

FINDING YOUR WAY
WITH
Charlotte Mason's
20 PRINCIPLES

*Free Study Guide
with Charlotte Mason's text
and Online Videos*

FROM A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY

CMPLEINARY.COM

FINDING YOUR WAY
WITH
Charlotte Mason's
20 PRINCIPLES

Free Course
with
Study Guide & Videos

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Introduction

FROM A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY

Welcome to *Finding Your Way with Charlotte Mason's 20 Principles*. This free Study Guide will walk you through each educational principle established by Charlotte Mason.

At A Charlotte Mason Plenary, we aim to make learning Charlotte Mason's philosophy of education as easy as possible so that families may benefit from this method of education.

Charlotte's educational philosophy is a method, not a system, and is highly adaptable to each child's needs, as well as the family's needs and circumstances. At A Charlotte Mason Plenary, we help you adapt the method to make it "Charlotte Mason Your Way."

One size does not fit all when it comes to education, but by learning the Principles, families can more readily customize any curricula to better meet their needs.

The 20 Principles study includes several components, all of which are free for you to use:

- Study Guide with Charlotte Mason's original text
- [Online Course](#) with:
 - Videos by Rachel Lebowitz, Owner of A Charlotte Mason Plenary
 - Videos by Amy Bodkin, EdS, Special Needs Consultant at A Charlotte Mason Plenary
 - Audio Book of Volume 6, *A Philosophy of Education*, produced by A Charlotte Mason Plenary
 - Links to audio of other CM Volumes where available

In addition to the above, we also offer a Mom's Study Group with discussions via Zoom through our two Membership programs at A Charlotte Mason Plenary:

- [The Charlotte Mason Online Co-op: Your Community, Your Way](#)
- [Special Needs Homeschooling with Amy Bodkin](#)

Please see our website at cmplenary.com for more ways to help you create a homeschool that is as unique as your child and your family.

Thanks for joining us,



Rachel Lebowitz
A Charlotte Mason Plenary

Charlotte Mason's

20 PRINCIPLES

- 1) Children are born *persons*.
- 2) They are not born either good or bad, but with possibilities for good and for evil.
- 3) The principles of authority on the one hand, and of obedience on the other, are natural, necessary and fundamental; but—
- 4) These principles are limited by the respect due to the personality of children, which must not be encroached upon, whether by the direct use of fear or love, suggestion or influence, or by undue play upon any one natural desire.
- 5) Therefore, we are limited to three educational instruments—the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas. The P.N.E.U. Motto is: “Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life.”
- 6) When we say that “*education is an atmosphere*,” we do not mean that a child should be isolated in what may be called a “child-environment” especially adapted and prepared, but that we should take into account the educational value of his natural home atmosphere, both as regards persons and things, and should let him live freely among his proper conditions. It stultifies a child to bring down his world to the “child’s” level.
- 7) By “*education is a discipline*,” we mean the discipline of habits, formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or body. Physiologists tell us of the adaptation of brain structures to habitual lines of thought, *i.e.*, to our habits.
- 8) In saying that “*education is a life*,” the need of intellectual and moral as well as of physical sustenance is implied. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum.
- 9) We hold that the child’s mind is no mere *sac* to hold ideas; but is rather, if the figure may be allowed, a spiritual *organism*, with an appetite for all knowledge. This is its proper diet, with which it is prepared to deal; and which it can digest and assimilate as the body does foodstuffs.
- 10) Such a doctrine as *e.g.* the Herbartian, that the mind is a receptacle, lays the stress of Education (the preparation of knowledge in enticing morsels duly ordered) upon the teacher. Children taught on this principle are in danger of receiving much teaching with little knowledge; and the teacher’s axiom is “what a child learns matters less than how he learns it.”
- 11) But we, believing that the normal child has powers of mind which fit him to deal with all knowledge proper to him, give him a full and generous curriculum; taking care only that all knowledge offered him is vital, that is, that facts are not presented without their informing ideas. Out of this conception comes our principle that—
- 12) “*Education is the Science of Relations*”; that is, that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts: so we train him upon physical exercises, nature lore, handicrafts, science and art, and upon *many living* books, for we know that our business is not to teach him all about anything, but to help him to make valid as many as may be of—

“Those first-born affinities
That fit our new existence to existing things.”

13) In devising a SYLLABUS for a normal child, of whatever social class, three points must be considered:

- a) He requires *much* knowledge, for the mind needs sufficient food as much as docs the body.
- (b) The knowledge should be various, for sameness in mental diet does not create appetite (*i.e.*, curiosity).
- (c) Knowledge should be communicated in well-chosen language, because his attention responds naturally to what is conveyed in literary form.

14) As knowledge is not assimilated until it is reproduced, children should “tell back” after a single reading or hearing: or should write on some part of what they have read.

15) A *single reading* is insisted on because children have naturally great power of attention; but this force is dissipated by the re-reading of passages, and also, by questioning, summarizing, and the like.

Acting upon these and some other points in the behavior of mind, we find that *the educability of children is enormously greater than has hitherto been supposed* and is but little dependent on such circumstances as heredity and environment.

Nor is the accuracy of this statement limited to clever children or to children of the educated classes: thousands of children in Elementary Schools respond freely to this method, which is based on the *behavior of mind*.

16) There are two guides to moral and intellectual self-management to offer to children, which we may call “the way of the will” and “the way of the reason.”

17) *The way of the will*: Children should be taught,

- (a) to distinguish between “I want” and “I will.”
- (b) That the way to will effectively is to turn our thoughts from that which we desire but do not will.
- (c) That the best way to turn our thoughts is to think of or do some quite different thing, entertaining or interesting.
- (d) That after a little rest in this way, the will returns to its work with new vigor.

(This adjunct of the will is familiar to us as *diversion*, whose office it is to ease us for a time from will effort, that we may “will” again with added power. The use of *suggestion* as an aid to the will *is to be deprecated*, as tending to stultify and stereotype character. It would seem that spontaneity is a condition of development, and that human nature needs the discipline of failure as well as of success.)

18) *The way of reason*: We teach children, too, not to “lean (too confidently) to their own understanding”; because the function of reason is to give logical demonstration

- (a) of mathematical truth,
- (b) of an initial idea, accepted by the will.

18) In the former case, reason is, practically, an infallible guide, but in the latter, it is not always a safe one; for, whether that idea be right or wrong, reason will confirm it by irrefragable proofs.

19) Therefore, children should be taught, as they become mature enough to understand such

teaching, that the chief responsibility which rests on them *as persons* is the acceptance or rejection of ideas. To help them in this choice we give them principles of conduct, and a wide range of the knowledge fitted to them. These principles should save children from some of the loose thinking and heedless action which cause most of us to live at a lower level than we need.

20) We allow no separation to grow up between the intellectual and “spiritual” life of children but teach them that the Divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their continual Helper in all the interests, duties, and joys of life.

Principle # 1

Children are born persons.

Principle #1

VOLUME 6, CHAPTER 2: CHILDREN ARE BORN PERSONS

1. The Mind of a Child

“No sooner doth the truth ... come into the soul's sight,
but the soul knows her to be her first and old acquaintance.”

“The consequence of truth is great,
therefore the judgment of it must not be negligent.”

It should not surprise the reader that a chapter, designed to set forth a startling truth, should open with the weighty words of an old Divine (Whichcote). But truths get flat and wonders stale upon us. We do not care much about the starry firmament, the budding trees, the cunning architecture of the birds; and to all except young parents and young brothers and sisters, a baby is no longer a marvel. The completeness of the new baby brother is what children admire most, his toes and his fingers, his ears and all the small perfections of him. His guardians have some understanding of the baby; they know that his chief business is to grow and they feed him with food convenient for him. If they are wise they give free play to all the wriggings and stretchings which give power to his feeble muscles. His parents know what he will come to, and feel that here is a new chance for the world. In the meantime, he needs food, sleep and shelter and a great deal of love. So much we all know. But is the baby more than a ‘huge oyster’? That is the problem before us and hitherto [34] educators have been inclined to answer it in the negative. Their notion is that by means of a pull here, a push there, a compression elsewhere, a person is, at last, turned out according to the pattern the educator has in his mind.

The other view is that the beautiful infant frame is but the setting of a jewel of such astonishing worth that, put the whole world in one scale and this jewel in the other, and the scale which holds the world flies up outbalanced. A poet looks back on the glimmering haze of his own infancy and this is the sort of thing he sees:

“I was entertained like an angel with the works of God in their splendor and glory . . . Is it not strange that an infant should be heir of the whole world and see those mysteries which the books of the learned never unfold? . . . The corn was orient and immortal wheat which never should be reaped nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious gold . . . The green trees transported and ravished me. Their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap . . . Boys and girls tumbling in the streets were moving jewels. I knew not that they were born or should die . . . The streets were mine, the people were mine, their clothes and gold and silver were mine as much as their sparkling eyes, fair skins and ruddy faces. The skies were mine and so were the sun and moon and stars, and all the world was mine and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it.”

It takes a poet like Traherne to retain and produce such vivid memories, though perhaps we

can all recall the sense that we were spectators at the show of life, and we can recollect a sunny time before we were able to speak or tell what we knew. *Punch* amused us at one time with a baby's views of his nurse and his surroundings and especially of the unwarranted pulls and pushes to which he was subject; but probably an infant is no critic. His business is to perceive and receive and these he does day in and day out.

We have an idea that poets say more than they know, [35] express more than they see, and that their version of life must be taken *cum grano*, but perhaps the fact is that no labor of the mind enables them to catch and put into words the full realities of which they are cognizant, and therefore we may take Wordsworth, Coleridge, Vaughan and the rest as witnesses who only hint at the glory which might be revealed. We are not poets and are disposed to discount the sayings of the poets, but the most prosaic of us comes across evidence of mind in children, and of mind astonishingly alert. Let us consider, in the first two years of life they manage to get through more intellectual effort than any following two years can show. Supposing that much-discussed Martian were at last able to make his way to our planet, think of how much he must learn before he could accommodate himself to our conditions! Our notions of hard and soft, wet and dry, hot and cold, stable and unstable, far and near, would be as foreign to him as they are to an infant who holds out his pinafore for the moon. We do not know what the Martian means of locomotion are but we can realize that to run and jump and climb stairs, even to sit and stand at will must require fully as much reasoned endeavor as it takes in after years to accomplish skating, dancing, skiing, fencing, whatever athletic exercises people spend years in perfecting; and all these the infant accomplishes in his first two years. He learns the properties of matter, knows colors and has first notions of size, solid, liquid; has learned in his third year to articulate with surprising clearness. What is more, he has learned a language, two languages, if he has had the opportunity, and the writer has known of three languages being mastered by a child of three, and one of them was Arabic; mastered, that is, so far that a child can say all that he needs to say in any one of the three – the sort of mastery most of us wish for when we are traveling in foreign countries. [36] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu tells us that in her time the little children of Constantinople prattled in five tongues with a good knowledge of each. If we have not proved that a child is born a person with a mind as complete and as beautiful as his beautiful little body, we can at least show that he always has all the mind he requires for his occasions; that is, that his mind is the instrument of his education and that *his education does not produce his mind*.

Who shall measure the range of a child's thoughts? His continual questions about God, his speculations about 'Jesus,' are they no more than idle curiosity, or are they symptoms of a God-hunger with which we are all born, and is a child able to comprehend as much of the infinite and the unseen as are his self-complacent elders? Is he 'cabined, cribbed, confined,' in our ways and does the fairy tale afford a joyful escape to regions where all things are possible? We are told that children have no imagination, that they must needs see and touch, taste and handle, in order to know. While a child's age is still counted by months, he devotes himself to learning the properties of things by touching, pulling, tearing, throwing, tasting, but as months pass into years a *coup d'oeil* suffices for all but new things of complicated structure. Life is a continual progress to a child. He does not go over old things in old ways; his joy is to go on. The immensity of his powers brings its own terrors. Let me again quote Traherne –

“Another time in a lowering and sad evening being alone in the field when all things were dead and quiet a certain wanton horror fell upon me beyond imagination. The unprofitableness and silence of the place dissatisfied me: its wildness terrified me. From the utmost ends of the earth fear surrounded me . . . I was a weak and little child and had forgotten there was a man alive on the earth. Yet also something of hope and expectation comforted me from every border.”

[37] Traherne never loses the lessons that come to him and he goes on –

“This taught me that I was concerned in all the world . . . that the beauties of the earth were made to entertain me . . . that the presence of cities, temples and kingdoms, ought to sustain me and that to be alone in the world was to be desolate and miserable.”

Reason is present in the infant as truly as imagination. As soon as he can speak he lets us know that he has pondered the ‘cause why’ of things and perplexes us with a thousand questions. His ‘why?’ is ceaseless. Nor are his reasonings always disinterested. How soon the little urchin learns to manage his nurse or mother, to calculate her moods and play upon her feelings! It is in him to be a little tyrant; “he has a will of his own,” says his nurse, but she is mistaken in supposing that his stormy manifestations of greed, willfulness, temper, are signs of will. It is when the little boy is able to stop all these and restrain himself with quivering lip that his will comes into play; for he has a conscience too. Before he begins to toddle he knows the difference between right and wrong; even a baby in arms will blush at the ‘naughty baby!’ of his nurse; and that strong will of his acts in proportion as he learns the difficult art of obedience; for no one can make a child obey unless he wills to do so, and we all know how small a rebel may make confusion in house or schoolroom.

2. The Mind of a School Child

But we must leave the quite young child, fascinating as he is, and take him up again when he is ready for lessons. I have made some attempt elsewhere¹ [*Home Education*, by the writer] to show what his parents and teachers owe to him in those years in which he is engaged in self-education, taking his lessons from everything he sees and hears, and strengthening [38] his powers by everything he does. Here, in a volume which is chiefly concerned with education in the sense of schooling, I am anxious to bring before teachers the fact that a child comes into their hands with a mind of amazing potentialities: he has a brain too, no doubt, the organ and instrument of that same mind, as a piano is not music but the instrument of music. Probably we need not concern ourselves about the brain which is subject to the same conditions as the rest of the material body, is fed with the body's food, rests, as the body rests, requires fresh air and wholesome exercise to keep it in health, but depends upon the mind for its proper activities. The world has concerned itself of late so much with psychology, whose province is what has been called ‘the unconscious mind,’ a region under the sway of nerves and blood (which it is best perhaps to let alone) that in our educational efforts we tend to ignore the *mind* and address ourselves to this region of symptoms. Now mind, being spiritual, knows no fatigue; brain, too, duly nourished with the food proper for the body, allowed due conditions of fresh air and rest, should not know fatigue; given these two conditions, we have a glorious field of educational possibilities; but it rests with us to evolve a theory and practice which afford due recognition to mind. An authoritative saying which we are apt to associate with the religious life only is equally applicable to education. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, we

are told; but we have forgotten this great principle in our efforts at schooling children. We give them a 'play way' and play is altogether necessary and desirable but is not the avenue which leads to mind. We give them a fitting environment, which is again altogether desirable and, again, is not the way to mind. We teach them beautiful motion and we do well, for the body too must have its education; [39] but we are not safe if we take these by-paths as approaches to mind. It is still true that that which is born of the spirit, is spirit. The way to mind is a quite direct way. Mind must come into contact with mind through the medium of ideas. "What is mind?" says the old conundrum, and the answer still is "No matter." It is necessary for us who teach to realize that things material have little effect upon mind, because there are still among us schools in which the work is altogether material and technical, whether the teaching is given by means of bars of wood or more scientific apparatus. The mistress of an Elementary School writes, "The father of one of my girls said to me yesterday, 'You have given me some work to do. E. has let me have no rest until I promised to set up my microscope and get pond water to look for monads and other wonders.'" Here we have the right order. That which was born of the spirit, the idea, came first and demanded to confirm and illustrate. "How can these things be?" we ask, and the answer is not *evident*.

Education, like faith, is the evidence of things not seen. We must begin with the notion that the business of the body is to grow; and it grows upon food, which food is composed of living cells, each a perfect life in itself. In like manner, though all analogies are misleading and inadequate, the only fit sustenance for the mind is ideas, and an idea too, like the single cell of cellular tissue, appears to go through the stages and functions of a life. We receive it with appetite and some stir of interest. It appears to feed in a curious way. We hear of a new patent cure for the mind or the body, of the new thought of some poet, the new notion of a school of painters; we take in, accept the idea and for days after every book we read, every person we talk with brings food to the newly entertained notion. 'Not proven,' will be the verdict of the casual reader; but [40] if he watch the behavior of his own mind towards any of the ideas 'in the air,' he will find that some such process as I have described takes place; and this process must be considered carefully in the education of children. We may not take things casually as we have done. Our business is to give children the great ideas of life, of religion, history, science; but it is the *ideas* we must give, clothed upon with facts as they occur, and must leave the child to deal with these as he chooses.

This is how he deals with Geography, for example:

"When I heard of any new kingdom beyond the seas the light and glory of it entered into me. It rose up within me and I was enlarged by the whole. I entered into it, I saw its commodities, springs, meadows, inhabitants and became possessor of that new room as if it had been prepared for me so much was I magnified and delighted in it. When the Bible was read my spirit was present in other ages. I saw the light and splendour of them, the land of Canaan, the Israelites entering into it, the ancient glory of the Amorites, their peace and riches, their cities, houses, vines and fig-trees . . . I saw and felt all in such a lively manner as if there had been no other way to those places but in spirit only . . . Without changing place in myself I could behold and enjoy all those. Anything when it was proposed though it was a thousand years ago being always present before me."

I venture again to quote Traherne because I know of no writer who retains so clear a memory of his infancy; but Goethe gives as full and convincing an account of his experience of the Bible¹

[see *Some Studies in the Formation of Character* by the writer]; I say 'experience' advisedly, for the word denotes the process by which children get to know. They *experience* all the things they hear and read of; these enter into them and are their life; and thus it is that ideas feed the mind in the most literal sense of the word 'feed.'

