

**Address delivered in the hall of Marischal College, Aberdeen, 5th November 1835, on occasion of his installation as Lord Rector of the University ... / [John Abercrombie].**

**Contributors**

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# ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE HALL OF

MARISCHAL COLLEGE, ABERDEEN,

5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 1835,

ON OCCASION OF HIS INSTALLATION AS

LORD RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY.

BY

JOHN ABERCROMBIE, M. D. OXON. & EDIN. V. P. R. S. E.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH;

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE OF FRANCE;

AND FIRST PHYSICIAN TO HIS MAJESTY IN SCOTLAND.

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## ADDRESS, &c.

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I FIND it impossible to express, as I ought, the feelings with which I appear before you, in entering upon the duties of the distinguished office to which you have been pleased to call me in so flattering a manner. Allow me, in the first place, to express my most grateful thanks, and to assure you, that I appreciate most highly this distinction, and feel most warmly the honour you have conferred on me. Of my ability to discharge the duties of the office, I must speak in the most guarded terms ; but I may express, with greater confidence, my earnest wish to discharge them, and my earnest desire to contribute, if it were in my power, towards advancing the interests, and promoting the usefulness, of this ancient and venerated seat of learning. My earliest and most tender recollections are closely associated with it ; and the hall, in which we are now assembled, recalls, with that kind of feeling which is pleasing yet mournful, the memory of years which are long gone by,—of fellow-

students who have been cut off in the midst of their days,—and of eminent and revered preceptors who have finished a course distinguished alike by their talents and their virtues. This ancient fabric itself is now mouldering into decay, but I rejoice in the prospect which is before us, of seeing it reared in new splendour; and I trust the time is not far distant, when we shall lay the foundation of another Marischal College, and unite our earnest prayers to the Giver of all good, that it may rival these ancient walls in celebrity and in usefulness.

The University of Marischal College has long held a very high place among our schools of literature and science; and its character has been supported by a succession of eminent men, whose names are well known and highly honoured among the great promoters of truth. Without going beyond the recollection of the present generation, I need only mention Campbell, Beattie, Brown, Stewart, Hamilton, Copland, to whom, with various others, some of us look back with respect bordering on veneration, and who are deeply associated in our minds with our first introduction to the delights of literature and the wonders of science. Their places are now occupied by individuals eminently qualified for the various departments to which they have devoted themselves, and eminently fitted both to enlarge the



boundaries of science, and to extend the reputation of the seminary which has the benefit of their talents. In this slight allusion to them, I shall only express my sincere regard for them as a body and as individuals, and my earnest wishes for their personal happiness and the long continuance of their invaluable labours. Under their instructions, may you, my beloved young friends, grow up in all that sound knowledge, and that true culture of the mind, which shall qualify you, in your progress through life, for extensive respectability and extensive usefulness.

The course of elementary instruction, which has long been pursued in Marischal College, is admirably and peculiarly calculated for laying a sound foundation in the various departments of knowledge ;—and those, who improve the opportunities which are here afforded to them, will, I am persuaded, have reason, in after life, to look upon the years which they have spent in this place, as a period productive of inestimable results in their mental discipline and moral culture. But, that these important results may be accomplished, it is necessary that you not only pay minute attention to the various branches of knowledge which are here presented to you, but that you bear in mind the higher purpose which all science ought to serve, in the culture of the understanding itself, and in qualifying it for the attainment



of truth,—particularly for the acquirement of those great and ultimate truths, by which science ought to lead us to the omnipotent and eternal cause. Philosophy fails of its noblest object, if it does not lead us to God ;—and, whatever may be its pretensions, that is unworthy of the name of science, which professes to trace the sequences of nature, and yet fails to discover, as if marked by a sunbeam, the mighty hand which arranged them all ; which fails to bow in humble adoration before the power and wisdom, the harmony and beauty, which pervade all the works of Him who is eternal.

