleading the moral powers than any other single cause, or perhaps, all other causes combined. I mean false views of religion. It is difficult to speak briefly on this point; and yet so as not to be misunderstood; and still more difficult to speak so as not to give offence. And I firmly believe, that were He, “who spake as never man spake,” to come again among us, as he did among the Jews, (who were in their own view a very religious people,) and to teach precisely the same truths which he taught them, giving them the same palpable point and bearing on persons and practices that he then did, he would meet with the same reception—generally shall I say?—too generally I fear—that he met with from them. On the dogmas of polemic theology, which are considered of such vital importance, it is a question whether he would give us any more satisfaction than he gave to the woman of Samaria and others on the like nice points; and he would have occasion to inculcate, now, as then, the superiority of moral duties over religious rites—the benignity of the Divine nature—the worthlessness of Pharisaical pretensions—the turpitude and damnable atrocity of fanatical zeal and party strife—the insignificance of “Mint annise and cummin”—the precedence of the *agenda* before the *credenda* of religion, or of doing before opinion; and he would, as then, take the ground of strong and decided and uncompromising opposition against—I shall not presume to say whom—but I may safely say—against *things* and *practices* esteemed by many most holy—and at any rate, against all persons who esteem themselves exclusively so—and despise others.

There is a notable difference between all other causes which operate to prevent the proper growth and development of the moral pow-

ers, and false views of religion. It is this, that in all other cases, conscience is merely obstructed; but, in this, it is perverted. In other cases it continues to fight on the side of virtue, only it is vanquished by the powers in opposition: but in this, it comes over and fights on the side of vice. Hence the peculiar malignity of corruptions of religion. Nothing else can drive men so far astray from the path of rectitude. For, in other instances when men act wrong, they move but by the impulse of a part of the energies of their nature: passion and appetite urge to the perpetration: conscience reclaims and reluctates. It is the flesh and spirit contending for the mastery; and when the force of the latter is substracted from the former, the man moves forward in his evil course, under the influence of the remainder only. But, when a false religion has corrupted the mind, his whole nature is engaged in one direction, and he moves onward towards his object, impelled by all his energies. Flesh and spirit, conscience and appetite, reason and passion unite their forces: no wonder, then, that the man after perpetrating under their sanction, deeds, the bare recital of which, even after the lapse of ages, fills us with horror; should look abroad upon the scene of his crimes with delight—on himself, with complacency—on others around, with pride and triumph, and to the retributions of a future state, with confidence and exultation. The pious transports of the martyr were perhaps equalled, if not surpassed, by the infernal extacy of his tormentors, who believed that in offering his blood, they were presenting a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing in the sight of God. The records of former times, in relation to this subject, would probably be rejected as fabulous, were they not supported by modern instances. The Thugs are a people of India, who not only follow murder as a profession, but practice it with religious zeal, with the view of securing the favor of the goddess to whose service they have devoted themselves. Whether something of the same spirit may not, under some more plausible shape, be lurking among the professors of our holy religion, is a question not for me to determine. Let every one look well to the state of his own mind in this matter.

There has been manifested, among various sects in philosophy and religion, and in different parts and ages of the world, a disposition to ascribe the depravity of our nature to some one part of our physical or moral constitution, and consequently, to suppose, that practical re-

ligion consists in the excinding or mortification of that part. It has been, for instance, supposed to be placed in the Passions, as by the Stoics; in the senses and appetites generally; as by Monks and Ascetics; or in the several appetites, as by the Shakers among us, and by the great body of the church of Rome; as appears by the high estimate in which they hold virginity in their nuns and celebacy in their clergy. That ignorant and foolish people should be so misled is not wonderful: but that such men as, for example, Bourdalove should prate and rave on the subject at the rate he does is surprizing and humiliating.

In general, mankind are prone to place the substance of their religion; not at home among the concerns of their own proper sphere, and in the well regulated use of all their time and faculties, but in something which is out of reach, afar off; in heaven; in the deep; beyond the sea: while in truth, "the word"—the thing—is nigh them, in their heart and in their mouth.

I have been told, I know not how often, and sometimes, when it was thought I would be hit by the remark, that no one can be an honest man, who is not a sectarian. The spirit, which dictates such remarks as this, is, I think, that which principally corrupts the religious sentiments and consequently the morals of people in the present day. They can be on good terms with all who will dispute with them; but one, who thinks their favorite points of sectarian peculiarity of no importance, they cannot so far tolerate, as to have for him the poor charity to believe, that he has any religious principles at all. If you meet them in the face with a zeal as furious as their own; it is well: you are a good christian, but prejudiced: and for that you are excusable, because of your education. But if you will not dispute with them at all, believing their peculiar tenets of no importance, immediately they are incensed. In a word, they will give quarter to an enemy, but none to a neutral: as if the Prince of Peace required us to prove our title to the blessings of his reign by perpetually battling one another. Pride is at the bottom of all this. For he who disputes with you, so far honors your good sense, that he agrees with you in this, that the thing is worth disputing about. Whereas, he who treats it with indifference, casts this imputation upon your understanding, that he thinks you attach religious importance to trifles, which no wise man will allow himself to do. Hence, silence more provokes a bigot,

than violent opposition. For, by the latter, you only question the orthodoxy of his creed: by the former, you seem to doubt the soundness of his head. In the one case you dissent from his logic: in the other you intimate plainly that you think him a fool. It is, therefore, to be expected that he will get his revenge by calling you a hypocrite.