Do our Geography lessons take the children *there*? Do they experience, live in, our story of the call of Abraham? – or of the healing of the blind man on the [41] way to Jericho? If they do not, it is not for lack of earnestness and intention on the part of the teacher; his error is rather want of confidence in children. He has not formed a just measure of a child's mind and bores his scholars with much talk about matters which they are able to understand for themselves much better than he does. How many teachers know that children require no pictures excepting the pictures of great artists, which have quite another function than that of illustration? They see for themselves in their own minds a far more glorious, and indeed more accurate, presentation than we can afford in our miserable daubs. They read between the lines and put in all the author has left out. A child of nine, who had been reading Lang's *Tales of Troy and Greece*, drew Ulysses on the Isle of Calypso cutting down trees to make a raft; a child of ten, reveling in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, drew that Indian Princess bringing her lovely boy to Titania. We others are content to know that Ulysses built a raft, that the boy was the child of an Indian Princess. This is how any child's mind works, and our concern is not to starve these fertile intelligences. They must have food in great abundance and variety. They know what to do with it well enough and we need not disturb ourselves to provide for the separate exercise of each so-called 'faculty'; for the mind is one and works all together; reason, imagination, reflection, judgment, what you please, are like 'all hands' summoned by the 'heave-ho!' of the boatswain. All swarm on deck for the lading of cargo, that rich and odorous cargo of ideas which the fair vessel of a child's mind is waiting to receive. Do we wish every child in a class to say, – or, if he does not say, to feel, – "I was enlarged wonderfully" by a Geography lesson? Let him see the place with the eyes of those who have seen or conceived it; your barographs, thermographs, contour lines, relief [42] models, sections, profiles and the like, will not do it. A map of the world must be a panorama to a child of pictures so entrancing that he would rather ponder them than go out to play; and nothing is more easy than to give him this *joie de vivre*. Let him see the world as we ourselves choose to see it when we travel; its cities and peoples, its mountains and rivers, and he will go away from his lesson with the piece of the world he has read about, be it county or country, sea or shore, as that of "a new room prepared for him, so much will he be magnified and delighted in it." All the world is in truth the child's possession, prepared for him, and if we keep him out of his rights by our technical, commercial, even historical, geography, any sort of geography, in fact, made to illustrate our theories, we are guilty of fraudulent practices. What he wants is the world and every bit, piece by piece, each bit a key to the rest. He reads of the Bore of the Severn and is on speaking terms with a 'Bore' wherever it occurs. He need not see a mountain to know a mountain. He sees all that is described to him with a vividness of which we know nothing just as if there had been "no other way to those places but in spirit only." Who can take the measure of a child? The Genie of the Arabian tale is nothing to him. He, too, may be let out of his bottle and fill the world. But woe to us if we keep him corked up.

Enough, that the children have minds, and every man's mind is his means of living; but it is a great deal more. Working men will have leisure in the future and how this leisure is to be employed is a question much discussed. Now, no one can employ leisure fitly whose mind is not brought into active play every day; the small affairs of a man's own life supply no intellectual food

and but small and monotonous intellectual exercise. Science, history, philosophy, literature, must [43] no longer be the luxuries of the 'educated' classes; all classes must be educated and sit down to these things of the mind as they do to their daily bread. History must afford its pageants, science its wonders, literature its intimacies, philosophy its speculations, religion its assurances to every man, and his education must have prepared him for wanderings in these realms of gold. How do we prepare a child, again, to use the aesthetic sense with which he appears to come provided? His education should furnish him with whole galleries of mental pictures, pictures by great artists old and new – Israels' *Pancake Woman*, his *Children by the Sea*; Millet's *Feeding the Birds*, *First Steps*, *Angelus*; Rembrandt's *Night Watch*, *The Supper at Emmaus*; Velasquez's *Surrender of Breda*, – in fact, every child should leave school with at least a couple of hundred pictures by great masters hanging permanently in the halls of his imagination, to say nothing of great buildings, sculpture, beauty of form and color in things he sees. Perhaps we might secure at least a hundred lovely landscapes too, – sunsets, cloudscapes, star-light nights. At any rate, he should go forth well furnished because imagination has the property of magical expansion, the more it holds the more it will hold.

It is not only a child's intellect but his heart that comes to us thoroughly furnished. Can any of us love like a little child? Father and mother, sisters and brothers, neighbors and friends, "our" cat and "our" dog, the wretchedest old stump of a broken toy, all come in for his lavish tenderness. How generous and grateful he is, how kind and simple, how pitiful and how full of benevolence in the strict sense of goodwill, how loyal and humble, how fair and just! His conscience is on the alert. Is a tale true? Is a person good? – these are the important questions. His *conscience* chides him when he is naughty, and by degrees as he is trained, [44] his *will* comes to his aid and he learns to order his life. He is taught to say his prayers, and we elders hardly realize how real his prayers are to a child.

3. Motives for Learning

Now place a teacher before a class of persons the beauty and immensity of each one of whom I have tried to indicate and he will say, "What have I to offer them?" His dull routine lessons crumble into the dust they are when he faces children as they are. He cannot go on offering them his stale commonplaces; he feels that he may not bore them; that he may not prick the minds he has dulled by unworthy motives of greed or emulation; he would not invite a parcel of children to a Timon feast of smoke and lukewarm water. He knows that children's minds hunger at regular intervals as do their bodies; that they hunger for knowledge, not for information, and that his own poor stock of knowledge is not enough, his own desultory talk has not substance enough; that his irrelevant remarks interrupt a child's train of thought; that, in a word, he is not sufficient for these things.

On the other hand, the children, the children of the slums especially, have no vocabulary to speak of, no background of thought derived from a cultured environment. They are like goodly pitchers, capable of holding much but with necks so narrow that only the thinnest stream can trickle in. So we have thought hitherto, and our teaching has been diluted to dishwater and the pitchers have gone empty away.

But we have changed all that. Just as in the War the magnanimous, patriotic citizen was manifested in every man so in our schools every child has been discovered to be a person of infinite possibilities. I say every child, for so-called 'backward' children are no [45] exception. I shall ven-

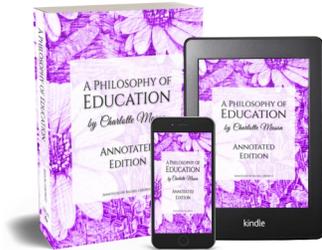
ture to bring before the reader some experiences of the *Parents' Union School* as being ground with which I am familiar. Examination papers representing tens of thousands of children working in Elementary Schools, Secondary Schools, and home schoolrooms have just passed under my eye. How the children have reveled in knowledge! and how good and interesting all their answers are! How well they spell on the whole and how well they write! We do not need the testimony of their teachers that the work of the term has been joyous; the verve with which the children tell what they know proves the fact. Every one of these children knows that there are hundreds of pleasant places for the mind to roam in. They are good and happy because some little care has been taken to know what they are and what they require; a care very amply rewarded by results which alter the whole outlook on education. In our Training College, the students are not taught how to stimulate attention, how to keep order, how to give marks, how to punish or even how to reward, how to manage a large class or a small school with children in different classes. All these things come by nature in a school where the teachers know something of the capacities and requirements of children. To hear children of the slums 'telling' *King Lear* or *Woodstock*, by the hour if you will let them, or describing with minutest details Van Eyck's *Adoration of the Lamb* or Botticelli's *Spring*, is a surprise, a revelation. We take off our shoes from off our feet; we 'did not know it was in them,' whether we be their parents, their teachers or mere lookers-on. And with some feeling of awe upon us, we shall be the better prepared to consider how and upon what children should be educated. I will only add that I make no claims for them which cannot be justified by hundreds, thousands, of instances within our experience.

Study Questions

PRINCIPLE #1

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the audio in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. What do you think “Children are born persons” means?
3. Does the idea that a child is a ‘born person’ change the way you think about your children? Was this a new idea to you? Did it ‘startle’ you?
4. What are some ways in which you can begin to treat your child as a ‘born person’?
5. List three things you plan to do in the next two weeks that will change the way you interact with your child.

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Principle # 2

*Children are not born good or bad,
but with possibilities for good and for evil.*

Principle # 2

VOLUME 6, CHAPTER 3: THE GOOD AND EVIL NATURE OF A CHILD

Children are not born good or bad, but with possibilities for good and for evil.

1. WELL-BEING OF BODY

A well-known educationalist has brought heavy charges against us all on the score that we bring up children as 'children of wrath.' He probably exaggerates the effect of any such teaching, and the 'little angel' theory is fully as mischievous. The fact seems to be that children are like ourselves, not because they have become so, but because they are born so; that is, with tendencies, dispositions, towards good and towards evil, and also with a curious intuitive knowledge as to which is good and which is evil. Here we have the work of education indicated. There are good and evil tendencies in body and mind, heart and soul; and the hope set before us is that we can foster the good so as to attenuate the evil; that is, on condition that we put Education in her true place as the handmaid of Religion. The community, the nation, the race, are now taking their due place in our religious thought. We are no longer solely occupied in what an Irish woman called 'saving yer dirty sowl.' Our religion is becoming more magnanimous and more responsible and it is time that a like change should take place in our educational thought. [47] We find ourselves in open places breathing fresher air when we consider, not the education of an individual child or of a social class or even of a given country, but of the race, of the human nature common to every class and country, every individual child. The prospect is exhilarating and the recognition of the potentialities in any child should bring about such an educational renaissance as may send our weary old world rejoicing on its way.

Physicians and physiologists tell us that newborn children start fair. A child is not born with tuberculosis, for example, if with a tendency which it is our business to counteract. In the same way all possibilities for good are contained in his moral and intellectual outfit, hindered it may be by a corresponding tendency to evil for every such potentiality. We begin to see our way. It is our business to know of what parts and passions a child is made up, to discern the dangers that present themselves, and still more the possibilities of free-going in delightful paths. However disappointing, even forbidding, the failings of a child, we may be quite sure that in every case the opposite tendency is there and we must bring the wit to give it play.

Parents have this sort of mother-wit more commonly than we outsiders, teachers and the like. Of course, we know of the mothers and fathers who can't do anything with Tom and hope the schoolmaster will lick him into shape. But how often on the other hand are we surprised to see how much more of persons Bob and Polly are in their own homes than at school! Perhaps this is because parents know their children better than do others and for that reason believe in them more; for our faith in the divine and the human keeps pace with our knowledge. For this reason it behooves us teachers to get a bird's eye view of the human nature which is present in every child. Everybody knows that hunger, [48] thirst, rest, chastity are those natural endowments of the body by means of which it grows and functions; but in every child there are tendencies to greediness,

restlessness, sloth, impurity, any one of which by allowance may ruin the child and the man that he will be.

Again, our old friends, the five senses, require direction and practice. Smell, especially, might be made a source of delicate pleasure by the habit of discriminating the good smells of field and garden, flower and fruit, for their own sakes, not as ministering to taste, which, unduly pampered, becomes a man's master. But there is little that is new to be learned about the body and those various body-servants with which it is equipped. Education already does her part in training the muscles, cultivating the senses, ordering the nerves, of all children, rich and poor; for in these days we perceive that the development which is due to one child is due to all. If we make a mistake in regard to physical education it is perhaps in the matter of ordering the nerves of a child. We do not consider enough that the nourishment, rest, fresh air and natural exercise, proper for the body as a whole, meet the requirements of the nervous system and that the undue nervous tension which a small child suffers in carrying a cup of tea, an older boy or girl in cramming for an examination, may be the cause later of a distressing nervous breakdown. We are becoming a nervous, overstrained nation and though golf and cricket may do something for us, a watchful education, alert to arrest every symptom of nervous over-pressure, would do much to secure for every child a fine physique and a high degree of staying power.

A snare which attends the really brilliant teacher is the exhausting effect upon children of an overpowering personality. They are such ardent and responsive little souls that the teacher who gives them nods and becks and wreathed smiles may play the Pied Piper [49] with them. But he or she should beware. The undue play of the personality of the teacher is likely to suppress and subdue that of his scholars; and, not only so, children are so eager to live up to the demands made upon them that they may be brought to a state of continual nervous over-pressure under the influence of a 'charming personality.' This sort of subjection, the *Schwarmerei* of the Germans, was powerfully set forth in a recent novel in which an unprincipled and fascinating mistress 'ran' her personality with disastrous results. But the danger does not lie in extreme cases. The girl who kisses the chamber door of her class mistress will forget this lady by and by; but the parasitic habit has been formed and she must always have some person or some cause on which to hang her body and soul. I speak of 'she' and 'her' perhaps unfairly, because ever since the Greek youth hung about their masters in the walks of the Academy there have been teachers who have undermined the stability of the boys to whom they devoted themselves. Were his countrymen entirely wrong about Socrates? A tendency to this manner of betrayal is the infirmity of noble minds, of those who have the most to give; and for this reason, again, it is important that we should have before us a bird's eye view, let us call it, of human nature.

2. WELL-BEING OF MIND

There is a common notion that it is our inalienable right not only to say what we please but to think as we please, that is, we believe that while body is subject to physical laws, while the affections, love and justice, are subject to moral laws, the mind is a chartered libertine. Probably this notion has much to do with our neglect of intellect. We do not perceive that the mind, too, has its tendencies both good and evil and that every inclination towards good is hindered and may be thwarted [50] by a corresponding inclination towards evil; I am not speaking of moral evil but of those intellectual evils which we are slow to define and are careless in dealing with. Does the

teacher of a large class always perceive that intellect is enthroned before him in every child, however dull and inattentive may be his outer show? Every child in such a class is open to the wonders that science reveals, is interested in the wheeling worlds of the winter firmament. "Child after child," said a schoolmistress, "writes to say how much they have enjoyed reading about the stars." "As we are walking sometimes and the stars are shining," says a girl of eleven in an Elementary School, "I tell mother about the stars and planets and comets. She said she should think astronomy very interesting." But we teach astronomy, no, we teach 'light and heat' by means of desiccated text-books, diagrams and experiments, which last are no more to children than the tricks of white magic. The infinitely little is as attractive to them as the infinitely great and the behavior of an atom, an ion, is a fairy tale they delight in, that is, if no semblance to a fairy tale be suggested. The pageant of history with its interplay of characters is as delightful as any tale because every child uses his own film to show the scenes and exhibit the persons. We fuss a good deal about the dress, implements and other small details of each historic period but we forget that, give the child a few fit and exact words on the subject and he has the picture in his mind's eye, nay, a series, miles long of really glorious films; for a child's amazing, vivifying imagination is part and parcel of his intellect.

The way children make their own the examples offered to them is amazing. No child would forget the characterization of Charles IX as 'feeble and violent,' nor fail to take to himself a lesson in self-control. We may not point the moral; that is the work proper [51] for children themselves and they do it without fail. The comparative difficulty of the subject does not affect them. A teacher writes (of children of eleven), – "They cannot have enough of Publicola and there are always groans when the lesson comes to an end."

I have said much of history and science, but mathematics, a mountainous land which pays the climber, makes its appeal to mind, and good teachers know that they may not drown their teaching in verbiage. As for literature – to introduce children to literature is to install them in a very rich and glorious kingdom, to bring a continual holiday to their doors, to lay before them a feast exquisitely served. But they must learn to know literature by being familiar with it from the very first. A child's intercourse must always be with good books, the best that we can find. Of course, we have always known that this is the right thing for children in cultivated homes, but what about those in whose dwellings books are little known? One of the wise teachers in Gloucestershire¹ notes that a recognition of two things is necessary in dealing with this problem. First, that, –

"To explain the meaning of words destroys interest in the story and annoys the child. Second, that in many instances it is unnecessary. Although a child's dictionary knowledge of words is lacking it does not follow that the meaning of a sentence or paragraph is unknown to him ... neither is the correct employment of the words beyond him in writing or narrating. Two examples of this power to sense the meaning were observed last term. There is a particular boy in Form III! who has not hitherto been looked upon as possessing high intelligence. Classified by age he ought to be two Forms higher. Last term in taking the story of Romulus and Remus, I found that in power of narrating and degree of understanding (that is, of 'sensing' a paragraph and either translating it into his vocabulary or in using the words read to him) he stood above the others and also above the majority in the next higher Form."

[52] "What has surprised us most," said the Headmaster of A., "is the ready way in which boys absorb information and become interested in literature, literature which we have hitherto considered outside the scope of primary school teaching. A year ago I could not have believed that boys would have read Lytton's *Harold*, Kingsley's *Hereward*, and Scott's *Talisman* with real pleasure and

zest or would study with understanding and delight Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *King John* and *Richard II*; but experience has shown us we have underrated the abilities and tastes of the lads we should have known better."

That is the capital charge against most schools. The teachers underrate the tastes and abilities of their pupils. In things intellectual, children, even backward children, have extraordinary 'possibilities for good' – possibilities so great that if we had the wit to give them their head they would carry us along like a stream in spate. But what about intellectual tendencies, or 'possibilities for evil'? One such tendency dominates many schools notwithstanding prodigious efforts on the part of the teachers to rouse slumbering minds. Indeed, the more the teacher works, the greater the *incuria* of the children, so the class is prodded with marks, the boys take places, the bogie of an oncoming examination is held before them. Some spasmodic effort is the result but no vital response and, though boys and girls love school, like their teachers and even their lessons, they care not at all for knowledge, for which the school should create enthusiasm. I can touch here on no more than two potent means of cresting incuria in a class. One is the talky-talky of the teacher. We all know how we are bored by the person in private life who explains and expounds. What reason have we to suppose that children are not equally bored? They try to tell us that they are by wandering eyes, inanimate features, fidgeting hands and feet, by every means at their disposal; and the kindly souls among us think that they want to play or to be out of doors. But they have no use [53] for play except at proper intervals. What they want is knowledge conveyed in literary form and the talk of the facile teacher leaves them cold.

Another soothing potion is little suspected of producing mental lethargy. We pride ourselves upon going over and over the same ground 'until the children know it'; the monotony is deadly. A child writes, – "Before we had these (books) we had to read the same old lot again and again." Is it not true? In the home schoolroom books used by the grandmother are fit for the grandchildren, books used in boys' schools may be picked up at second-hand stalls with the obliterated names of half-a-dozen successive owners. And what of the compilations, neither books nor textbooks, which do duty in Elementary Schools? No wonder Mr. Fisher said, in opening a public library, that he had been "surprised and pained when visiting Elementary Schools to find that there was nothing in them which could be called a book, nothing that would charm and enlighten and expand the imagination." And yet, as he went on to say, the country is "full of artistic and literary ability and always has been so." If this ability is to be brought into play we must recognize that children are not ruminants intellectually any more than physically. They cannot go over the same ground repeatedly without deadening, even paralyzing results, for progress, continual progress is the law of intellectual life.

In matters of the mind again *Habit* is a good servant but a bad master. Specialization, the fetish of the end of the last century, is to be deprecated because it is at our peril that we remain too long in any one field of thought. We may not, for example, allow the affairs and interests of daily life to deprive the mind of its proper range of interests and occupations. It is even possible for a person to go into any one of the great [54] fields of thought and to work therein with delight until he become incapable of finding his way into any other such field. We know how Darwin lost himself in science until he could not read poetry, find pleasure in pictures, think upon things divine; he was unable to turn his mind out of the course in which it had run for most of his life. In the great (and ungoverned) age of the Renaissance, the time when great things were done, great pictures painted, great

buildings raised, great discoveries made, the same man was a painter, an architect, a goldsmith and a master of much knowledge besides; and all that he did he did well, all that he knew was part of his daily thought and enjoyment. Let us hear Vasari on Leonardo, –

“Possessed of a divine and marvelous intellect and being an excellent geometrician, he not only worked at sculpture ... but also prepared many architectural plans and buildings ... he made designs for mills and other engines to go by water; and, as painting was to be his profession, he studied drawing from life.”

Leonardo knew nothing about Art for Art's sake, that shibboleth of yesterday, nor did our own Christopher Wren, also a great mathematician and master of much and various knowledge, to whom architecture was rather a by-the-way interest, and yet he built St. Paul's. What an irreparable loss we had when that plan of his for a beautiful and spacious London was flung aside because it would cost too much to carry it out! Just so of our parsimony do we fling aside the minds of the children of our country, also capable of being wrought into pleasaunces of delight, structures of utility and beauty, at a pitifully trifling cost. It is well we should recognize that the business of education is with us all our lives, that we must always go on increasing our knowledge.