But all that is furnished by early study gives only the elements for forming the mind, and for gradually training it to that intellectual vigour and moral discipline by which it may be prepared for farther and greater pursuits. While, therefore, you prosecute with ardour the various departments of science, you will remember that a higher and more extended object is still before you. You will feel the necessity of rising above the details of individual sciences, to those results to which all science ought to combine in leading us,—the culture of the understanding itself,—and the practical application of those rules by which the mind may be directed towards the discovery of truth, and by which the truth



so discovered may be applied to the actual duties and responsibilities of life. You will learn to estimate the value of that greatest of all acquirements, a well-regulated mind, and to study with anxious care what those qualities are which constitute such a mind, and what are the particular pursuits, and the mode of conducting them, which are best adapted for the high attainment. You will learn to estimate the benefits which arise from such a regulation of the mind,—to see how, in every inquiry, it tends to conduct us to truth,—how it leads the mind to apply itself to various pursuits with a degree of attention adapted to their real value, and to follow out the inductions of each to its last and highest object,—the culture of the moral being.

Judging upon these principles, we are taught to feel that life has a value beyond the mere acquirement of knowledge, and the mere prosecution of our own happiness. This value is found in those nobler pursuits which qualify us for promoting the good of others, and in those acquirements by which we learn to become masters of ourselves. It is to cultivate the intellectual part for the attainment of truth,—and to train the moral being for the solemn purposes of life, when life is viewed in its relation to a life which is to come. These exalted pursuits are not more conducive to the great objects which are presented to us as moral and respon-



sible beings, than they are calculated to promote our own happiness and peace. Constituted as we are, indeed, and placed in certain relations to objects of sense, and to other sentient beings, we are, in some degree, under the influence of external things. But the powers which wield the destiny of our happiness are chiefly within. It is there that we trace the elements of those noble faculties, which, if duly cultivated, secure at once our usefulness and our happiness ;—and it is there that we find the germs of those vulture passions whose dominion is worse than eastern bondage, and, under whose relentless tyranny, a man who is master of the world may be himself a slave. In the conquest of these, consists the highest dignity of our nature,—and in the control and subjugation of them is our only solid peace.

Among the phænomena 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 farther 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 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 able thus to direct them, upon sound and steady principles, to the acquisition of useful knowledge, and the

\* M. Degerando.

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 character. 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 regard, and banishing all such as are of a frivolous, impure, or degrading character,—this is he who is pursuing the highest of all earthly acquirements, the culture of the understanding, and the discipline of the heart.



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 farther 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 at 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 determining what number of such acts are necessary for forming the habits,—and at what period these may acquire a mastery which shall peril the highest interests of the mind. We cannot determine how many instances of frivolity may constitute the per-



manently frivolous mind ;—how many trains of impurity 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, and 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, there may result a due influence upon our motives and principles of action, as moral and responsible beings. Without attention to these con-



siderations, 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 enquiry. 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.

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. This deficiency is not confined to the listless and vacant mind, which allows life to glide over it amid 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 temperament. The truth, indeed, seems to be, that, after a certain period of life, few have the hardihood thus sternly to look within. For a high degree of moral courage is required to face the disclosure which awaits the mind, when it is thus turned inwards 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 of 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 aught that the world can give. The exercise is gradually confirmed into a 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 being.

The regulated condition of the mind, which has been the subject of these observations, is applicable to every situation in which a man can be placed in life, and leads him to feel his way through its various pursuits and responsibilities in a manner adapted to the requirements of each of them. But it more properly belongs to the aim of my present suggestions, to mark its influence upon the progress of the mind itself;—and, in this respect I may allude, in a very few words, to its remarkable bearing upon three leading objects of mental discipline,—the acquisition of knowledge,—the for-



mation of opinions,—and the culture of those moral emotions of the heart, which are the last and highest object to every responsible being.

I. A regulated condition of the mind contributes, in a most material degree, to our progress in knowledge. In this respect, it is, in the first place, the source of a quality which ought to be carefully cultivated in early life, which I may call *mental activity*. This consists of an eager inquiring state of mind, ever on the watch for information from any source from which it can be drawn—and ever anxious to make its information more correct and more extensive. It leads to a habit of observation, by which we learn to derive knowledge from all that is passing around us. It teaches us, farther, to direct this mental activity in a proper manner, by selecting such objects as are really deserving of our regard, and by directing the mind to them with a steady and continuous attention, so that we may acquire a full and connected knowledge of all the facts and their relations to each other,—and thus prepare them for the conclusions, or general principles, which they are calculated to yield. It thus tends to preserve us from frivolous pursuits, by leading us to a steady culture of those which are of real importance, and with an eager and persevering attention adapted to their true value.