The outward forms and the mysteries of christianity, have furnished occasion to the most of those strifes and factions which have had, and still continue to have, so much influence in corrupting the morals of the christian world. This pernicious influence it exerts chiefly in three ways. First it diverts the minds of people away from the study and practice of christian virtue. Second: it substitutes, for the matter of religion itself, a certain discipline of the understanding, whereby it is worked into the implicit belief of certain philosophical doctrines which the authority of man has interwoven with the truths of God. Thus the priests of the church of Rome incessantly inculcate upon their people the necessity of giving up their understandings, as well as their wills, and affections, to God—which means, that they should implicitly believe whatever they, the priests, tell them. And thirdly: it has furnished matter for interminable disputation, split up the religious community into hostile factions, and tended, in ways too numerous now to be described, to obstruct the diffusion of sound moral principles in the world. The successful cultivation of these principles cannot go forward, till this mischievous spirit is purged from among us.

Habits of industry must be formed in early youth. Bodily exercise is necessary to put the mind in a healthful state. Idleness is the inlet to every vice.

Great care is necessary, in order to check the exorbitant growth of ambition, especially in persons of feeble intellect. Ambition is *not* the vice of great minds. The weakest heads are the most readily turned by eminence and show. No imbecile ever filled a public station, who was not, from the first, or who did not become, to the extent of his abilities, a knave. For such an one can only hope to succeed, in ascending to a place above his natural level, or in maintaining himself in it, by unfair means. Folly always resorts to force to accomplish its ends. Weak men are invariably tyrants, when they have the power.

Let parents and teachers be warned not to thrust forward the young prematurely into notice; lest they destroy those feelings of bashfulness, which nature designed as a guard to juvenile innocence. The unfledged bird should abide in the nest.

It should be the incessant study and aim of all who have any thing to do in forming the character of the young, to secure the concurrence, with conscience, of as many of the principles of human nature as possible. It should be shown that what is morally right is also, laudable, lovely, profitable and worthy of imitation. On the contrary, vice should never be exhibited in such colors as to hide its deformity. Wherever it can be prudently done, the reasonableness of what is required of those under authority should be pointed out. And, especially, should those fascinating powers of taste and imagination be made to lend their charms to the requisitions of reason and conscience. Duty should never be made irksome to the unpractised and unthinking, by being associated with what is filthy, or mean, or ridiculous.

Above all, the aid of religion should be sought and employed in the culture of the moral powers. This must be done, not as a matter of art and finesse, by the introduction of a solemn farce, made up of manœuvres which the merest child can penetrate and despise, but in the dignity and simplicity of truth, after the manner of the Great Teacher himself. He brings our minds directly into the presence of God, whom he encourages us to approach, in prayer; as "our Father in heaven," whose Providence extends to the minutest of our concerns, "the very hairs of our head," who, as our Almighty Maker and Friend, has not only given us a rational and immortal nature, with all the capacities for happiness which we possess, and set before us a career of progressive enjoyment and improvement without end or limit, but has, by the intervention of a Mediator, done for us whatever the guilt and helplessness of our fallen nature rendered necessary to be done that we might enter upon and prosecute it with hope and confidence. In giving us these views of the character of God he shews us, at the same time, his claim to our love, confidence and gratitude. And to obey the holy impulse of these affections is the same thing with doing our duty. For, to repeat a sentiment which ought never to be lost sight of, as there is no duty we have to perform which does not terminate on some person as its object; so there is no person whom these pious affections will not lead us to regard with kindness, if for no

other reason, for this, that he is the offspring, with us, of the same Divine Parent and a sharer with us in his regard. One more grand consideration there is in the christian religion, as presented in the teaching of its Great Author, which causes it to take hold, with a still firmer grasp, of the whole system of our moral principles. It is this: The same Deity who is presented to view, as the first and highest object of our affectionate confidence, is also shewn, on the field of our moral contemplations, in the august and awful character of an Omnipotent Ruler and an Impartial Judge. And we are taught, moreover, that he has so constituted the entire system of things, of which we are a part, that we find our happiness in acting in conformity to his laws, and lose it by disobedience. The two grand considerations, just mentioned, I regard as the vital principles of true religion; and it is my firm belief, that no moral training which does not employ them, will ever prove effectual.