Of the means we employ to hinder the growth of mind perhaps none is more subtle than the *questionnaire*. It is as though one required a child to produce for inspection [55] at its various stages of assimilation the food he consumed for his dinner; we see at once how the digestive processes would be hindered, how, in a word, the child would cease to be fed. But the mind also requires its food and leave to carry on those quiet processes of digestion and assimilation which it must accomplish for itself. The child with capacity, which implies depth, is stupefied by a long rigmarole on the lines of, – “If John's father is Tom's son, what relation is Tom to John?” The shallow child guesses the riddle and scores; and it is by the use of tests of this kind that we turn out young people sharp as needles but with no power of reflection, no intelligent interests, nothing but the aptness of the city *gamin*.

Imagination may become like that cave Ezekiel tells of wherein were all manner of unseemly and evil things; it may be a temple wherein self is glorified; it may be a chamber of horrors and dangers; but it may also be a House Beautiful. It is enough for us to remember that imagination is stored with those images supplied day by day whether by the cinema, the penny dreadful, by Homer or Shakespeare, by the great picture or the flaming 'shocker.' We have heard of the imaginative man who conceived a passion for the Sphinx!

In these days when *Reason* is deified by the unlearned and plays the part of the Lord of Misrule it is necessary that every child should be trained to recognize fallacious reasoning and above all to know that a man's reason is his servant and not his master; that there is no notion a man chooses to receive which his reason will not justify, whether it be mistrust of his neighbor, jealousy of his wife, doubts about his religion, or contempt for his country. Realizing this, we 'see reason' in the fact that thousands of men go on strike because two of their body have been denied permission to attend a certain [56] meeting. We see reason in this but the men themselves confound reason with right and consider that such a strike is a righteous protest. The only safeguard against fallacies which undermine the strength of the nation morally and economically is a liberal education which affords a wide field for reflection and comparison and abundant data upon which to found sound judgments.

As for that *aesthetic* 'appetency' (to use Coleridge's word) upon which so many of the gentle pleasures of life depend, it is open to many disasters: it dies of inanition when beauty is not duly presented to it, beauty in words, in pictures and music, in tree and flower and sky. The function of the sense of beauty is to open a paradise of pleasure for us; but what if we grow up admiring the wrong things, or, what is morally worse, arrogant in the belief that it is only we and our kind who are able to appreciate and distinguish beauty? It is no small part of education to have seen much beauty, to recognize it when we see it, and to keep ourselves humble in its presence.

3. INTELLECTUAL APPETITE

As the body is provided with its appetites, by undue indulgence of any one of which a man may make shipwreck, but which duly ordered should result in a robust and vigorous frame; so, too, the spiritual part of us is provided with certain caterers whose business it is to secure that kind of nourishment which promotes spiritual or intellectual growth in one or another direction. Perhaps in no part of our educational service do we make more serious blunders than in our use of those *desires* which act as do the appetites for the body's service. Every child wants to be approved, even baby in his new red shoes; to be first in what is going on; to get what is going; to be admired; to lead and manage the rest; to have the companionship of children and grown people; [57] and last, but not least, every child wants *to know*. There they are, those desires, ready to act on occasion and our business is to make due use of this natural provision for the work of education. We do make use of the desires, not wisely, but too well. We run our schools upon *emulation*, the desire of every child to be first; and not the ablest, but the most pushing, comes to the front. We quicken emulation by the common desire to get and to have, that is, by the impulse of avarice. So we offer prizes, exhibitions, scholarships, every incentive that can be proposed. We cause him to work for our *approbation*, we play upon his vanity, and the boy does more than he can. What is the harm, we say, when all those springs of action are in the child already? The athlete is beginning to discover that he suffers elsewhere from the undue development of any set of muscles; and the boy whose ambition, or emulation, has been unduly stimulated becomes a flaccid person. But there is a worse evil. We all want knowledge just as much as we want bread. We know it is possible to cure the latter appetite by giving more stimulating food; and the worst of using other spurs to learning is that a natural love of knowledge which should carry us through eager school-days, and give a spice of adventure to the duller days of mature life, is effectually choked; and boys and girls 'Cram to pass but not to know; they do pass but they don't know.' The divine curiosity which should have been an equipment for life hardly survives early schooldays.

Now it has been demonstrated very fully indeed that the delightfulness of knowledge is sufficient to carry a pupil joyfully and eagerly through his school life and that prizes and places, praise, blame and punishment, are unnecessary in so far as they are used to secure ardent interest and eager work. The love of knowledge is sufficient. Each of those other stimuli should no doubt [58] have its natural action, but one or two springs of action seem to be played upon excessively in our schools. Conduct gives opportunity for 'virtue emulously rapid in the race' and especially that part of conduct known as 'play' in which most of the natural desires come into action; but even in play we must beware of the excess of zeal which risks the elimination of the primary feelings of love and justice. In the schoolroom, without doubt, the titillation of knowledge itself affords sufficient stimulus to close attention and steady labor; and the desire of acquisition has due play in a boy who is constantly increasing his acquirements.

4. MISDIRECTED AFFECTIONS

We are aware of more than mind and body in our dealings with children. We appeal to their 'feelings'; whether 'mind' or 'feelings' be more than names we choose to give to manifestations of that spiritual entity which is each one of us. Probably we have not even taken the trouble to analyze and name the feelings and to discover that they all fall under the names of love and justice, that it is the glory of the human being to be endowed with such a wealth of these two as is sufficient for every occasion of life. More, the occasions come and he is ready to meet them with the ease and triumph of the solvent debtor.

But this rich endowment of the moral nature is also a matter with which the educator should concern himself. Alas, he does so. He points the moral with a thousand tedious platitudes, directs, instructs, illustrates and bores exceedingly the nimble and subtle minds of his scholars. This, of the feelings and their manifestations, is certainly the field for the spare and guarded praise and blame of parent and teacher; but this praise or blame is apt to be either scrapped by children, or, taken as the sole motive for conduct, they [59] go forth unused to do a thing 'for it is right' but only because somebody's approbation is to be won.

This education of the feelings, moral education, is too delicate and personal a matter for a teacher to undertake trusting to his own resources. Children are not to be fed morally like young pigeons with predigested food. They must pick and eat for themselves and they do so from the conduct of others which they hear of or perceive. But they want a great quantity of the sort of food whose issue is conduct, and that is why poetry, history, romance, geography, travel, biography, science and sums must all be pressed into service. No one can tell what particular morsel a child will select for his sustenance. One small boy of eight may come down late because – "I was meditating upon Plato and couldn't fasten my buttons," and another may find his meat in 'Peter Pan'! But all children must read widely, and know what they have read, for the nourishment of their complex nature.

As for moral lessons, they are worse than useless; children want a great deal of fine and various moral feeding, from which they draw the 'lessons' they require. It is a wonderful thing that every child, even the rudest, is endowed with *Love* and is able for all its manifestations, – kindness, benevolence, generosity, gratitude, pity, sympathy, loyalty, humility, gladness; we older persons are amazed at the lavish display of any one of these to which the most ignorant child may treat us. But these aptitudes are so much coin of the realm with which a child is provided that he may be able to pay his way through life; and, alas, we are aware of certain vulgar commonplace tendencies in ourselves which make us walk delicately and trust, not to our own teaching, but to the best that we have in art and literature and above all to that storehouse of example and precept, the Bible, to enable us to touch these delicate spirits to fine issues. [60] St. Francis, Collingwood, Father Damien, one of the V.C.'s among us, will do more for children than years of talk.

Then there is that other wonderful provision for right living without which no neglected or savage man-soul exists. Everyone has *Justice* in his heart; a cry for 'fair play' reaches the most lawless mob, and we all know how children torment us with their 'It's not fair.' It is much to know that as regards justice as well as love there exists in everyone an adequate provision for the conduct of life: general unrest, which has its rise in wrong thinking and wrong judging far more than in faulty conditions, is the misguided outcome of that sense of justice with which, thank God, we are all endowed.

Here, on the face of it, we get one office of education. This, of justice, is another spiritual provision which we fail to employ duly in our schools; and so wonderful is this principle that we cannot kill, paralyze, or even benumb it, but, choked in its natural course, it spreads havoc and devastation where it should have made the soil fertile for the fruits of good living. Few of the offices of education are more important than that of preparing men to distinguish between their rights and their duties. We each have our rights and other persons have their duties towards us as we towards them; but it is not easy to learn that we have precisely the same rights as other people and no more; that other people owe to us just such duties as we owe to them. This fine art of self-adjustment is possible to everyone because of the ineradicable principle which abides in us. But our eyes must be taught to see, and hence the need for all the processes of education, futile in proportion as they do not serve this end. To think fairly requires, we know, knowledge as well as consideration.

Young people should leave school knowing that their thoughts are not their own; that what we think of [61] other people is a matter of justice or injustice; that a certain manner of words is due from them to all manner of persons with whom they have to deal; and that not to speak those words is to be unjust to their neighbors. They should know that truth, that is, justice in word, is their due and that of all other persons; there are few better equipments for a citizen than a mind capable of discerning the truth, and this just mind can be preserved only by those who take heed what they think. "Yet truth," says Bacon, "which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the enquiry of truth, which is the lovemaking, or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature."

If justice in word is to be duly learned by all scholars still more is integrity, justice in action; integrity in work, which disallows ca'canny methods, whether those of the artisan who does as little as he can in the time, or of the schoolboy who receives payment in kind – in his support, the cost of his education and the trust imposed in him by parents and teachers. Therefore he may not scamp, dawdle over, postpone, crib, or otherwise shirk his work. He learns that "my duty towards my neighbor" is "to keep my hands from picking and stealing," and, whether a man be a workman, a servant, or a prosperous citizen, he must know that justice requires from him the integrity in material which we call honesty; not the common honesty which hates to be found out, but that refined and delicate sense of values which George Eliot exhibits for us in 'Caleb Garth.'

There is another form in which the magnanimous citizen of the future must be taught the sense of justice. Our opinions show our integrity of thought. Every person has many opinions whether his own honestly thought out, or notions picked up from his pet newspaper or his companions. The person who thinks out [62] his opinions modestly and carefully is doing his duty as truly as if he saved a life because there is no more or less about duty.

If a schoolboy is to be guided into the justice of thought from which sound opinions emanate, how much more does he need guidance in arriving at that justice in motive which we call sound principles. For what, after all, are principles but those motives of first importance which govern us, move us in thought and action? We appear to pick up these in a casual way and are seldom able to render an account of them and yet our lives are ordered by our principles, good or bad. Here, again, we have a reason for wide and wisely ordered reading; for there are always catch-words floating in the air, as, – 'What's the good?' 'It's all rot,' and the like, which the vacant mind catches up for use as the basis of thought and conduct, as, in fact, paltry principles for the guidance of a life.

Here we have one more reason why there is nothing in all those spiritual stores in the world's treasury too good for the education of *all* children. Every lovely tale, illuminating poem, instructive history, every unfolding of travel and revelation of science exists for children. "*La terre appartient à l'enfant, toujours à l'enfant,*" was well said by Maxim Gorky, and we should do well to remember the fact.

The service that some of us (of the P.N.E.U.) believe we have done in the cause of education is to discover that all children, even backward children, are aware of their needs and pathetically eager for the food they require; that no preparation whatever is necessary for this sort of diet; that a limited vocabulary, sordid surroundings, the absence of a literary background to thought are not hindrances; indeed they may turn out to be incentives to learning, just as the more hungry the child, the readier he is for his dinner. This statement is no mere pious [63] opinion; it has been amply proved in thousands of instances. Children of a poor school in the slums are eager to tell the whole story of *Waverley*, falling continually into the beautiful language and style of the author. They talk about the Rosetta Stone and about treasures in their local museum; they discuss Coriolanus and conclude that 'his mother must have spoiled him.' They know by heart every detail of a picture by La Hooch, Rembrandt, Botticelli, and not only is no evolution of history or drama, no subtle sweetness, no inspiration of a poet, beyond them, but they decline to know that which does not reach them in literary form.

What they receive under this condition they absorb immediately and show that they *know* by that test of knowledge which applies to us all, that is, they can tell it with power, clearness, vivacity and charm. These are the children to whom we have been doling out the 'three R's' for generations! Small wonder that juvenile crime increases; the intellectually starved boy must needs find food for his imagination, scope for his intellectual power; and crime, like the cinema, offers it must be admitted, brave adventures.

5. THE WELL-BEING OF THE SOUL

If we leave the outer courts of mind and body, the holy places of the affections and the will (we shall consider this last later) and enter that holy of holies where man performs his priestly functions, we may well ask with diffidence and humility what may education do for the Soul of a child? "What is there that outwits the understanding of a man or that is out of the range of his thoughts, the reach of his aspirations? He is, it is true, baffled on all hands by his ignorance, the illimitable ignorance of even the wisest, but ignorance is not incapacity and the wings of a man's soul beat with impatience against the bars of his ignorance. He would [64] out, out into the universe of infinite thought and infinite possibilities. How is the soul of a man to be satisfied? Crowned kings have thrown up dominion because they want that which is greater than kingdoms; profound scholars fret under limitations which keep them playing upon the margin of the unsounded ocean of knowledge; no great love can satisfy itself with loving; there is no satisfaction save one for the soul of a man, because the things about him are finite, measurable, incomplete and his reach is beyond his grasp. He has an urgent, incessant, irrepressible need of the infinite." "I want, am made for, and must have a God;" – not a mere serviceable religion, – because we have in us an infinite capacity for love, loyalty and service which we cannot expend upon any other.

But what sort of approaches do we prepare for children towards the God whom they need, the Savior in Whom is all help, the King Who affords all delight, commands all adoration and loyalty?

Any words or thoughts of ours are poor and insufficient, but we have a treasury of divine words which they read and know with satisfying pleasure and tell with singular beauty and fitness. "The Bible is the most interesting book I know," said a young person of ten who had read a good many books and knew her Bible. By degrees children get that knowledge of God which is the object of the final daily prayer in our beautiful liturgy – the prayer of St. Chrysostom – "Grant us in this world knowledge of Thy truth," and all other knowledge which they obtain gathers round and illuminates this.

Here is an example of how such knowledge grows. I heard a class of girls aged about thirteen read an essay on George Herbert. Three or four of his poems were included, and none of the girls had read either essay or poems before. They 'narrated' what they [65] had read and in the course of their narration gave a full paraphrase of *The Elixir*, *The Pulley*, and one or two other poems. No point made by the poet was omitted and his exact words were used pretty freely. The teacher made comments upon one or two unusual words and that was all; to explain or enforce (otherwise than by a reverently sympathetic manner, the glance and words that showed that she too, cared), would have been impertinent. It is an interesting thing that hundreds of children of this age in Secondary and Elementary Schools and in families scattered over the world read and narrated the same essay and no doubt paraphrased the verses with equal ease. I felt humbled before the children knowing myself incapable of such immediate and rapid apprehension of several pages of new matter including poems whose intention is by no means obvious. In such ways the great thoughts of great thinkers illuminate children and they grow in knowledge, chiefly the knowledge of God.

And yet this, the chief part of education, is drowned in torrents of talk, in tedious repetition, in obfuscation and recrimination, in every sort of way in which the mind may be bored and the affections deadened.

I have endeavored to sketch some of the possibilities for good and the corresponding possibilities for evil present in all children; they are waiting for direction and control, certainly, but still more for the formative influence of knowledge. I have avoided philosophical terms, using only names in common use, – body and soul, body and mind, body, soul and spirit, – because these represent ideas that we cannot elude and that convey certain definite notions; and these ideas must needs form the basis of our educational thought.

We must know something about the material we are to work upon if the education we offer is not to be scrappy and superficial. We must have some measure of a child's [66] requirements, not based upon his uses to society, nor upon the standard of the world he lives in, but upon his own capacity and needs. We would not willingly educate him towards what is called 'self-expression'; he has little to express except what he has received as knowledge, whether by way of record or impression; what he can do is to assimilate and give this forth in a form which is original because it is modified, recreated, by the action of his own mind; and this originality is produced by the common bread and milk which is food for everyone, acting upon the mind which is peculiar to each individual child.

Education implies a continuous going forth of the mind; but whatever induces introspection or any form of self-consciousness holds up as it were the intellectual powers and brings progress to a standstill. The reader may have noticed with some disappointment that I have not invited him to the study of psychology as it is understood today. No doubt there exists a certain dim region described as the unconscious mind, a sort of half-way house between mind and matter, a place

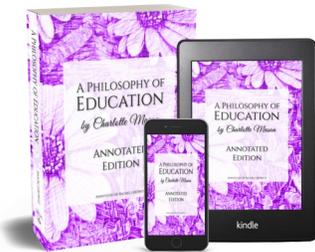
where the intellect is subdued to the action of nerves and blood. Mind is of its nature infinitely and always conscious and to speak of the unconscious mind is a contradiction in terms; but what is meant is that the mind thinks in ways of which we are unconscious; and that our business is to make ourselves aware by much introspection, much self-occupation, of the nature and tendencies of this 'unconscious' region. The results of this study, so far as they have been arrived at, are not encouraging. The best that is in us would appear to find its origin in 'complexes,' sensual, erotic, greedy. Granting that such possibilities are in us safety, lies in so nourishing the mind that seed of baseness may bear fruit of beauty. Researches in this region are deeply interesting no doubt, to the psychologist, and may eventually bear fruit if only as [67] contributing a quota to the classification of knowledge; but no authority on the subject is willing to offer at present his researches as a contribution to educational lore. It may be that the mind as well as the body has its regions where *noli me tangere* is a counsel of expedience; and, by the time we have dealt with those functions of the mind which we know, we may find ourselves in a position to formulate that which we certainly do not possess, a Science, should it not be a Philosophy, of Education?

Study Questions

PRINCIPLE #2

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the audio in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. What was your first reaction when you read this Principle?
3. Does the historical context change the way you view this Principle?
4. How does the idea that a child is a 'born person' interact with this Principle?
5. What quotes from Chapter 3 stood out to you?
6. Have you been able to identify any good inclinations or bad inclinations in your child? Can you identify your own good inclinations or bad inclinations?
7. How might you help your child to develop his or her good inclinations?
8. How might you help your child to lessen his or her bad inclinations?

Need more help with reading Volume 6? Try [The Annotated Charlotte Mason Series](#) published by A Charlotte Mason Plenary! The annotations help you understand Charlotte's context, include historical background information, and definitions. We try to make it easier for you to really dive in to Charlotte Mason's philosophy.



Principle # 3

*The principles of Authority and Obedience
are natural, necessary and fundamental.*

Principle # 3

VOLUME 6, CHAPTER 4: AUTHORITY AND DOCILITY

The principles of Authority on the one hand and Docility on the other are natural, necessary and fundamental

The War has made surprises stale but in those remote pre-war days we were enormously startled by the discovery of wireless telegraphy. That communications should pass through almost infinite space without sign or sound or obvious channel and arrive instantly at their destination took away our breath. We had the grace to value the discovery for something more than its utility; we were awed in the presence of a law which had always been there but was only now perceived. In something the same way we have been electrified by the discovery in the fields of France of heroism in the breast of every common soldier. Now, just such discoveries wait us in the field of education and any miner in this field may strike a vein of ore which shall enrich the world. The citizens of an ancient city on the shores of Gennesaret made one of those startling discoveries and knew how to give it a name; they found out that Christ 'spoke with authority' and not as their scribes.