For, among many pursuits, no man can excel in all ; and the foundation of eminence is a due selection, and a leading direction of the mind to those which are thus selected. You will be at no loss to discover around you, remarkable and instructive examples of the effects produced by the want of this sound discipline of the mind. One you will find dreaming through life, without directing himself with energy to any object,—a second wasting his powers, perhaps of a superior order, in a desultory application to a variety of studies, without excelling in one,—while a third devotes himself with eagerness and zeal to some favourite pursuit, neglecting others which really merit his chief regard.

Closely connected with the habit of mental activity is the habit of reflection on the relations of the facts which are acquired,—leading us to observe their connections, and the conclusions which they yield ;—and the habit of association,—referring facts to others with which they bear an analogy, and to principles or opinions which they tend to confirm, modify, or overturn. It teaches us also to trace among facts the relation of cause and effect, and to deduce from them general conclusions or general principles, the last and main object of science. Now, the whole of this course of mental activity is productive not only of intellectual improvement, but of the highest mental enjoyment,—



while the frivolous, or ill-regulated mind, is not only fatal to improvement, but is a burden to itself, and, as life advances, becomes its own tormentor. Let, then, the eager desire of knowledge carry you above those pursuits which waste the best years of so many around you, and leave them, even to the close of their days, the victims of frivolity still.

II. The second great mental operation, in which is felt the value of a regulated mind, is the formation of opinions. Here various errors are committed, but all of them are of serious moment. There is a listless vacuity of mind which prevents it from being directed with attention or interest to the formation of defined opinions, even on subjects of supreme importance. There is a servility of mind which leaves it the slave of mere authority, without forming opinions for itself by personal inquiry. And there is a rude and reckless affectation of mental independence, or liberty of thinking, which leads a man to despise authority, to aim at striking out for himself a system distinguished from the received opinions of those around him,—led, it may be, by a love of singularity or the vanity of appearing wiser than his neighbours ;—or perhaps, impelled, by the condition of his moral feelings, to argue himself into the disbelief of what he wishes not to be true.



From all such distortions of the understanding a regulated mental discipline tends to preserve us. It induces us to approach every subject with a sincere and humble desire for truth,—to give its due influence to authority, without being blindly led by it,—to give its due weight to every kind of evidence, without partial views or imperfect examination,—and to direct the whole powers, not to favour, establish, or overturn particular opinions, but honestly and anxiously to discover what is truth.

This is a subject of intense and solemn interest. A slight attention to the philosophy of it will enable you to perceive its true bearings upon us as responsible beings,—and how, on the highest of all subjects, a man may incur moral guilt in the formation of his opinions. Both as intellectual and moral beings, the great agent by which we are acted upon, is *truth*. Truth derives its power from evidence; and there are laws of evidence which, in their nature, are as absolute and immutable as the laws of physical relations. But for the operation of them, a state of the mind itself is required, and without this, even the best evidence may be deprived of its power to produce conviction. For the result of evidence upon the mind depends on close and continued attention; and this is a voluntary process which every one may be able to perform. It is on this ground, therefore, that we hold a man to be re-



sponsible for his belief,—and contend that he may incur deep moral guilt in his disbelief of truths which he has examined in a frivolous or prejudiced manner,—or which, perhaps, he indulges in the miserable affectation of disbelieving, without having examined them at all. The remarkable fact, indeed, appears to be, that the chief source of unbelief, on the greatest of all subjects, is generally to be found in a previous moral corruption of the mind. It arises from no defect of evidence, but from a state of mind on which the highest falls without power. This striking moral process begins by a man renouncing the guidance of sound moral principle, and the restraints of religious truth, both on his conduct and on the discipline of his heart. The great truths which he thus violates are then repelled as intruders, which disturb his mental tranquillity; and, from this stage in his downward progress, the career is short, and the mental process simple, by which he succeeds in driving the belief of them from his mind. Such is the wondrous economy of the human heart,—and such is the history of many a man, who, after a certain course of moral degradation, has sought refuge in infidelity.