It is not ours to speak with authority; the 'verily, verily I say unto you' is a divine word not for us. Nevertheless deputed authority is among us and in us. 'He is an authority' on such and such a subject, is a correct expression because by much study he has made it his own and has a right to speak. This deputed authority appears [69] to be lodged in everyone, ready for occasion. Mr. Benjamin Kidd has told us how the London policeman is the very embodiment of authority, implicitly obeyed in a way surprising to strangers. Every king and commander, every mother, elder sister, school prefect, every foreman of works and captain of games, finds that within himself which secures faithful obedience, not for the sake of his merits but because authority is proper to his office. Without this principle, society would cease to cohere. Practically there is no such thing as anarchy; what is so-called is a mere transference of authority, even if in the last resort the anarchist find authority in himself alone. There is an idea abroad that authority makes for tyranny, and that obedience, voluntary or involuntary, is of the nature of slavishness; but authority is, on the contrary, the condition without which liberty does not exist and, except it be abused, is entirely congenial to those on whom it is exercised: we are so made that we like to be ordered even if the ordering be only that of circumstances. Servants take pride in the orders they receive; that our badge of honor is an 'Order' is a significant use of words. It is still true that 'Order is heaven's first law' and order is the outcome of authority.

That principle in us which brings us into subjection to authority is docility, teachableness, and that also is universal. If a man in the pride of his heart decline other authority, he will submit himself slavishly to his 'star' or his 'destiny.' It would seem that the exercise of docility is as natural and necessary as that of reason or imagination; and the two principles of authority and docility act in every life precisely as do those two elemental principles which enable the earth to maintain its orbit, the one drawing it towards the sun, the other as constantly driving it into space; between the two, the earth maintains a more or less middle course and the days go on.

[70] The same two principles work in every child, the one producing ordered life, the other making for rebellion, and the *crux* in bringing up children is to find the mean which shall keep a child true to his elliptical orbit. The solution offered today is freedom in our schools; children may

be governed but they must not be aware that they are governed, and, 'Go as you please,' must be the apparent rule of their lives, while, 'Do as you're bid,' is the moving force. The result of an ordered freedom is obtained, that ordered freedom which rules the lives of 999 in 1000 of the citizens of the world; but the drawback to an indirect method of securing this result is that when, 'Do as you please,' is substituted for, 'Do as you're bid,' there is dissimulation in the air and children fail to learn that habit of 'proud subjection and dignified obedience' which distinguishes great men and noble citizens. No doubt it is pleasing that children should behave naturally, should get up and wander about, should sit still or frolic as they have a mind to, but they too, must 'learn obedience'; and it is no small element in their happiness and ours that obedience is both delightful and reposeful.

It is the part of the teacher to secure willing obedience, not so much to himself as to the laws of the school and the claims of the matter in hand. If a boy has a passage to read, he obeys the call of that immediate duty, reads the passage with attention and is happy in doing so. We all know with what a sense of added importance we say, "I must be at Mrs. Jones's by eleven." "It is necessary that I should see Brown." The life that does not obey such conditions has got out of its orbit and is not of use to society. It is necessary that we should all follow an ordered course, and children, even infant children, must begin in the way in which they will have to go on. Happily they come to us with the two inherent forces, centripetal and centrifugal, which secure to them [71] freedom, i.e., self-authority, on the one hand, and 'proud subjection' on the other.

But parents and those who stand *in loco parentis* have a delicate task. There must be subjection, but it must be proud, worn as a distinction, an order of merit. Probably the way to secure this is to avoid standing between children and those laws of life and conduct by which we are all ultimately ruled. The higher the authority, the greater distinction in obedience, and children are quick to discriminate between the mere will and pleasure of the arbitrary teacher or parent and the chastened authority of him who is himself under rule. That subservience should take the place of docility is the last calamity for nation, family or school. Docility implies equality; there is no great gulf fixed between teacher and taught; both are pursuing the same ends, engaged on the same theme, enriched by mutual interests; and probably the quite delightful pursuit of knowledge affords the only intrinsic liberty for both teacher and taught. "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free," and this freedom the steady pursuit and delightful acquirement of knowledge afford to us day by day. "The mind is its own place," we are told, "and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven"; and that heaven of the mind, is it not continual expansion in ordered freedom? And that restless, burning, inflammatory hell, does it not come of continual chafing against natural and righteous order?

As for the superficial freedom of sitting or standing, going or coming, that is a matter which settles itself, as do all the relations between teacher and taught, once children are allowed a due share in their own education, not a benefit for us to confer but rather a provision for them to take. Our chief concern for the mind or for the body is to supply a well-ordered table with abundant, appetizing, nourishing and very varied food, which [72] children deal with in their own way and for themselves. This food must be served *au naturel*, without the predigestion which deprives it of stimulating and nourishing properties and no sort of forcible feeding or spoon feeding may be practiced. Hungry minds sit down to such a diet with the charming greediness of little children; they absorb it, assimilate it and grow thereby in a manner astonishing to those accustomed to the

dull profitless ruminating so often practiced in schools. When the teacher avoids hortatory methods, his scholars change position when they have a mind to; but their mind is commonly to sit still during a lesson time because they are so intent on their work that they have no desire for small divagations; while, on the other hand, the teacher makes it his business to see that the body gets its share, and an abundant share, of gymnastics whether by way of games or drill. But this is a subject well understood in modern schools and it is only necessary to say that though mental activity promotes bodily functions in a surprising way – has not an American physiologist discovered that people may live to 160 or 1,000 years (!) if they continue to use their minds? – athleticism, on the other hand, if unduly pursued, by no means promotes mental activity.

In days when the concern of educators seems to be to provide an easy option for that mental activity, the sole condition of education, it must be *urged* that manual dexterity, gardening, folk-dancing, and the like, while they fulfil their proper function in training nerve and muscle to ready responsiveness, *do not sustain mind*. Nor, again, can we educate children upon the drama, even the Shakespearean drama, nor upon poetry, even the most musical and emotional. These things children must have; but they come into the world with many relations waiting to be established; relations with places far and near, with the wide universe, with the past of [73] history, with the social economics of the present, with the earth they live on and all its delightful progeny of beast and bird, plant and tree; with the sweet human affinities they entered into at birth; with their own country and other countries, and, above all, with that most sublime of human relationships – their relation to God. With such a programme before his pupils only the uninstructed teacher will put undue emphasis upon and give undue time to arithmetic and handicrafts, singing or acting, or any of the hundred specifics which are passed off as education in its entirety.

The sense of *must* should be present with children; our mistake is to act in such a way that they, only, seem to be law-compelled while their elders do as they please. The parent or teacher who is pestered for 'leave' to do this or that, contrary to the discipline of the house or school, has only himself to thank; he has posed as a person *in* authority, not *under* authority, and therefore free to allow the breach of rules whose only *raison d'être* is that they minister to the well-being of the children. Two conditions are necessary to secure all proper docility and obedience and, given these two, there is seldom a conflict of wills between teacher and pupils. The conditions are, – the teacher, or other head, may not be arbitrary but must act so evidently as one under authority that the children, quick to discern, see that he too must do the things he ought; and therefore that regulations are not made for his convenience. (I am assuming that everyone entrusted with the bringing up of children recognizes the supreme Authority to Whom we are subject; without this recognition I do not see how it is possible to establish the nice relation which should exist between teacher and taught.) The other condition is that children should have a fine sense of the freedom which comes of knowledge which they [74] are allowed to appropriate as they choose, freely given with little intervention from the teacher. They do choose and are happy in their work, so there is little opportunity for coercion or for deadening, hortatory talk.

But the principle of authority, as well as that of docility, is inherent in children and it is only as the tact and judgment of the teacher make opportunity for its free play that they are prepared for the duties of life as citizens and members of a family. The movement in favor of prefects, as in Public Schools, is a recognition of this fact and it is well that children should become familiar with the idea of representative authority, that is, that they are governed by chosen members of their own

body, a form of self-government. To give effect to the idea, the prefect should be elected and children show extraordinary insight in choosing the right officers. But that is not enough because only a few are set in authority; certain small offices should be held in rotation by every member of a class. The office makes the man as much as the man makes the office and it is surprising how well rather incompetent children will perform duties laid on them.

All school work should be conducted in such a manner that children are aware of the responsibility of learning; it is *their business* to know that which has been taught. To this end the subject matter should not be repeated. We ourselves do not attend to the matters in our daily paper which we know we shall meet with again in a weekly review, nor to that if there is a monthly review in prospect; these repeated aids result in our being persons of wandering attention and feeble memory. To allow repetition of a lesson is to shift the responsibility for it from the shoulders of the pupil to those of the teacher who says, in effect, "I'll see that you know it," so his pupils make no effort of attention. Thus the [75] same stale stuff is repeated again and again and the children get bored and restive, ready for pranks by way of a change.

Teachers are apt to slight their high office and hinder the processes of education because they cherish two or three fallacies. They regard children as inferior, themselves as superior, beings; why else their office? But if they recognized that the potency of children's minds is as great or greater than that of their own, they would not conceive that spoon-feeding was their mission, or that they must masticate a morsel of knowledge to make it proper for the feeble digestion of the scholar.

We depreciate children in another way. We are convinced that they cannot understand a literary vocabulary so we explain and paraphrase to our own heart's content but not to theirs. Educated mothers know that their children can read anything and do not offer explanations unless they are asked for them; and we have taken it for granted that this quickness of apprehension comes only to the children of educated parents.

Another misapprehension which makes for disorder is our way of regarding attention. We believe that it is to be cultivated, nursed, coddled, wooed by persuasion, by dramatic presentation, by pictures and illustrative objects: in fact, the teacher, the success of whose work depends upon his 'personality,' is an actor of no mean power whose performance would adorn any stage. Attention, we know, is not a 'faculty' nor a definable power of mind but is the ability to turn on every such power, to concentrate, as we say. We throw away labor in attempting to produce or to train this necessary function. There it is in every child in full measure, a very Niagara of force, ready to be turned on in obedience to the child's own authority and capable of infinite resistance to authority imposed from without. Our part is to regard attention, too, as an appetite and to [76] feed it with the best we have in books and in all knowledge. But children do it 'on their own'; we may not play Sir Oracle any more; our knowledge is too circumscribed, our diction too poor, vague, desultory, to cope with the ability of young creatures who thirst for knowledge. We must put into their hands the sources which we must needs use for ourselves, the best books of the best writers.

I will mention only one more disability which hinders us in our work as teachers; I mean that depreciation of knowledge which is just now characteristic of Englishmen. A well-known educationist lately nailed up the thesis that what children want in the way of knowledge is just two things – How to do the work by which they must earn their living and how to behave as citizens. This writer does not see that work is done and duties performed in the ratio of the person who works: the

more the man is as a person, the more valuable will be his work and the more dependable his conduct: yet we omit from popular education that tincture of humane letters which makes for efficiency! One hears, for instance, of an adolescent school with some nine thousand pupils who come in batches of a few hundreds, each batch to learn one or other of a score or so of admirable crafts and accomplishments; but not one hour is spent in a three or four years' course in this people's university on any sort of humane knowledge, in any reading or thinking which should make the pupils better men and women and better citizens.

To return to our method of employing attention; it is not a casual matter, a convenient, almost miraculous way of covering the ground, of getting children to know certainly and lastingly a surprising amount; all this is to the good, but it is something more, a root principle vital to education. In this way of learning the child comes to his own; he makes use of the authority which [77] is in him in its highest function as a self-commanding, self-compelling, power. It is delightful to use any power that is in us if only that of keeping up in cup and ball a hundred times as (to the delight of small nephews and nieces), Jane Austen did. But to make yourself attend, make yourself know, this indeed is to come into a kingdom, all the more satisfying to children because they are so made that they revel in knowledge.

Here is some notice of a day or two spent in London by a child of eleven which reaches me as I write:

“Mother took her to Westminster Abbey one afternoon and while I was seeing her to bed she told me all the things she had noticed there which they had been hearing about in ‘architecture’ this term. She loves ‘architecture.’ She also expressed her anxiety to make acquaintance with the British Museum and see the things there that they had been ‘having’ in their term’s work. So the next morning we went there and studied the Parthenon Room in great detail. She was a most interesting companion and taught me ever so much! We also went to St. Paul’s and Madame Tussaud’s where she was delighted to see so many people out of ‘history.’ The modern people did not interest her so much except Jack Cornwell and Nurse Cavell.”

It will be noticed that the child is educating herself; her friends merely take her to see the things she knows about and she tells what she has read, a quite different matter from the act of pouring information down the throats of the unhappy children who are taken to visit our national treasure houses.

A short time ago when the King and Queen paid a private visit to the British Museum, in the next hall, also, no doubt, examining the Parthenon Room, were a group of children from a London County Council School, as full of information and interest as the child above mentioned because they had been doing the same work. It was not a small thing for those children to know that their interests and delights were common to them and their Sovereigns. Of such strands are formed the cord which binds society; and one of the main purposes of a [78] ‘liberal education for all’ is to form links between high and low, rich and poor, the classes and the masses, in the strong sympathy of common knowledge. The Public Schools have arrived at this through the medium of the classics; an occasional ‘tag’ from Horace moves and unites the House of Commons, not only through the urbane thought of the poet but because it is a key to a hundred associations. If this has been effected through the medium of a dead language, what may we not hope for in the way of common thought, universal springs of action, conveyed through our own rich and inspiring literature?

Consider what this power of perfect attention and absolute recollection should be to every employer and chief, what an asset to the nation! I heard this week of a Colonel who said that his best subaltern was an old "P.U.S." (Parents' Union School) boy; and this sort of evidence reaches us continually. There are few who do not know the mischievous and baffling effects of inattention and forgetfulness on the part of subordinates; and we visualize a world of surprising achievement when children shall have been trained to quick apprehension and retention of instructions. We may not pose before children, nor pride ourselves on dutiful getting up of knowledge in order to deliver it as emanating from ourselves. There are those who have a right to lecture, those who have devoted a lifetime to some one subject about which they have perhaps written their book. Lectures from such persons are, no doubt, as full of insight, imagination and power as are their written works; but we cannot have a score of such lecturers in every school, each to elucidate his own subject, nor, if we could, would it be good for the children. The personality of the teacher would influence them to distraction from the delight in knowledge which is itself a sufficient and compelling force to secure perfect attention, and seemly discipline.

[79] I am not figuring an 'Erewhon,' some Utopia of our dreams; we of the P.N.E.U. seem to have let loose a force capable of sending forth young people firm with the resolve –

"I will not cease from mental strife
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land."

Practically all schools are doing wonders. The school-master is abroad in the land and we are educating 'our masters' with immense zeal and self-devotion. What we have reason to deplore is that after some eight or twelve years' brilliant teaching in school, the cinema show and the football field, polo or golf, satisfy the needs of our former pupils to whatever class they belong. We are filled with compassion when we detect the lifeless hand or leg, the artificial nose or jaw, that many a man has brought home as a consequence of the War. But many of our young men and women go about more seriously maimed than these. They are devoid of intellectual interests, history and poetry are without charm for them, the scientific work of the day is only slightly interesting, their 'job' and the social amenities they can secure are all that their life has for them.

The maimed existence in which a man goes on from day to day without either nourishing or using his intellect, is causing anxiety to those interested in education, who know that after religion it is our chief concern, is, indeed, the necessary handmaid of religion.

Principle # 3

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 2: PARENTS AS RULERS

THE FAMILY GOVERNMENT AN ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

Let us continue our consideration of the family as the nation in miniature, with the responsibilities, the rights, and the requirements of the nation. The parents represent the 'Government'; but, here, the government is ever an absolute monarchy, conditioned very loosely by the law of the land, but very closely by that law more or less of which every parent bears engraved on his conscience. Some attain the levels of high thinking, and come down from the Mount with beaming countenance and the tables of the law intact; others fail to reach the difficult heights, and are content with such fragments of the broken tables as they pick up below. But be his knowledge of the law little or much, no parent escapes the call to rule.

THE RULE OF PARENTS CANNOT BE DEPUTED

Now, the first thing we ask for in a ruler is, 'Is he able to rule? Does he know how to maintain his authority?' A ruler who fails to govern is like an unjust judge, an impious priest, an ignorant teacher; that is, he fails in the essential attribute of his office. This is even more true in the family than in the State; the king may rule by deputy; but, here we see the exigent nature of the parent's functions; he can have no deputy. Helpers he may have, but the moment he makes over his functions and authority to another, the rights of parenthood belong to that other, and not to him. Who does not know of the heart-burnings that arise when Anglo-Indian parents come home, to find their children's affections given to others, their duty owing to others; and they, the parents, sources of pleasure like the godmother of the fairy tale, but having no authority over their children? And all this, nobody's fault, for the guardians at home have done their best to keep the children loyal to the parents abroad.

CAUSES WHICH LEAD TO THE ABDICATION OF PARENTS

Here is indicated a rock upon which the heads of families sometimes make shipwreck. They regard parental authority as inherent in them, a property which may lie dormant, but is not to be separated from the state of parenthood. They may allow their children from infancy upwards to do what is right in their own eyes; and then, Lear turns and makes his plaint to the winds, and cries—

'Sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!'

But Lear has been all the time divesting himself of the honor and authority that belong to him, and giving his rights to his children. Here he tells us why; the biting anguish is the '*thankless*' child. He has been laying himself out for the thanks of his children. That they should think him a fond father has been more to him than the duty he owes them; and in proportion as he omits his duty are they oblivious of theirs. Possibly the unregulated love of approbation in devoted parents has more share in the undoing of families than any other single cause. A writer of today represents a mother as saying,

“But you are not afraid of me, Bessie?”

“No indeed; who could be afraid of a dear, sweet, soft, little mother like you?”

And such praise is sweet in the ears of many a fond mother hungering for the love and liking of her children, and not perceiving that words like these in the mouth of a child are as treasonable as words of defiance. Authority is laid down at other shrines than that of popularity. Prospero describes himself as,

“all dedicate
To study, and the bettering of my mind.”

And, meantime, the exercise of authority devolves upon Antonio; is it any wonder that the habit of authority fits the usurper like a glove, and that Prospero finds himself ousted from the office he failed to fill? Even so, the busy parent, occupied with many cares, awakes to find the authority he has failed to wield has dropped out of his hands; perhaps has been picked up by others less fit, and a daughter is given over to the charge of a neighboring family, while father and mother hunt for rare prints.

In other cases, the love of an easy life tempts parents to let things take their course; the children are good children, and won't go far wrong, we are told; and very likely it is true. But however good the children be, the parents owe it to society to make them better than they are, and to bless the world with people, not merely good-natured and well disposed, but good of set purpose and endeavor.

The love of ease, the love of favor, the claims of other work, are only some of the causes which lead to a result disastrous to society – the abdication of parents. When we come to consider the nature and uses of the parents' authority, we shall see that such abdication is as immoral as it is mischievous. Meantime, it is well worth while to notice that the causes which lead parents to resign the position of domestic rulers are resolvable into one – the office is too troublesome, too laborious. The temptation which assails parents is the same which has led many a crowned head to seek ease in the cloister—

‘Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,’

even if it be the natural crown of parenthood.

THE MAJESTY OF PARENTHOOD

The apostolic counsel of ‘diligence’ in ruling throws light upon the nature and aim of authority; it is no longer a matter of personal honor and dignity; authority is for use and service, and the honor that goes with it is only for the better service of those under authority. The arbitrary parent, the exacting parent, who claims this and that of deference and duty because he is a parent, all for his own honor and glory, is more hopelessly in the wrong than the parent who practically abdicates; the majesty of parenthood is hedged round with observances only because it is good for the children to ‘faithfully serve, honor, and humbly obey’ their natural rulers. Only at home can children be trained in the chivalrous temper of ‘proud submission and dignified obedience’; and if the parents do not inspire and foster deference, reverence, and loyalty, how shall these crowning graces of character thrive in a hard and emulous world?

It is perhaps a little difficult to maintain an attitude of authority in these democratic days, when even educationists counsel that children be treated on equal terms from the very beginning;

but the children themselves come to our aid; the sweet humility and dependence natural to them fosters the gentle dignity, the soupçon of reserve, which is becoming in parents. It is not open to parents either to lay aside or to sink under the burden of the honor laid upon them; and, no doubt, we have all seen the fullest, freest flow of confidence, sympathy, and love between parent and child where the mother sits as a queen among her children and the father is honored as a crowned head. The fact that there are two parents, each to lend honor to the other, yet free from restraint in each other's presence, makes it the easier to maintain the impalpable 'state' of parenthood. And the presence of the slight, sweet, undefined feeling of dignity in the household is the very first condition for the bringing-up of loyal, honorable men and women, capable of reverence and apt to win respect.

CHILDREN ARE A PUBLIC TRUST AND A DIVINE TRUST

The foundation of parental authority lies in the fact that parents hold office as deputies; and that in a two-fold sense. In the first place, they are the immediate and personally appointed deputies of the Almighty King, the sole Ruler of men; they have not only to fulfil his counsels regarding the children, but to represent his Person; his parents are as God to the little child; and, yet more constraining thought, *God is to him what his parents are*; he has no power to conceive a greater and lovelier personality than that of the royal heads of his own home; he makes his first approach to the Infinite through them; they are his measure for the highest; if the measure be easily within his small compass, how shall he grow up with the reverent temper which is the condition of spiritual growth?

More; parents hold their children in trust for society. 'My own child' can only be true in a limited sense; the children are held as a public trust to be trained as is best for the welfare of the community; and in this sense also the parents are persons in authority with the dignity of their office to support; and are even liable to deposition. The one State whose name has passed into a proverb, standing for a group of virtues which we have no other word to describe, is a State which practically deprived parents of the functions which they failed to fulfil to the furtherance of public virtue. No doubt the State reserves to itself virtually the power to bring up its own children in its own way, with the least possible co-operation of parents. Even today, a neighboring nation has elected to charge itself with the training of its infants. So soon as they can crawl, or sooner, before ever they run or speak, they are to be brought to the 'Maternal School,' and carefully nurtured, as with mother's milk, in the virtues proper for a citizen. The scheme is as yet but in the experimental stage, but will doubtless be carried through, because the nation in question has long ago discovered – and acted consistently upon the discovery – that what you would have the man become, that you must train the child to be.

Perhaps such public deposition of parents is the last calamity that can befall a nation. These poor little ones are to grow up in a world where the name of God is not to be named; to grow up, too, without the training in filial duty and brotherly love and neighborly kindness which falls to the children of all but the few unnatural parents. They may be returned to their parents at certain hours or after certain years; but once alienation has been set up, once the strongest and sweetest tie has been loosened and the parents have been publicly delivered from their duty, the desecration of the home is complete, and we shall have the spectacle of a people growing up orphaned almost from their birth. This is a new thing in the world's history, for even Lycurgus left the children

to the parents for the first half-dozen years of life. Certain newspapers commend the example for our imitation, but God forbid that we should ever lose faith in the blessedness of family life. Parents who hold their children as at the same time a public trust and a divine trust, and who recognize the authority they hold as *deputed* authority, not to be trifled with, laid aside, or abused – such parents preserve for the nation the immunities of home, and safeguard the privileges of their order.

THE LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF PARENTAL AUTHORITY

Having seen that it does not rest with the parents to use, or to forego the use of, the authority they hold, let us examine the limitations and the scope of this authority. In the first place, it is to be maintained and exercised solely for the advantage of the children, whether in mind, body, or estate. And here is room for the nice discrimination, the delicate intuitions, with which parents are blessed. The mother who makes her growing-up daughter take the out-of-door exercise she needs, is acting within her powers. The father of quiet habits, who discourages society for his young people, is considering his own tastes, and not their needs, and is making unlawful use of his authority.

Again, the authority of parents, though the deference it begets remains to grace the relations of parents and child, is itself a provisional function, and is only successful as it encourages the *autonomy*, if we may call it so, of the child. A single decision made by the parents which the child is, or should be, capable of making for itself, is an encroachment on the rights of the child, and a transgression on the part of the parents.

Once more, the authority of parents rests on a secure foundation only as they keep well before the children that it is deputed authority; the child who knows that he is being brought up for the service of the nation, that his parents are acting under a Divine commission, will not turn out a rebellious son.

Further, though the emancipation of the children is gradual, they acquiring day by day more of the art and science of self-government, yet there comes a day when the parents' right to rule is over; there is nothing left for them but to abdicate gracefully, and leave their grown-up sons and daughters free agents, even though these still live at home; and although, in the eyes of their parents, they are not fit to be trusted with the ordering of themselves: if they fail in such self-ordering, whether as regards time, occupations, money, friends, most likely their parents are to blame for not having introduced them by degrees to the full liberty which is their right as men and women. Anyway, it is too late now to keep them in training; fit or unfit, they must hold the rudder for themselves.

As for the employment of authority, the highest art lies in ruling without seeming to do so. The law is a terror to evil-doers, but for the praise of them that do well; and in the family, as in the State, the best government is that in which peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, are maintained without the intervention of the law. Happy is the household that has few rules, and where 'Mother does not like this,' and, 'Father wishes that,' are all-constraining.

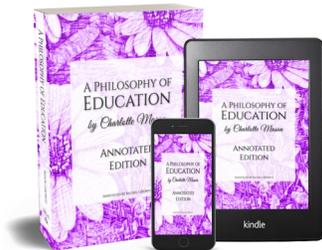
Study Questions

PRINCIPLE #3

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the audio in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. What is your initial reaction to the words “Authority” and “Obedience” - positive or negative? Why?
3. Charlotte says that “Without this principle, society would cease to cohere.” Do you agree or disagree with her statement? Why?
4. In what ways are you “under authority” every day?
5. What are some things you can do to “secure willing obedience” from your children?
6. What are some things you plan to do to restore the balance between Authority and Obedience in your home?
7. What quotes from this chapter stood out to you?

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Charlotte Mason Plenary! The annotations help you understand Charlotte’s context, include historical background information, and definitions. We try to make it easier for you to really dive in to Charlotte Mason’s philosophy.



Principle # 4

These principles (i.e., authority and docility) are limited by the respect due to the personality of children which may not be encroached upon whether by the direct use of fear or love, suggestion or influence, or by undue play upon any one natural desire.

Principle # 4

VOL. 6, CH. 5: THE SACREDNESS OF PERSONALITY

These principles (i.e., authority and docility) are limited by the respect due to the personality of children which may not be encroached upon whether by the direct use of fear or love, suggestion or influence, or by undue play upon any one natural desire.

People are too apt to use children as counters in a game, to be moved hither and thither according to the whim of the moment. Our crying need today is less for a better method of education than for an adequate conception of children, – children, merely as human beings, whether brilliant or dull, precocious or backward. Exceptional qualities take care of themselves and so does the ‘wanting’ intelligence, and both of these share with the rest in all that is claimed for them in the previous chapters. Our business is to find out how great a mystery a person is *quâ* person. All action comes out of the ideas we hold and if we ponder duly upon personality we shall come to perceive that we cannot commit a greater offence than to maim or crush, or subvert any part of a person.

We have many ingenious, not to say affectionate, ways of doing this, all of them more or less based upon that egoism which persuades us that in proportion to a child’s dependence is our superiority, that all we do for him is of our grace and favor, and that we have a right, whether as parents or teachers, to do what we will with our own. Have we considered that in the Divine estimate the child’s estate is higher than ours; that it is [81] ours to “become as little children,” rather than theirs to become as grown men and women; that the rules we receive for the bringing up of children are for the most part negative? We may not despise them, or hinder them, (“suffer little children”), or offend them by our brutish clumsiness of action and want of serious thought; while the one positive precept afforded to us is “feed” (which should be rendered ‘pasture’) “my lambs,” place them in the midst of abundant food. A teacher in a Yorkshire Council School renders this precept as, – “I had left them in the pasture and came back and found them feeding,” that is, she had left a big class reading a given lesson and found them on her return still reading with eagerness and satisfaction. *Maxima reverentia debetur pueris* has a wider meaning than it generally receives. We take it as meaning that we should not do or say anything unseemly before the young, but does it not also include a profound and reverent study of the properties and possibilities present in a child?

Nor need we be alarmed at so wide a programme. The vice which hinders us in the bringing up of children is that so heavily censured in the Gospel. We are not simple; we act our parts and play in an unlawful way upon motives. Perhaps after all the least reprehensible pedagogic motive is that which is most condemned and the terrorism of ‘Mr. Creakle’ may produce a grey record in comparison with the blackness of more subtle methods of undermining personality. We can only touch upon a few of these, but a part may stand for the whole. For the action of fear as a governing motive we cannot do better than read again our *David Copperfield* (a great educational treatise) and study ‘Mr. Creakle’ in detail for terrorism in the schoolroom and ‘Mr. Murdstone’ for the same vice in the home. But, – is it through the influence of Dickens? – fear is no longer the acknowledged

basis of school discipline; we have [82] methods more subtle than the mere terrors of the law. Love is one of these. The person of winning personality attracts his pupils (or hers) who will do anything for his sake and are fond and eager in all their ways, docile to that point where personality is submerged, and they live on the smiles, perish on the averted looks, of the adored teacher. Parents look on with a smile and think that all is well; but Bob or Mary is losing that growing time which should make a self-dependent, self-ordered person, and is day by day becoming a parasite who can go only as he is carried, the easy prey of fanatic or demagogue. This sort of encroachment upon the love of children offers as a motive, 'do this for my sake'; wrong is to be avoided lest it grieve the teacher, good is to be done to pleasure him; for this end a boy learns his lessons, behaves properly, shows good will, produces a whole catalogue of schoolboy virtues and yet his character is being undermined.

'Suggestion' goes to work more subtly. The teacher has mastered the gamut of motives which play upon human nature and every suggestion is aimed at one or other of these. He may not use the nursery suggestions of lollipops or bogies but he does in reality employ these if expressed in more spiritual values, suggestions subtly applied to the idiosyncrasies of a given child. 'Suggestion' is too subtle to be illustrated with advantage: Dr. Stephen Paget holds that it should be used only as a surgeon uses an anesthetic; but it is an instrument easy to handle, and unconsidered suggestion plays on a child's mind as the winds on a weathercock. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" is the unfortunate child's doom; for how is it possible for stability of mind and character to evolve under a continual play of changing suggestions? But this it will be said is true of the unconsidered suggestion. What of a carefully laid train, all leading in the same direction, to produce perseverance, [83] frankness, courage, any other excellent virtue? The child is even worse off in such a case. That particular virtue becomes detestable; no other virtue is inviting; and he is acquiring no strength to stand alone but waits in all his doings for promptings from without. Perhaps the gravest danger attending this practice is that every suggestion received lays the person open to the next and the next. A due respect for the personality of children and a dread of making them incompetent to conduct their own lives will make us chary of employing a means so dangerous, no matter how good the immediate end.

Akin to suggestion is influence, which acts not so much by well-directed word or inciting action as by a sort of atmosphere proceeding from the teacher and enveloping the taught. Late in the last century goody-goody books were written about the beauty of influence, the duty of influence, the study of the means of influence, and children were brought up with the notion that to influence other persons consciously was a moral duty. No doubt such influence is inevitable; we must needs affect one another, not so much by what we do or say as by that which we are, and so far influence is natural and wholesome. We imbibe it from persons real and imaginary and we are kept strong and upright by currents and counter-currents of unstudied influence. Supineness before a single, steady, persistent influence is a different matter, and the schoolgirl who idolizes her mistress, the boy who worships his master, is deprived of the chance of free and independent living. His personality fails to develop and he goes into the world as a parasitic plant, clinging ever to the support of some stronger character.

So far we have considered incidental ways of trespassing upon those rights of personality proper to children, but we have more pervasive, if less injurious, ways of [84] stultifying intellectual and moral growth. Our school ethic rests upon, our school discipline is supported by, undue play

upon certain natural desires. It is worthwhile to reflect that the mind also has its appetites, better known as desires. It is as necessary that Mind should be fed, should grow and should produce, as that these things should happen to Body, and just as Body would not take the trouble to feed itself if it never became hungry, so Mind also would not take in that which it needs if it were not that certain Desires require to be satisfied. Therefore schoolmasters do not amiss in basing their practice upon the Desires whose very function appears to be to bring nourishment to Mind. Where we teachers err is in stimulating the wrong Desires to accomplish our end. There is the desire of approbation which even an infant shows, he is not happy unless mother or nurse approve of him. Later this same desire helps him to conquer a sum, climb a hill, bring home a good report from school, and all this is grist to the mill, knowledge to the mind; because the persons whose approbation is worth having care that he should learn and know, conquer idleness, and get habits of steady work, so that his mind may be as duly nourished every day as is his body. Alas for the vanity that attends this desire of approbation, that makes the boy more solicitous for the grin of the stable-boy than for the approval of his master! Nay, this desire for approval may get such possession of him that he thinks of nothing else; he must have approval whether from the worthless or the virtuous. It is supposed that outbreaks of violence, robbery, assassinations, occur at times for the mere sake of infamy, just as deeds of heroism are done for the sake of fame. Both infamy and fame mean being thought about and talked about by a large number of people; and we know how this natural desire is worked by the daily press; how we get, now a film actress, now a burglar, [85] a spy, a hero, or a scientist set before us to be our admiration and our praise.

Emulation, the desire of excelling, works wonders in the hands of the schoolmaster; and, indeed, this natural desire is an amazing spur to effort, both intellectual and moral. When in pursuit of virtue two or a score are 'emulously rapid in the race,' a school acquires a 'good tone' and parents are justified in thinking it the right place for their boy. In the intellectual field, however, there is danger; and nothing worse could have happened to our schools than the system of marks, prizes, place-taking, by which many of them are practically governed. A boy is so taken up with the desire to forge ahead that there is no time to think of anything else. What he learns is not interesting to him; he works to get his remove.

But emulation does not stand alone as Vicegerent in our schools; another natural desire whose unvarnished name is avarice labors for good government and so-called progress cheek by jowl with emulation. "He must get a scholarship," – is the duty of a small boy even before he goes to school, and indeed for good and sufficient reasons. Sometimes the sons of rich parents carry off these prizes but as a rule they fall to those for whom they are intended, the sons of educated parents in rather straitened circumstances, sons of the clergy, for example. The scholarship system is no more than a means of distributing the vast wealth left by benefactors in the past for this particular purpose. Every Grammar School has its own scholarships; the Universities have open scholarships and bursaries often of considerable value; and a free, or partially free, education is open to the majority of the youth of the upper middle class on one condition, that of brains. It is small wonder that every Grammar and Public School bases its curriculum upon these conditions, knows exactly what [86] standard of merit will secure the 'Hastings,' knows the boys who have a chance, and orders their very strenuous work towards the end in view. It is hard to say what better could be done and yet this deliberate cult of cupidity is disastrous; for there is no doubt that here and there we come upon impoverishment of personality due to enfeebled intellectual life; the boy did

not learn to delight in knowledge in his schooldays and the man is shallow in mind and whimsical in judgment.

It is hopeless to make war from without on a system which affords very effectual help in the education of boys who are likely later to become of service to the country; but Britain must make the most of her sons and many of these men are capable of being more than they are. It is from within the schools that help must come and the way is fairly obvious. Most schools give from eleven in the lowest to eight hours in the highest Forms to 'English' that is, from twenty to sixteen consecutive readings a week might be afforded in a wide selection of books – literature, history, economics, etc. – books read with the concentrated attention which makes a single reading suffice. The act of narrating what has been read might well be useful to boys who should be prepared for public speaking. By a slight alteration of this kind, in procedure rather than in curriculum or timetable, it is probable that our schools would turn out many more well-read, well-informed men and convincing speakers than they do at present. Such a method, even if applied to 'English' only, would tend to correct any tendency in schools to become mere cramming places for examinations, would infect boys with a love of knowledge and should divert the natural desire for acquisition into a new channel, for few things are more delightful than the acquisition of knowledge.

We need not delay over that desire of power, ambition, which plays its part in every life; but the educator must [87] see that it plays no more than its part. Power is good in proportion as it gives opportunities for serving; but it is mischievous in boy or man when the pleasure of ruling, managing, becomes a definite spring of action. Like each of the other natural desires, that for power may ruin a life that it is allowed to master; ambition is the cause of half the disasters under which mankind suffers. The ambitious boy or man would as soon lead his fellows in riot and disorder as in noble effort in a good cause; and who can say how far the labor unrest under which we suffer is inspired and inflamed by ambitious men who want to rule if only for the immediate intoxication of rousing and leading men? It is a fine thing to say of a multitude of men, – "I can wind them round my little finger"; and the much-burdened Head of a school must needs beware! If the able, ambitious fellow be allowed to manage the rest, he cheats them out of their fair share of managing their own lives; no boy should be allowed to wax feeble to make another great; the harm to the ambitious boy himself must be considered too, lest he become an ignoble, maneuverings person. It is within a teacher's scope to offer wholesome ambitions to a boy, to make him keen to master knowledge rather than manage men; and here he has a wide field without encroaching on another's preserve.

Another desire which may well be made to play into the schoolmaster's hands is that of society, a desire which has much to do with the making of the naughty boys, idle youths and silly women of our acquaintance. It is sheer delight to mix with our fellows, but much depends on whom we take for our fellows and why; and here young people may be helped by finger-posts. If they are so taught that knowledge delights them, they will choose companions who share that pleasure. In this way princes are trained; they must know something of botany to talk with botanists, of history to [88] meet with historians; they cannot afford to be in the company of scientists, adventurers, poets, painters, philanthropists or economists, and themselves be able to do no more than 'change the weather and pass the time of day'; they must know modern languages to be at home with men of other countries, and ancient tongues to be familiar with classical allusions. Such considerations rule the education of princes, and every boy has a princely right to be brought up so

that he may hold his own in good society, that is, the society of those who 'know.'

We hear complaints of the cast-iron system of British society; but how much of it is due to the ignorance which makes it only possible to men and women to talk to those of their own clique, soldiers with soldiers, school-masters and schoolboys with their kind? The boy who wants to be able to talk to people who 'know' has no unworthy motive for working.