III. But I must leave this deeply important subject, and hasten to offer a very few remarks on the third of



the topics to which I have alluded,—the influence of a regulated mind on the moral emotions of the heart. In these consists the highest state of man,—his soundness as a moral being; and there flow from them, by direct and natural sequence, all those affections and motives of action which guide his conduct to his fellow-men,—and those nobler emotions still which raise the feeble and finite being to Him the infinite and eternal. In the culture of these are involved not only the chief dignity of our nature, and our prospects as moral and responsible beings,—but also, in an equal degree, our present sound and solid happiness. They constitute that true wisdom, of which we are entitled to say, on the best of all authority, “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

Here we are reminded of that remarkable principle which pervades the whole economy of the mind,—the intimate relation which exists between the moral emotions and intellectual processes over which we have a direct and absolute control. As moral and responsible beings, the power by which we are acted upon is truth. But all truth must first be presented to the understanding,—and being, by an appropriate process of examination, received into the mind, it is then, by a voluntary exercise of attention and reflection, to be applied in such a manner as to produce its proper influence on the



moral emotions of the heart. It is thus that a beautiful harmony and consistency pervade the whole economy of the mind, eminently worthy of Him who made it ;—and it is thus that a solemn responsibility attaches to ourselves, in regard to those emotions of the heart over which we have not a direct control. It is precisely the same principle to which I have already referred, respecting the responsibility of man for his belief. He cannot believe as he wills, by any direct effort of his mind ;—yet a deep responsibility attaches to him in the formation of his opinions : And he cannot call forth at his bidding the moral emotions of the heart ; but the deepest guilt may be involved in the absence of them ; because, by an established economy of his mind, they arise out of processes of the understanding, over which he has an absolute power, applied to truths which, under a higher influence, are calculated to exert a direct control over the moral emotions of the heart. This part of the mental constitution is worthy of the deepest attention of every one, who appreciates that most essential of all pursuits, the culture of the moral feelings. It is by means of it that truth, which is received by a process of the understanding, is made to exert its power in controlling the tempests of the heart : It is by means of it that we can invite and cherish mental images and trains of thought, which tend di-



rectly to the highest purposes of our moral culture ;— and can banish those which have an opposite tendency, as enemies which would poison the springs of moral health, and peril the safety of the moral being.

And what are the truths which, under a supreme influence, our intellectual nature is thus to use as the engines of a power to control and regulate the emotions of the heart. They are those which refer to the attributes of God,—and our relation to him as the creatures of his hand, moral, responsible, and immortal. They rest upon evidence so extensive and so varied, that its authority will be best appreciated by those who have made the greatest attainments in the laws of rigid inquiry. This evidence is above us, and within us, and around us. Every step that we take, amid the wonders of creation without, leads us to new discoveries of the power, and wisdom, and goodness of Him who called them into being by his word, and maintains them all in undeviating harmony. When we turn our attention within, we read in the moral impressions of our own minds, or, in other words, in the light of conscience, his attributes of holiness, and justice, and truth. And, meeting with difficulties in the book of natural religion, we have only to turn to the page of revelation, where all these difficulties are removed, and the divine character is displayed with a harmony and



consistency which carry conviction to every candid mind. We have there disclosed the wondrous provision which has been made by infinite wisdom, and infinite mercy, for the restoration of man from his state of moral ruin,—and a power adapted to his moral weakness,—and a light to shine upon his moral darkness,—and a code of ethics more high, more pure, and more extensive far, than ever was contemplated by the wisest of men. The whole is supported by a weight of evidence which fixes itself upon the mind with irresistible power,—and, with a tone of authority, it calls our attention to all the responsibilities of life, and all the realities of a life which is to come.