We have considered the several desires whose function is to stimulate the mind and save us from that *vis inertia* which is our besetting danger. Each such desire has its place but the results are disastrous if any one should dominate. It so happens that the last desire we have to consider, the desire of knowledge, is commonly deprived of its proper function in our schools by the predominance of other springs of action, especially of emulation, the desire of place, and avarice, the desire of wealth, tangible profit. This divine curiosity is recognized in ordinary life chiefly as a desire to know trivial things. What did it cost? What did she say? Who was with him? Where are they going? How many postage stamps in a line would go round the world? And curiosity is satisfied by incoherent, scrappy information which serves no purpose, assuredly not the purpose of knowledge whose function is to nourish the mind as food nourishes the body. But so besotted is our educational [89] thought that we believe children regard knowledge rather as repulsive medicine than as inviting food. Hence our dependence on marks and prizes, athletics, alluring presentation, any jam we can devise to disguise the powder. The man who willfully goes on crutches has feeble incompetent legs; he who chooses to go blindfold has eyes that cannot bear the sun; he who lives on pap-meat has weak digestive powers, and he whose mind is sustained by the crutches of emulation and avarice loses that one stimulating power which is sufficient for his intellectual needs. This atrophy of the desire of knowledge is the penalty our scholars pay because we have chosen to make them work for inferior ends. Our young men and maidens do not read unless with the stimulus of a forthcoming examination. They are good-natured and pleasant but have no wide range of thought, lofty purpose, little of the magnanimity which is proper for a citizen. Great thoughts and great actions are strange to them, though the possibility is still there and they may yet show in peace such action as we have seen and wondered at during the War. But we cannot always educate by means of a great war; the penalties are too heavy for human nature to endure for long. Therefore the stimuli to greatness, magnanimity, which the war afforded we must produce in the ordinary course of education.

But knowledge is delectable. We have all the 'satiabile curiosity' of Mr. Kipling's Elephant even when we content ourselves with the broken meats flung by the daily press. Knowledge is to us as our mother's milk, we grow thereby and in the act of sucking are admirably content.

The work of education is greatly simplified when we realize that children, apparently all children, want to know all human knowledge; they have an appetite for what is put before them, and, knowing this, our [90] teaching becomes buoyant with the courage of our convictions. We know how Richelieu shut up colleges throughout France, both Jesuit and secular, "in order to prevent the mania of the poor for educating their children which distracts them from the pursuits of trade and war." This mania exists with us, not only in the parents but in the children, the mania of hungry souls clamoring for meat, and we choke them off, not by shutting up schools and colleges, but by offering matter which no living soul can digest. The complaints made by teachers and children of the monotony of the work in our schools is full of pathos and all credit to those teachers who cheer the weary path by entertaining devices. But mind does not live and grow upon enter-

tainment; it requires its solid meals.

The Gloucestershire teachers, under Mr. Household's direction, have entered so fully into the principles implied in the method, that I am tempted to illustrate largely from their experience. But they by no means stand alone. Hundreds of other teachers have the same experiences and describe them as opportunity offers. The finding of this power which is described as 'sensing a passage,' is as the striking of a vein of gold in that fabulously rich country, human nature. Our 'find' is that children have a natural aptitude for literary expression which they enjoy in hearing or reading and employ in telling or writing. We might have guessed this long ago. All those speeches and sayings of untamed warriors and savage potentates which the historians have preserved for us, critics have declined as showing too much cultivated rhetoric to have been possible for any but highly educated persons. But the time is coming when we shall perceive that only minds like those of children are capable of producing thoughts so fresh and so finely expressed. This natural aptitude for literature, or, shall we say, rhetoric, which overcomes [91] the disabilities of a poor vocabulary without effort, should direct the manner of instruction we give, ruling out the talky-talky of the oral lesson and the lecture; ruling out, equally, compilations and text-books; and placing books in the hands of children and only those which are more or less literary in character that is, which have the terseness and vividness proper to literary work. The natural desire for knowledge does the rest and the children feed and grow.

It must be borne in mind that in proportion as other desires are stimulated that of knowledge is suppressed. The teacher who proposes marks and places as worthy aims will get work certainly but he will get no healthy love of knowledge for its own sake and no provision against the *ennui* of later days. The monotony I have spoken of attends all work prompted by the stimuli of marks and places; such work becomes mechanical, and there is hardly enough of it prepared to last through the course of a boy's school life. The master of a Preparatory School remarks, – "It must be a well-known fact (I am not speaking of the exceptional but of the average boy) that new boys are placed too low. We find – it is a common experience – that if we send up a boy whether he be a good mathematician, a good classic, a good English scholar or a good linguist, a couple of years will pass by before he is doing at the Public School the work he was doing when he left us." The Public School-master makes the same sort of complaint; he says, that "At twenty the boy is climbing the same pear-tree that he climbed at twelve," that is to say, work which is done in view of examinations must be of the rather narrow mechanical kind upon which it is possible to set questions and mark answers with absolute fairness. Now, definite progress, continual advance from day to day with no treading of old ground, is a condition of education.

There is an uneasy dread in some minds lest a liberal [92] education for all, the possibility which is now before us, should cause a social *bouleversement*, such an upheaval as obtained in the French Revolution. But this fear arises from an erroneous conception. The doctrine of equal opportunities for all is no doubt dangerous. It is the intellectual rendering of the 'survival of the fittest' and we have had a terrible object lesson as to how that doctrine works. The uneasy, ambitious spirit comes to the front, gets all the chances, dominates his fellows, and thinks no upheaval too great a price for the advancement of himself and his notions. Men of this type come to the top through the avenue of examinations. Ambition and possibly greed are seconded by dogged perseverance. As was said of Louis XIV, such men elevate their practice into a theory and arrogate to their habits the character of principles of government. And these pseudo-principles inflame the

populace because they promise place and power to every man in the state, with no sense of the proportion he bears to the rest. Probably the 'labor unrest' of today is not without connection with the habit of working in our schools for prizes and places. The boy who works to be first and to get something out of it does not always become the quiet, well-ordered citizen who helps to cement society and carries on the work of the State.

Knowledge pursued for its own sake is sedative in so far as it is satisfying; and the splendid consciousness that every boy in your Form has your own delight in knowing, your own pleasure in expressing that which he knows, shares your intimacy with this and the other sage and hero, makes for good fellowship and magnanimity and should deliver the citizen from a restless desire to come to the front. It is possible that a conscientious and intelligent teacher may be a little overwhelmed when he considers all that goes to a man, all that goes [93] to each of the boys under his care. It is true that –

There lives
 No faculty within us which the Soul
 Can spare: and humblest earthly weal demands
 For dignity not placed beyond her reach
 Zealous co-operation of all means
 Given or required to raise us from the mire
 And liberate our hearts from low pursuits
 By gross utilities enslaved; we need
 More of ennobling impulse from the past
 If for the future aught of good must come.

Wordsworth is no doubt right. There is no faculty within the soul which can be spared in the great work of education; but then every faculty, or rather power, works to the one end if we make the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake the object of our educational efforts. We find children ready and eager for this labor and their accomplishment is surprising.

PRINCIPLE #4

LIST OF ENCROACHMENTS

FEAR

LOVE

SUGGESTION

INFLUENCE

PLAY UPON NATURAL DESIRES

SUCH AS:

APPROBATION – THE NEED FOR APPROVAL

EMULATION – COMPETITION

AVARICE – GREED; PUSH FOR SCHOLARSHIP

POWER AND AMBITION – PLEASURE OF RULING OVER OTHERS

SOCIETY – THOSE WHO 'KNOW'

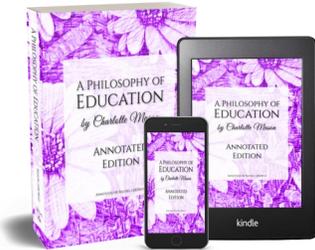
KNOWLEDGE – THE ATROPHY OF THE DESIRE FOR KNOWLEDGE

Study Questions

Here are some thoughts for you to contemplate for this Principle:

PRINCIPLE #4

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the audio in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. Do you think this Principle ties in with Principle #1, that a child is a born person? Why or why not?
3. Think back to when you were a child in school – what motivated you to learn?
4. Was it a healthy motivation? Or were any encroachments used?
5. Can you identify any ways in which you encroach upon your child's personality?
6. What 'natural desires' do you have the tendency to 'play upon' with your child?
7. What plan of action can you take to diminish those encroachments?
8. What quotes from this chapter stood out to you?



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Principle # 5

We allow ourselves three educational
instruments:

the atmosphere of environment

the discipline of habit

the presentation of living ideas.

Our motto is, - 'Education is an atmosphere,
a discipline, a life.'

Principle # 6

Education is an Atmosphere

Principles #5 & #6

VOLUME 6, CH. 6: THREE INSTRUMENTS OF EDUCATION

PART 1: EDUCATION IS AN ATMOSPHERE

Seeing that we are limited by the respect due to the personality of children, we can allow ourselves but three educational instruments – the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit and the presentation of living ideas. Our motto is, – ‘Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life.’ When we say that education is an atmosphere we do not mean that a child should be isolated in what may be called a ‘child environment’ specially adapted and prepared, but that we should take into account the educational value of his natural home atmosphere both as regards persons and things and should let him live freely among his proper conditions. It stultifies a child to bring down his world to the ‘child’s’ level.

Having cut out the direct use of fear or love, suggestion or influence, undue play upon any one natural desire, emulation, for example, we are no longer free to use all means in the education of children. There are but three left for our use and to each of these we must give careful study or we shall not realize how great a scope is left to us. To consider the first of these educational instruments; for a decade or two we have pinned our faith on environment as a great part of education; as, say, nine-tenths rather than a third part of the whole. The theory has been – put a child in the right environment and so subtle is its influence, so permanent its effects that he is to all intents and purposes educated thereby. Schools may add Latin and sums and whatever else their curriculum contains, but the actual education is, as it were, [95] performed upon a child by means of color schemes, harmonious sounds, beautiful forms, gracious persons. He grows up aesthetically educated into sweet reasonableness and harmony with his surroundings.

“Peter’s nursery was a perfect dream in which to hatch the soul of a little boy. Its walls were done in warm, cream-colored paint and upon them Peter’s father had put the most lovely patterns of trotting and jumping horses and dancing cats and dogs and leaping lambs, a carnival of beasts ... there was a big brass fire-guard in Peter’s nursery ... and all the tables had smoothly rounded corners against the days when Peter would run about. The floor was of cork carpet on which Peter would put his toys and there was a crimson hearthrug on which Peter was destined to crawl ... there were scales in Peter’s nursery to weigh Peter every week and tables to show how much he ought to weigh and when one should begin to feel anxious. There was nothing casual about the early years of Peter.”

So, Mr. Wells, in that inconclusive educational treatise of his, *Joan and Peter*. It is an accurate picture of the preparation for ‘high-souled’ little persons all over the world. Parents make tremendous sacrifices to that goddess who presides over Education. We hear of a pair investing more than their capital in a statue to adorn the staircase in order that ‘Tommy’ should make his soul by the contemplation of beauty. This sort of thing has been going on since the ‘eighties at any rate and, as usual, Germany erected a high altar for the cult which she passed on to the rest of us. Perhaps it is

safe to say that the young *Intelligenza* of Europe have been reared after this manner. And is the result that Neo-Georgian youth Punch presents to us with his air of weariness, condescension and self-complacency? Let us hear Professor Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, the Indian scientist, on one of his conclusions concerning the nervous impulse in plants –

“A plant carefully protected under glass from outside shocks looks sleek and flourishing but its higher nervous function is then found to be atrophied. But when a succession of blows” [96] (electric shocks) “is rained on this effete and bloated specimen, the shocks themselves create nervous channels and arouse anew the deteriorated nature. Is it not the shocks of adversity and not cotton wool protection that evolve true manhood?”

We had thought that the terrible succession of blows inflicted by the War had changed all that; but, no; the errors of education still hold sway and we still have amongst us the better-than-my-neighbor folk, whose function, let us hope, is to administer the benefits of adversity to most of us. What if parents and teachers in their zeal misread the schedule of their duties, magnified their office unduly and encroached upon the personality of children? It is not an environment that these want, a set of artificial relations carefully constructed, but an *atmosphere* which nobody has been at pains to constitute. It is there, about the child, his natural element, precisely as the atmosphere of the earth is about us. It is thrown off, as it were, from persons and things, stirred by events, sweetened by love, ventilated, kept in motion, by the regulated action of common sense. We all know the natural conditions under which a child should live; how he shares household ways with his mother, romps with his father, is teased by his brothers and petted by his sisters; is taught by his tumbles; learns self-denial by the baby's needs, the delightfulness of furniture by playing at battle and siege with sofa and table; learns veneration for the old by the visits of his great-grandmother; how to live with his equals by the chums he gathers round him; learns intimacy with animals from his dog and cat; delight in the fields where the buttercups grow and greater delight in the blackberry hedges. And, what tempered ‘fusion of classes’ is so effective as a child's intimacy with his betters, and also with cook and housemaid, blacksmith and joiner, with everybody who comes in his way? Children have a genius for this sort of general intimacy, a valuable part of their education; [97] care and guidance are needed, of course, lest admiring friends should make fools of them, but no compounded ‘environment’ could make up for this fresh air, this wholesome wind blowing now from one point, now from another.

We certainly may use atmosphere as an instrument of education, but there are prohibitions, for ourselves rather than for children. Perhaps the chief of these is, that no artificial element be introduced, no sprinkling with rose-water, softening with cushions. Children must face life as it is; if their parents are anxious and perturbed children feel it in the air. “Mummie, Mummie, you aren't going to cry this time, are you?” and a child's hug tries to take away the trouble. By these things children live and we may not keep them in glass cases; if we do, they develop in succulence and softness and will not become plants of renown. But due relations must be maintained; the parents are in authority, the children in obedience; and again, the strong may not lay their burdens on the weak; nor must we expect from children that effort of decision, the most fatiguing in our lives, of which the young should generally be relieved.

School, perhaps, offers fewer opportunities for vitiating the atmosphere than does home life. But teaching may be so watered down and sweetened, teachers may be so suave and condescending, as to bring about a condition of intellectual feebleness and moral softness which it is not easy

for a child to overcome. The bracing atmosphere of truth and sincerity should be perceived in every school; and here again the common pursuit of knowledge by teacher and class comes to our aid and creates a current of fresh air perceptible even to the chance visitor, who sees the glow of intellectual life and moral health on the faces of teachers and children alike.

But a school may be working hard, not for love of knowledge, but for love of marks, our old enemy; and [98] then young faces are not serene and joyous but eager, restless, apt to look anxious and worried. The children do not sleep well and are cross; are sullen or in tears if anything goes wrong, and are, generally, difficult to manage. When this is the case there is too much oxygen in the air; they are breathing a too stimulating atmosphere, and the nervous strain to which they are subjected must needs be followed by reaction. Then teachers think that lessons have been too hard, that children should be relieved of this and that study; the doctors probably advise that so-and-so should 'run wild' for a year. Poor little soul, at the very moment when he is most in need of knowledge for his sustenance he is left to prey upon himself! No wonder the nervous symptoms become worse, and the boy or girl suffers under the stigma of 'nervous strain.' The fault has been in the atmosphere and not in the work; the teacher, perhaps, is over anxious that her children should do well and her nervous excitation is catching. "I am afraid X— cannot do his examination; he loves his work but he bursts into tears when he is asked an examination question. Perhaps it is that I have insisted too much that he must never be satisfied with anything but his best." Poor little chap (of seven) pricked into over exertion by the spur of moral stimulus! We foresee happy days for children when all teachers know that no other exciting motive whatever is necessary to produce good work in each individual of however big a class than that love of knowledge which is natural to every child. The serenity and sweetness of schools conducted on this principle is surprising to the outsider who has not reflected upon the contentment of a baby with his bottle!

There are two courses open to us in this matter. One, to create by all manner of modified conditions a hot-house atmosphere, fragrant but emasculating, in which children grow apace but are feeble and dependent; the other to [99] leave them open to all the "airts that blow," but with care lest they be unduly battered; lest, for example, a miasma come their way in the shape of a vicious companion.

Principles #5 & #6

VOLUME 2, CH. 4: PARENTS AS INSPIRERS

The Life of the Mind Grows Upon Ideas

‘Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.’

[29] SUMMARY OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER The last chapter closed with an imperfect summary of what we may call the educational functions of parents. We found that it rests with the parents of the child to settle for the future man his ways of thinking, behaving, feeling, acting; his disposition, his particular talent; the manner of things upon which his thoughts shall run. Who shall fix limitations to the power of parents? The destiny of the child is ruled by his parents, because they have the virgin soil all to themselves. The first sowing must be at their hands, or at the hands of such as they choose to depute.

EDUCATIONAL CONCEPTIONS OF THE PAST What do parents sow? *Ideas*. We cannot too soon recognize what is the sole educational seed in our hands, or how this seed is to be distributed. But how radically wrong is all our thought upon education! We cannot use the fit words because we do not think the right thing. We have perhaps got over the educational misconception of the *tabula rasa*. No [30] one now looks on the child's white soul as a tablet prepared for the exercise of the educator's supreme art. But the conception which has succeeded this time-honored heresy rests on the same false bases of the august office and the infallible wisdom of the educator. Here it is in its cruder form:

PESTALOZZI'S THEORY ‘Pestalozzi aimed more at harmoniously developing the faculties than at making use of them for the acquirement of knowledge; he sought to prepare the vase rather than to fill it.’

FROEBEL'S THEORY In the hands of Froebel the figure gains in boldness and beauty; it is no longer a mere vase to be shaped under the potter's fingers; but a flower, say, a perfect rose, to be delicately and consciously and methodically molded, petal by petal, curve and curl; for the perfume and living glory of the flower, why, these will come; do you your part and mold the several petals; wait, too, upon sunshine and shower, give space and place for your blossom to expand. And so we go to work with a touch to ‘imagination’ here, and to ‘judgment’ there; now, to the ‘perceptive faculties,’ now, to the ‘conceptive’; in this, aiming at the moral, and in this, at the intellectual nature of the child; touching into being, petal by petal, the flower of a perfect life under the genial influences of sunny looks and happy moods.

THE KINDERGARTEN A VITAL CONCEPTION This reading of the meaning of education and of the work of the educator is very fascinating, and it calls forth singular zeal and self-devotion on the part of those gardeners whose plants are the children. Perhaps, indeed, this of the Kindergarten is the one vital conception of education we have had hitherto.

[31] BUT SCIENCE IS CHANGING FRONT But in these days of revolutionary thought, when all along the line – in geology and anthropology, chemistry, philology, and biology – science is changing front, it is necessary that we should reconsider our conception of Education.

AS TO HEREDITY We are taught, for example, that ‘heredity’ is by no means the simple and direct transmission, from parent or remote ancestor, to child of power and proclivity, virtue and de-

fect; and we breathe freer, because we had begun to suspect that if this were so, it would mean to most of us an inheritance of exaggerated defects: imbecility, insanity, congenital disease—are they utterly removed from any one of us?

IS EDUCATION FORMATIVE? So of education, we begin to ask, Is its work so purely formative as we thought? Is it directly formative at all? How much is there in this pleasing and easy doctrine, that, the drawing forth and strengthening and directing of the several 'faculties' is education? Parents are very jealous over the individuality of their children; they mistrust the tendency to develop all on the same plan; and this instinctive jealousy is right; for, supposing that education really did consist in systematized efforts to draw out every power that is in us, why, we should all develop on the same lines, be as like as 'two peas,' and (should we not?) die of weariness of one another! Some of us have an uneasy sense that things are tending towards this deadly sameness; but, indeed, the fear is groundless.

We may believe that the personality, the individuality, of each of us, is too dear to God, and too [32] necessary to a complete humanity, to be left at the mercy of empirics. We are absolutely safe, and the tenderest child is fortified against a battering-ram of educational forces.

'EDUCATION' AN INADEQUATE WORD The problem of education is more complex than it seems at first sight, and well for us and the world that it is so. 'Education is a life'; you may stunt and starve and kill, or you may cherish and sustain; but the beating of the heart, the movement of the lungs, and the development of the faculties (are there any 'faculties'?) are only indirectly our care. The poverty of our thought on the subject of education is shown by the fact that we have no word which at all implies the sustaining of a *life*: education (*e*, out, and *ducere*, to lead, to draw) is very inadequate; it covers no more than those occasional gymnastics of the mind which correspond with those by which the limbs are trained: training (*trahere*) is almost synonymous, and upon these two words rests the misconception that the development and the exercise of the 'faculties' is the object of education (we must needs use the word for want of a better).

'BRINGING-UP'? Our homely Saxon 'bringing up' is nearer the truth, perhaps because of its very vagueness; any way, 'up' implies an *aim*, and 'bringing' an *effort*.

THE HAPPY PHRASE OF MR MATTHEW ARNOLD 'Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life'—is perhaps the most complete and adequate definition of education we possess. It is a great thing to have said it: and our wiser posterity may see in that [33] 'profound and exquisite remark' the fruition of a lifetime of critical effort.

AN ADEQUATE DEFINITION Observe how it covers the question from the three conceivable points of view. Subjectively, in the child, education is a life; objectively, as affecting the child, education is a discipline; relatively, if we may introduce a third term, as regards the environment of the child, education is an atmosphere.

We shall examine each of these postulates later; at present we shall attempt no more than to clear the ground a little, with a view to the subject of this chapter, 'Parents as Inspirers' – not 'modelers' but 'inspirers.'

METHOD, A WAY TO AN END It is only as we recognize our limitations that our work becomes effective: when we see definitely what we are to do, what we can do, and what we cannot do, we set to work with confidence and courage; we have an end in view, and we make our way intelligently towards that end, and a *way to an end* is *method*. It rests with parents not only to give their

children birth into the life of intelligence and moral power, but to sustain the higher life which they have borne.

THE LIFE OF THE MIND GROWS UPON IDEAS Now that life, which we call education, receives only one kind of sustenance; it grows upon *ideas*. You may go through years of so-called 'education' without getting a single vital idea; and that is why many a well-fed body carries about a feeble, starved intelligence; and no society for the prevention of cruelty to children cries shame on the parents. Some years ago I heard of a girl of fifteen who had spent two years at a school without taking part in [34] a single lesson, and this by the express desire of her mother, who wished all her time and all her pains to be given to 'fancy needlework.' This, no doubt, is a survival (not of the fittest), but it is possible to pass even the Universities Local Examinations with credit, without ever having experienced that vital stir which marks the inception of an idea; and, if we have succeeded in escaping this disturbing influence, why, we have 'finished our education' when we leave school; we shut up our books and our minds, and remain pigmies in the dark forest of our own dim world of thought and feeling.

WHAT IS AN IDEA? A live thing of the mind, according to the older philosophers, from Plato to Bacon, from Bacon to Coleridge. We say of an idea that it strikes us, impresses us, seizes us, takes possession of us, rules us; and our common speech is, as usual, truer to fact than the conscious thought which it expresses. We do not in the least exaggerate in ascribing this sort of action and power to an idea. We form an *ideal* – a, so to speak, embodied idea – and our ideal exercises the very strongest formative influence upon us. Why do you devote yourself to this pursuit, that cause?' Because twenty years ago such and such an idea *struck* me,' is the sort of history which might be given of every purposeful life – every life devoted to the working out of an idea. Now is it not marvelous that, recognizing as we do the potency of ideas, both the word and the conception it covers enter so little into our thought of education?

Coleridge brings the conception of an 'idea' within the sphere of the scientific thought of to-day; not as that thought is expressed in *Psychology* — a term which he himself launched upon the world with an [35] apology for it as an *insolens verbum*, but in that science of the correlation and interaction of mind and brain, which is at present rather clumsily expressed in such terms as 'mental physiology' and 'psychophysiology.'

In his *Method* Coleridge gives us the following illustration of the rise and progress of an idea:

RISE AND PROGRESS OF AN IDEA "We can recall no incident of human history that impresses the imagination more deeply than the moment when Columbus, on an unknown ocean, first perceived that startling fact, the change of the magnetic needle. How many such instances occur in history when the ideas of Nature (presented to chosen minds by a Higher Power than Nature herself) suddenly unfold, as it were, in prophetic succession, systematic views destined to produce the most important revolutions in the state of man! The clear spirit of Columbus was doubtless eminently *methodical*. He saw distinctly that great leading *idea* which authorized the poor pilot to become a 'promiser of kingdoms.'"

GENESIS OF AN IDEA Notice the genesis of such ideas – 'presented to chosen minds by a Higher Power than Nature!'; notice how accurately this history of an idea fits in with what we know of the history of great inventions and discoveries, with that of the *ideas* which rule our own lives; and how well does it correspond with that key to the origin of 'practical' ideas which we find elsewhere:

“Doth the plowman plow continually to ... open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad [36] the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and put in the wheat in rows, and the barley in the appointed place, and the spelt in the border thereof? For his God doth instruct him aright, and doth teach him ...

“Bread corn is ground; for he will not ever be threshing it ... This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.”

AN IDEA MAY EXIST AS AN ‘APPETENCY’ Ideas may invest as an atmosphere, rather than strike as a weapon. ‘The idea may exist in a clear, distinct, definite form, as that of a circle in the mind of a geometrician; or it may be a mere instinct, a vague appetency towards something, like the impulse which fills the young poet’s eyes with tears, he knows not why.’ To excite this ‘appetency towards something’ — towards things lovely, honest, and of good report, is the earliest and most important ministry of the educator. How shall these indefinite ideas which manifest themselves in appetency be imparted? They are not to be given of set purpose, nor taken at set times. They are held in that thought-environment which surrounds the child as an atmosphere, which he breathes as his breath of life; and this atmosphere in which the child inspires his unconscious ideas of right living emanates from his parents. Every look of gentleness and tone of reverence, every word of kindness and act of help, passes into the thought-environment, the very atmosphere which the child breathes; he does not think of these things, may never think of them, but all his life long they excite that ‘vague appetency towards something’ out of which most of his actions spring. Oh, [37] the wonderful and dreadful presence of the little child in the midst!

A CHILD DRAWS INSPIRATION FROM THE CASUAL LIFE AROUND HIM That he should take direction and inspiration from all the casual life about him, should make our poor words and ways the starting point from which, and in the direction of which, he develops — this is a thought which makes the best of us hold our breath. There is no way of escape for parents; they must needs be as ‘inspirers’ to their children, because about them hangs, as its atmosphere about a planet, the thought-environment of the child, from which he derives those enduring ideas which express themselves as a life-long ‘appetency’ towards things sordid or things lovely, things earthly or divine.

ORDER AND PROGRESS OF DEFINITE IDEAS Let us now hear Coleridge on the subject of those *definite* ideas which are not inhaled as air, but conveyed as meat to the mind:

“From the first, or initiative idea, as from a seed, successive ideas germinate.”

“Events and images, the lively and spirit-stirring machinery of the external world, are like light and air and moisture to the seed of the mind, which would else rot and perish.”

“The paths in which we may pursue a methodical course are manifold, and at the head of each stands its peculiar and guiding idea.”

“Those ideas are as regularly subordinate in dignity as the paths to which they point are various and eccentric in direction. The world has suffered much, in modern times, from a subversion of the natural [38] and necessary order of Science ... from summoning reason and faith to the bar of that limited physical experience to which, by the true laws of method, they owe no obedience.”

“Progress follows the path of the idea from which it sets out; requiring, however, a constant wakefulness of mind to keep it within the due limits of its course. Hence the orbits of thought, so to speak, must differ among themselves as the initiative ideas differ.”

PLATONIC DOCTRINE OF IDEAS Have we not here the corollary to, and the explanation of, that law of unconscious cerebration which results in our 'ways of thinking,' which shapes our character, rules our destiny? Thoughtful minds consider that the new light which biology is throwing upon the laws of mind is bringing to the front once more the Platonic doctrine, that "An idea is a distinguishable power, self-affirmed, and seen in its unity with the Eternal Essence."

IDEAS ALONE MATTER IN EDUCATION The whole subject is profound, but as practical as it is profound. We must disabuse our minds of the theory that the functions of education are, in the main, gymnastic. In the early years of the child's life it makes, perhaps, little apparent difference whether his parents start with the notion that to educate is to fill a receptacle, inscribe a tablet, mold plastic matter, or nourish a life; but in the end we shall find that only those *ideas* which have fed his life are taken into the being of the child; all the rest is thrown away, or worse, is like sawdust in the system, an impediment and an injury to the vital processes.

HOW THE EDUCATIONAL FORMULA SHOULD RUN This is, perhaps, how the educational formula should [39] run: Education is a life; that life is sustained on ideas; ideas are of spiritual origin; and, 'God has made us so'

that we get them chiefly as we convey them to one another. The duty of parents is to sustain a child's inner life with ideas as they sustain his body with food. The child is an eclectic; he may choose this or that; therefore, in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

The child has affinities with evil as well as with good; therefore, hedge him about from any chance lodgment of evil ideas.

The initial idea begets subsequent ideas; therefore, take care that children get right primary ideas on the great relations and duties of life.

Every study, every line of thought, has its 'guiding idea'; therefore, the study of a child makes for living education in proportion as it is quickened by the guiding idea 'which stands at the head.'

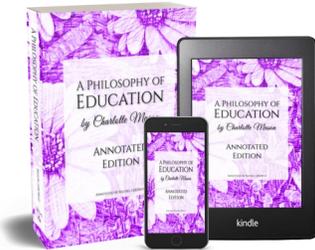
'INFALLIBLE REASON'; WHAT IS IT? In a word, our much boasted 'infallible reason' – is it not the involuntary thought which follows the initial idea upon necessary logical lines? Given, the starting idea, and the conclusion may be predicated almost to a certainty. We get into the *way* of thinking such and such manner of thoughts, and of coming to such and such conclusions, ever further and further removed from the starting-point, but on the same lines. There is structural adaptation in the brain tissue to the manner of thoughts we think – a place and a way for them to run in. Thus we see how the [40] destiny of a life is shaped in the nursery, by the reverent naming of the Divine Name; by the light scoff at holy things; by the thought of duty the little child gets who is made to finish conscientiously his little task; by the hardness of heart that comes to the child who hears the faults or sorrows of others spoken of lightly.

Study Questions

PRINCIPLES #5 & #6

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the audio in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. If you had previously heard of the quote “*Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life,*” did you have any preconceived ideas about what it meant?
3. What does it mean to you now that you have read more about it?
4. Did any quotes really resonate with you?
5. Have you been guilty of “sprinkling with rose-water” or “softening with cushions?” (I know I have!)
6. How might you allow your children more opportunities to overcome adversities?
7. What are the *IDEAS* that you would like to promote in the thought-environment of your home?
8. How do you plan to promote those ideas?

Need more help with reading Volume 6? Try [The Annotated Charlotte Mason Series](#) published by A Charlotte Mason Plenary! The annotations help you understand Charlotte’s context, include historical background information, and definitions. We try to make it easier for you to really dive in to Charlotte Mason’s philosophy.



Principle # 7

Education is a Discipline

Principle # 7

VOLUME 6, CH. 6: THREE INSTRUMENTS OF EDUCATION

PART 2: EDUCATION IS A DISCIPLINE

By this formula we mean the discipline of habits formed definitely and thoughtfully whether habits of mind or of body. Physiologists tell us of the adaptation of brain structure to habitual lines of thought, i.e., to our habits.

Education is not after all to either teacher or child the fine careless rapture we appear to have figured it. We who teach and they who learn are alike constrained; there is always effort to be made in certain directions; yet we face our tasks from a new point of view. We need not labor to get children to learn their lessons; that, if we would believe it, is a matter which nature takes care of. Let the lessons be of the right sort and children will learn them with delight. The call for strenuousness comes with the necessity of forming habits; but here again we are relieved. The intellectual habits of the good life form themselves in the following out of the due curriculum in the right way. As we have already urged, there is but one right way, that is, children must do the work for themselves. They must read the given pages and tell what they have read, they must perform, that is, what we may call the *act of knowing*. We are all aware, alas, what a monstrous quantity of printed matter has gone into the dustbin of our memories, because we have failed to perform that quite natural and spontaneous 'act of knowing,' as easy to a child as breathing and, if we would believe it, comparatively easy to ourselves. The reward is two-fold: no intellectual habit is so valuable as that of attention; it is a mere habit but it is also the hall-mark of an educated person. Use is second nature, we are told; it is not too much to say that [100] 'habit is ten natures,' and we can all imagine how our work would be eased if our subordinates listened to instructions with the full attention which implies recollection. Attention is not the only habit that follows due self-education. The habits of fitting and ready expression, of obedience, of good-will, and of an impersonal outlook are spontaneous byproducts of education in this sort. So, too, are the habits of right thinking and right judging; while physical habits of neatness and order attend upon the self-respect which follows an education which respects the personality of children.

Physiologists tell us that thoughts which have become habitual make somehow a mark upon the brain substance, but we are bold in calling it a mark for there is no discernible effect to be quoted. Whether or no the mind be served by the brain in this matter, we are empirically certain that a chief function of education is the establishment of such ways of thinking in children as shall issue in good and useful living, clear thinking, aesthetic enjoyment, and, above all, in the religious life. How it is possible that spirit should act upon matter is a mystery to us, but that such act takes place we perceive every time we note a scowling brow, or, on the other hand –

A sweet attractive kind of grace,
A full assurance given by looks;
Continual comfort in a face.
The lineaments of gospel books."

We all know how the physical effort of smiling affects ourselves in our sour moods –

"Nor soul helps flesh more now, than flesh helps soul."

Both are at our service in laying down the rails, so to speak, upon which the good life must needs run. In the past we have, no doubt, gone through an age of infant slavery, an age of good habits enforced by vigorous [101] penalties, conscientiously by the over scrupulous eighteenth century parent, and infamously by the school-masters, the 'Creakles' and the 'Squeers' who labored only for their own ease and profit. Now, the pendulum swings the other way. We have lost sight of the fact that habit is to life what rails are to transport cars. It follows that lines of habit must be laid down towards given ends and after careful survey, or the joltings and delays of life become insupportable. More, habit is inevitable. If we fail to ease life by laying down habits of right thinking and right acting, habits of wrong thinking and wrong acting fix themselves of their own accord. We avoid decision and indecision brings its own delays, "and days are lost lamenting o'er lost days." Almost every child is brought up by his parents in certain habits of decency and order without which he would be a social outcast. Think from another point of view how the labor of life would be increased if every act of the bath, toilet, table, every lifting of the fork and use of spoon were a matter of consideration and required an effort of decision! No; habit is like fire, a bad master but an indispensable servant; and probably one reason for the nervous scrupulosity, hesitation, indecision of our day, is that life was not duly eased for us in the first place by those whose business it was to lay down lines of habit upon which our behavior might run easily.

It is unnecessary to enumerate those habits which we should aim at forming, for everyone knows more about these than anyone practices. We admire the easy carriage of the soldier but shrink from the discipline which is able to produce it. We admire the lady who can sit upright through a long dinner, who in her old age prefers a straight chair because she has arrived at due muscular balance and has done so by a course of discipline. There is no other way of forming any good habit, though the discipline is usually that of the internal [102] government which the person exercises upon himself; but a certain strenuousness in the formation of good habits is necessary because every such habit is the result of conflict. The bad habit of the easy life is always pleasant and persuasive and to be resisted with pain and effort, but with hope and certainty of success, because in our very structure is the preparation for forming such habits of muscle and mind as we deliberately propose to ourselves. We entertain the idea which gives birth to the act and the act repeated again and again becomes the habit; 'Sow an act,' we are told, 'reap a habit.' 'Sow a habit, reap a character.' But we must go a step further back, we must sow the idea or notion which makes the act worthwhile. The lazy boy who hears of the Great Duke's narrow camp bed, preferred by him because when he wanted to turn over it was time to get up, receives the idea of prompt rising. But his nurse or his mother knows how often and how ingeniously the tale must be brought to his mind before the habit of prompt rising is formed; she knows too how the idea of self-conquest must be made at home in the boy's mind until it become a chivalric impulse which he cannot resist. It is possible to sow a great idea lightly and casually and perhaps this sort of sowing should be rare and casual because if a child detect a definite purpose in his mentor he is apt to stiffen himself against it. When parent or teacher supposes that a good habit is a matter of obedience to his authority, he relaxes a little. A boy is late who has been making evident efforts to be punctual; the teacher good-naturedly foregoes rebuke or penalty, and the boy says to himself – "It doesn't matter," and begins to form the unpunctual habit. The mistake the teacher makes is to suppose that to be punctual is troublesome to the boy, so he will let him off; whereas the office of the habits of an ordered life is to make such life easy and spontaneous; the effort is confined to the first half [103] dozen or score of occasions for doing the thing.

Consider how laborious life would be were its wheels not greased by habits of cleanliness, neatness, order, courtesy; had we to make the effort of decision about every detail of dressing and eating, coming and going, life would not be worth living. Every cottage mother knows that she must train her child in habits of decency, and a whole code of habits of propriety get themselves formed just because a breach in any such habit causes a shock to others which few children have courage to face. Physical fitness, morals and manners, are very largely the outcome of habit; and not only so, but the habits of the religious life also become fixed and delightful and give us due support in the effort to live a godly, righteous and sober life. We need not be deterred by the fear that religious habits in a child are mechanical, uninformed by the ideas which should give them value. Let us hear what the young De Quincey felt about going to church –

“On Sunday mornings I went with the rest of my family to church: it was a church on the ancient model of England having aisles, galleries, organ, all things ancient and venerable, and the proportions were majestic. Here, whilst the congregation knelt through the long litany, as often as we came to that passage so beautiful amongst many that are so where God is supplicated on behalf of ‘all sick persons and young children’ and ‘that He would show His pity upon all prisoners and captives,’ I wept in secret, and raising my streaming eyes to the upper windows saw, on days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld ... *there* were the Apostles that had trampled upon earth and the glories upon earth, *there* were the martyrs who had borne witness to the truth through flames ... and all the time I saw through the wide central field of the window where the glass was uncolored white fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky.”