Such are the truths, which, as moral causes, are calculated to act upon the mind, and thus to control and regulate our emotions, and our whole character, as moral and responsible beings;—and it is of the utmost consequence that we attend to the philosophy of that process by which they may be made to answer this great purpose, and without which it may be entirely lost to us, with all its important results. This is an exercise of attention and reflection, over which every man feels that he has a voluntary control. The truths are endowed with certain tendencies which are as uniform as the operation of physical causes; but their actual efficiency is closely connected with this exercise of the



mind itself; and it is thus, that, by ignorance or inattention, a man may incur the deepest guilt, in the want of that moral culture, the great agents of which are thus presented to him, and pressed upon his attention as a rational being. Now, the truths to which I have thus referred are usually called objects of faith,—and you will often find a distinction made between objects of reason and objects of faith,—as if the latter were, in some respect, inferior to the former in their evidence and stability: But this is entirely without foundation. The truths which are the objects of faith are properly so called, because they do not come under the cognisance of any of our senses; but they are as directly addressed to the understanding as the most obvious inductions of physical science; and they carry with them a weight of evidence, as direct and incontrovertible, to every mind which is open to its power. This evidence, indeed, is of a different character, but its strength and its authority are the same. The truths themselves are calculated to engage the highest powers of the mind; and the most exalted understanding, that ever dwelt in human form, will derive from them a new feeling of intellectual vigour and moral health, by which it shall wing its way to those regions where shine forth in a peculiar manner the divine perfections; and shall there prostrate these highest powers in devout and humble adoration of



Him, who was, and who is, and who is to come. This, and nothing less than this, is true philosophy ; for it is this alone that traces the phenomena of nature to their cause ; it is this alone that takes within its grasp the whole range of truth, and places fairly and deliberately against the mere objects of sense, those great realities which are the objects of faith.

Let it then be your study in early life, to cultivate that sound condition of the mind, by which its powers are not kept in bondage to the mere objects of sense, but are trained to the habit of bringing down upon it the habitual influence of the truths which are the objects of faith. Devote yourselves with eager enthusiasm to the high acquirements of science ; but cultivate also that habit of the mind by which science shall continually lead you to the eternal cause. And, while you are taught to follow the planet through the wondrous regularities of its movements,—when you find the comet, after being lost for a century, returning at the appointed period from the solitudes of its eccentric orbit,—when you extend your view beyond the system in which we move, and penetrate into that field in which ten thousand other systems revolve around ten thousand other suns in ceaseless harmony,—Oh rest not in a cold recognition of the facts, but take one



single step, and say,—“ These are thy wondrous works, —thyself how wondrous :”—And rest not here, but take yet another step, and recognise this Being as the witness of all your conduct,—as the witness even of the moral condition of the heart :—Seek after purity of character, for you cannot go where you are not followed by that eye ; aspire after purity of heart, for that eye extendeth even there :—And, feeling your inability for this mighty undertaking, seek continually a power from God,—a power which he alone can give, a power adapted to your utmost want, and which is promised to every one that asks it. In your progress through life, indeed, you will not fail to meet with those by whom this momentous truth is treated with derision, as the vision of fanaticism, unworthy of a philosophical mind. But never allow yourselves to be imposed upon by names ; and never suppose there can be any thing unphilosophical in the belief, that an influence should be exerted on the mind by Him who framed the wondrous fabric :—And be assured you follow the dictates of the most exalted philosophy, when you commit yourselves to him as the guide of your youth ; when you resign yourselves to that guidance, and ask that powerful aid, both for your conduct through this life, and your preparation for the life which is to come.

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...and say, 'I have been very much  
—I shall now, however, — and that the  
take yet more, especially in regard to the  
witness of all men, to be a witness of  
the same quality as the best, — and in  
circumstances, for you cannot go to the  
by that they are equal to the best, and  
extended even there: — and I have your inability for  
the mighty undertaking, seek continually power from  
that — for even while the stars can give a power  
of so great nature, and which is granted to  
of you, and that which is your power, — and that  
which you will not fail to meet with those by whom  
the numerous truth is stated with certainty, and the  
truth of justice, — and of a full and complete  
that never else, — you are to be a witness upon the earth  
and never again, — that is, — that is, — that is, —  
that is the best, — that is the best, — that is the best, —  
the best, — that is the best, — the best, — the best, —  
And so again, — follow the direction of the best,  
which philosophy, when you cannot, — you are to  
in the fields of your youth, — when you are to  
subject to the greatest, and the best, — and the best,  
not only of them, — but of the best, — the best,  
now for the best, — the best, — the best, —