And then the little boy had visions of sick children upon whom God would have pity –

“These visions were self-sustained, the hint from the Litany, the fragment from the clouds, those and the storied windows [104] were sufficient God speaks to children also in dreams and by the oracles that lurk in darkness; but in solitude, above all things when made vocal to the meditative heart by the truths and services of a national church, God holds with children ‘communion undisturbed.’”

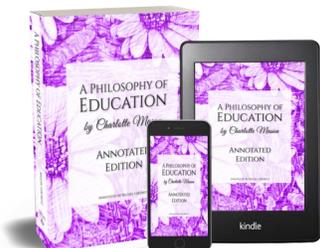
With such a testimony before us, supported by gleams of recollection on our own part, we may take courage to believe that what we rightly call Divine Service is particularly appropriate to children; and will become more so as the habit of reading beautifully written books quickens their sense of style and their unconscious appreciation of the surpassingly beautiful diction of our liturgy.

We have seen the value of habit in mind and morals, religion and physical development. It is as we have seen disastrous when child or man learns to think in a groove, and shivers like an unaccustomed bather on the steps of a new notion. This danger is perhaps averted by giving children as their daily diet the wise thoughts of great minds, and of many great minds; so that they may gradually and unconsciously get the courage of their opinions. If we fail in this duty, so soon as the young people get their ‘liberty’ they will run after the first fad that presents itself; try it for a while and then take up another to be discarded in its turn, and remain uncertain and ill-guided for the rest of their days.

Study Questions

PRINCIPLE #7

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the audio in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. If you had previously heard of the quote “*Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life,*” did you have any preconceived ideas about what discipline meant?
3. What does it mean to you now that you have read more about it? How did your understanding of discipline change, if any?
4. Did any quotes really resonate with you?
5. How can the three steps help to establish good intellectual habits? The three steps being:
 - Use a Charlotte Mason Curriculum*
 - The students must do the work for themselves*
 - The students must narrate*
5. How can you help your students *do the work for themselves*?
6. If you need help with narration, please see the article [Beginning Narration](#).
7. Make a list of the habits that Charlotte describes in both Volume 6, Chapter 6, Part 2: *Education is a Discipline*, and in Volume 1, Parts 2 and 3.
8. What habits do you plan to work on with your children?
9. What habits do YOU need to work on?



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Principle # 8

Education is a Life

Principle #8

VOLUME 6, CH. 6: THREE INSTRUMENTS OF EDUCATION

PART 3: EDUCATION IS A LIFE

We have left until the last that instrument of education implied in the phrase 'Education is a life'; 'implied' because life is no more self-existing than it is self-supporting; it requires sustenance, regular, ordered and fitting. This is fully recognized as regards bodily life and, possibly, the great discovery of the twentieth century will be that mind too requires its ordered rations and perishes when these fail. We know that food is to [105] the body what fuel is to the steam-engine, the sole source of energy; once we realize that the mind too works only as it is fed education will appear to us in a new light. The body pines and develops humors upon tabloids and other food substitutes; and a glance at a 'gate' crowd watching a football match makes us wonder what sort of mind-food those men and boys are sustained on, whether they are not suffering from depletion, inanition, not-withstanding big and burly bodies. For the mind is capable of dealing with only one kind of food; it lives, grows and is nourished upon ideas only; mere information is to it as a meal of sawdust to the body; there are no organs for the assimilation of the one more than of the other.

What is an idea? we ask, and find ourselves plunged beyond our depth. A live thing of the mind, seems to be the conclusion of our greatest thinkers from Plato to Bacon, from Bacon to Coleridge. We all know how an *idea* 'strikes,' 'seizes,' 'catches hold of,' 'impresses' us and at last, if it be big enough, 'possesses' us; in a word, behaves like an entity.

If we enquire into any person's habits of life, mental preoccupation, devotion to a cause or pursuit, he will usually tell us that such and such *an idea struck him*. This potency of an idea is matter of common recognition. No phrase is more common and more promising than, 'I have an idea'; we rise to such an opening as trout to a well-chosen fly. There is but one sphere in which the word idea never occurs, in which the conception of an idea is curiously absent, and that sphere is education! Look at any publisher's list of school books and you shall find that the books recommended are carefully desiccated, drained of the least suspicion of an idea, reduced to the driest statements of fact. Here perhaps the Public Schools have a little pull over the rest of us; the diet they afford may be meagre, meagre almost to [106] starvation point for the average boy, but it is not destitute of ideas; for, however sparsely, boys are nourished on the best thoughts of the best minds.

Coleridge has done more than other thinkers to bring the conception of an idea within the sphere of the scientific thought of today; not as that thought is expressed in *psychology*, a term which he himself launched upon the world with an apology for it as *insolens verbum* ("we beg pardon for the use of this *insolens verbum* but it is one of which our language stands in great need." Method, S. T. Coleridge) but as showing the reaction of mind to an idea. This is how in his Method Coleridge illustrates the rise and progress of such an idea –

"We can recall no incident of human history that impresses the imagination more deeply than the moment when Columbus on an unknown ocean first perceived that baffling fact, the change of the magnetic needle. How many instances occur in history when the ideas of nature (presented to chosen minds by a Higher Power than Nature herself) suddenly unfold as it were in prophetic succession systematic views destined to produce the most

important revolutions in the state of man! The clear spirit of Columbus was doubtless eminently methodical. He saw distinctly that great leading idea which authorized the poor pilot to become a 'promiser of kingdoms.'"

Here we get such a genesis of an idea as fits in curiously with what we know of the history of great inventions and discoveries "presented to chosen minds by a higher Power than Nature herself." It corresponds too, not only with the ideas that rule our own lives, but with the origin of practical ideas which is unfolded to us by the prophet Isaiah:

"Doth the ploughman plough continually to ... open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches and scatter the cummin and put the wheat in rows ... for his God doth instruct him aright and doth teach him ... Bread corn is ground for he will not ever be threshing it ... This also [107] cometh from the Lord of Hosts which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

Let us hear Coleridge further on the subject of those ideas which may invest us as an atmosphere rather than strike as a weapon:

"The idea may exist in a clear and definite form as that of a circle in that of the mind of a geometrician or it may be a mere instinct, a vague appetency towards something ... like the impulse which fills a young poet's eyes with tears."

These indefinite ideas which express themselves in an 'appetency' towards something and which should draw a child towards things honest, lovely and of good report, are not to be offered of set purpose or at set times: they are held in that thought-atmosphere which surrounds him, breathed as his breath of life.

It is distressing to think that our poor words and ways should be thus *inspired* by children; but to recognize the fact will make us careful not to admit sordid or unworthy thoughts and motives into our dealings with them.

Coleridge treats in more detail those definite ideas which are not inhaled as air but are conveyed as meat to the mind:

"From the first or initiative idea, as from a seed, successive ideas germinate." "Events and images, the lively and spirit-stirring machinery of the external world, are like light and air and moisture to the seed of the mind which would else rot and perish." "The paths in which we may pursue a methodical course are manifold and at the head of each stands its peculiar and guiding idea. Those ideas are as regularly subordinate in dignity as the paths to which they point are various and eccentric in direction. The world has suffered much in modern times from a subversive and necessary natural order of science ... from summoning reason and faith to the bar of that limited physical experience to which by the true laws of method they owe no obedience. Progress follows the path of the idea from which it sets out requiring however a constant wakefulness of mind to keep it within the due limits of its course. Hence the [108] orbits of thought, so to speak, must differ from among themselves as the initiative ideas differ." (Method, S. T. C).

Is it not a fact that the new light which biology is throwing upon the laws of mind is bringing us back to the Platonic doctrine that "An idea is a distinguishable power, self-affirmed and seen in unity with the Eternal Essence"?

I have ventured to repeat from an earlier volume¹ [Parents and Children, by the Writer] this slight exposition of Coleridge's teaching, because his doctrine corresponds with common experience and should reverse our ordinary educational practice. The whole subject is profound,

but as practical as it is profound. We must disabuse our minds of the theory that the functions of education are in the main gymnastic, a continual drawing out without a corresponding act of putting in. The modern emphasis upon 'self-expression' has given new currency to this idea; we who know how little there is in us that we have not received, that the most we can do is to give an original twist, a new application, to an idea that has been passed on to us; who recognize, humbly enough, that we are but torch-bearers, passing on our light to the next as we have received it from the last, even we invite children to 'express themselves' about a tank, a Norman castle, the Man in the Moon, not recognizing that the quaint things children say on unfamiliar subjects are no more than a patchwork of notions picked up here and there. One is not sure that so-called original composition is wholesome for children, because their consciences are alert and they are quite aware of their borrowings; it may be better that they should read on a theme before they write upon it, using then as much latitude as they like.

In the early days of a child's life it makes little apparent difference whether we educate with a notion of filling [109] a receptacle, inscribing a tablet, molding plastic matter, or nourishing a life, but as a child grows we shall perceive that only those *ideas* which have fed his life are taken into his being; all the rest is cast away or is, like sawdust in the system, an impediment and an injury.

Education is a life. That life is sustained on ideas. Ideas are of spiritual origin, and God has made us so that we get them chiefly as we convey them to one another, whether by word of mouth, written page, Scripture word, musical symphony; but we must sustain a child's inner life with ideas as we sustain his body with food. Probably he will reject nine-tenths of the ideas we offer, as he makes use of only a small proportion of his bodily food, rejecting the rest. He is an eclectic; he may choose this or that; our business is to supply him with due abundance and variety and his to take what he needs. Urgency on our part annoys him. He resists forcible feeding and loathes predigested food. What suits him best is pabulum presented in the indirect literary form which Our Lord adopts in those wonderful parables whose quality is that they cannot be forgotten though, while every detail of the story is remembered, its application may pass and leave no trace. We, too, must take this risk. We may offer children as their sustenance the Lysander of Plutarch, an object lesson, we think, showing what a statesman or a citizen should avoid: but, who knows, the child may take to Lysander and think his 'cute' ways estimable! Again, we take the risk, as did our Lord in that puzzling parable of the Unjust Steward. One other caution; it seems to be necessary to present ideas with a great deal of padding, as they reach us in a novel or poem or history book written with literary power. A child cannot in mind or body live upon tabloids however scientifically prepared; out of a whole big book he may not get more than half a dozen of those ideas upon which his spirit thrives; and they [110] come in unexpected places and unrecognized forms, so that no grown person is capable of making such extracts from Scott or Dickens or Milton, as will certainly give him nourishment. It is a case of – "In the morning sow thy seed and in the evening withhold not thine hand for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that."

One of our presumptuous sins in this connection is that we venture to offer opinions to children (and to older persons) instead of ideas. We believe that an opinion expresses thought and therefore embodies an idea. Even if it did so once the very act of crystallization into opinion destroys any vitality it may have had; pace Ruskin, a crystal is not a living body and does not feed men. We think to feed children on the dogmas of a church, the theorems of Euclid, mere abstracts of history, and we wonder that their education does not seem to take hold of them. Let us hear M. Fouillee¹ [Education from a National Standpoint] on this subject, for to him the *idea* is all in all both

in philosophy and education. But there is a function of education upon which M. Fouillee hardly touches, that of the formation of habits, physical, intellectual, moral.

“‘Scientific truths,’ said Descartes, ‘are battles won.’ Describe to the young the principal and most heroic of these battles; you will thus interest them in the results of science and you will develop in them a scientific spirit by means of the enthusiasm for the conquest of truth. How interesting Arithmetic and Geometry might be if we gave a short history of their principal theorems, if the child were meant to be present at the labors of a Pythagoras, a Plato, a Euclid, or in modern times, of a Descartes, a Pascal, or a Leibnitz. Great theories instead of being lifeless and anonymous abstractions would become living human truths each with its own history like a statue by Michael Angelo or like a painting by Raphael.”

Here we have an application of Coleridge’s ‘captain-idea’ of every train of thought; that is, not a naked generalization, (neither children nor grown persons find [111] aliment in these), but an idea clothed upon with fact, history and story, so that the mind may perform the acts of selection and inception from a mass of illustrative details. Thus Dickens makes ‘David Copperfield’ tell us that – “I was a very observant child,” and that “all children are very observant,” not as a dry abstraction, but as an inference from a number of charming natural incidents.

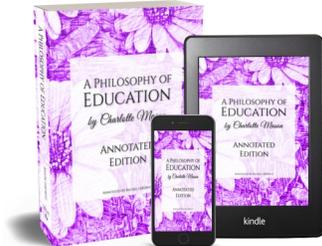
All roads lead to Rome, and all I have said is meant to enforce the fact that much and varied humane reading, as well as human thought expressed in the forms of art, is, not a luxury, a tit-bit, to be given to children now and then, but their very bread of life, which they must have in abundant portions and at regular periods. This and more is implied in the phrase, “The mind feeds on ideas and therefore children should have a generous curriculum.”

Study Questions

PRINCIPLE #8

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the Volume 6 audio here in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. If you had previously heard of the quote *“Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life,”* did you have any preconceived ideas about what did you think was meant by *“Education is a Life”*?
3. What does it mean to you now that you have read more about it? How did your understanding of *“life”* change, if any?
4. What ideas, if any, did you gain from your own education as a child?
5. What ideas have helped to shape the person that you are today?
6. What are the *“captain ideas”* you hope to present to your child through their education?
7. Did any quotes really resonate with you?

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Principles #9 & #10

*A Child's Mind is a Spiritual Organism
with an Appetite for All Knowledge*

Principles #9 & #10

VOLUME 6, CH. 7: HOW WE MAKE USE OF MIND

We hold that the child's mind is no mere sac to hold ideas but is rather, if the figure may be allowed, a 'spiritual organism' with an appetite for all knowledge. This is its proper diet with which it is prepared to deal and what it is able to digest and assimilate as the body does food-stuffs.

Such a doctrine as the Herbartian, that the mind is a receptacle, lays the stress of education, the preparation of food in enticing morsels, duly ordered, upon the teacher. Children taught on this principle are in danger of receiving much teaching but little knowledge; the teacher's axiom being 'what a child learns matters less than how he learns it.'

I cannot resist presenting the Herbartian Psychology in the dry light of Scottish humor.

"We have failed to explain ideas by the mind, how about explaining the mind by ideas? You are not to suppose that this is exactly how Herbart puts it, Herbart is a philosopher, a German philosopher. It is true that he starts with the mind or, as he prefers to call it, a soul: but do not fear that the sport of the hunt is to be spoiled for that ... the 'given' soul is no more a real soul than it is a real crater of a volcano. It has absolutely no content: it is not even an idea trap. Ideas can slip in and out of it as they please, or, rather, as other ideas please but the soul has no power either to call, make, keep, or recall, an idea. The ideas arrange all these matters among themselves. The mind can make no objection."

"The soul has no capacity nor faculty whatever either to receive or produce anything: it is therefore no tabula rasa in the [113] sense that impressions, foreign to its nature, may be made on it. Also it is no substance in Leibnitz's sense, which includes original self-activity. It has originally neither ideas, nor feelings, nor desires. Further, within it lie no forms of intuition and thought, no laws of willing and acting, nor any sort of predisposition however remote towards these. The simple nature of the soul is totally unknown and for ever remains so. It is as little a subject for speculative as for empirical psychology.' (*Lehrbuch zur Psychologie* by Herbart: Part III: pp. 152, 153.) Thus, a vigorous *vis inertia* is the only power of the mind. Still it is subject to the action of certain forces. Nothing but ideas (*Vorstellung*) can attack the soul so that the ideas really make up the mind."

We are familiar with the struggle of ideas on the threshold, with the good luck of those that get in and especially of those that get in first and mount to high places; with the behavior of ideas, very much like that of persons who fall into groups in an anarchical state. This behavior is described as the formation of 'apperception masses' and the mass that is sufficiently strong has it all its own way and dominates the mind. Our business is not to examine the psychology of Herbart, a very serious and suggestive contribution to our knowledge of educational principles, but rather to consider how it works out practically in education. But before we examine how Herbartian psychology bears this test of experiment, let us consider what Professor William James has to say of psychology in general.

"When we talk of psychology as a natural science," he tells us, "we must not assume that that means a sort of psychology that stands at last on solid ground. It means just the reverse. It means a psychology particularly fragile and into which the waters of

metaphysical criticism leak at every joint, a psychology all of whose elementary assumptions and data must be reconsidered in wider connections and translated into other terms. It is, in short, a phrase of diffidence and not of arrogance; and it is indeed strange to hear people talk triumphantly of the 'New Psychology' and write Histories of Psychology when into the real elements and forces which the word covers not the first glimpse of clear insight exists. A string of raw facts, a little [114] gossip and wrangle about opinions, a little classification and generalization on the mere descriptive level ... but not a single law ... not a single proposition from which any consequence can casually be deduced."

But Professor James went on and wrote his extraordinarily interesting book on psychology, and we must do the same though our basis is no more than the common experience of mankind so far as one mind can express the experience common to us all.

Herbart's psychology is extraordinarily gratifying and attractive to teachers who are, like other people, eager to magnify their office; and here is a scheme which shows how every child is a new creation as he comes forth from the hands of his teacher. The teacher learns how to do it; he has but to draw together a mass of those ideas which themselves will combine in the mind into which they effect an entrance, and, behold, the thing is done: the teacher has done it; he has selected the ideas, shewn the correlation of each with the other and the work is complete! The ideas establish themselves, the most potent rule and gather force, and if these be good, the man is made.

Here, for example, is a single week's 'Correlation of Subjects' worked out by a highly qualified teacher. *Arithmetic (Decimal Fractions), Mathematics (Simple Equations, Parallelograms), Science (Latent Heat), Housecraft (Nerves, Thought, Habits), Geography (Scotland, General Industries)*; or, again, for another week – under the same headings – *Metric problems, Symbols (four rules), Triangles (sum angles), Machinery, Circulation, Sculpture of the British Isles*. The ideas, no doubt, have an agility and ability which we do not possess and know how to jump at each other and form the desired 'apperception masses.' A successful and able modern educationalist gives us a valuable introduction to Herbartian Principles, and, [115] by way of example, "A *Robinson Crusoe Concentration Scheme*," a series of lessons given to children in Standard I in an Elementary School. First we have nine lessons in literature and language, the subjects being such as 'Robinson climbs a hill and finds he is on an island.' Then, ten object lessons of which the first is – *The Sea*, the second, *A Ship from Foreign Parts*, the sixth, *A Life-Boat*, the seventh, *Shell-Fish*, the tenth, *A Cave*. How these 'objects' are to be produced one does not see. The third series are drawing lessons, probably as many, a boat, a ship, an oar, an anchor and so on. Then follows a series on manual training, still built upon 'Robinson'; the first, a model of the seashore; then, models of Robinson's island, of Robinson's house and Robinson's pottery. The next course consists of reading, an indefinite number of lessons – 'passages from *The Child's Robinson Crusoe* and from a general Reader on the matters discussed in object lessons.' Then follows a series of writing lessons, 'simple composition on the subject of the lessons ... the children framed the sentences which the teacher wrote on the blackboard and the class copied afterwards.' Here is one composition: "Robinson spent his first night in a tree. In the morning he was hungry but he saw nothing round him but grass and trees without fruit. On the sea-shore he found some shell-fish which he ate." Compare this with the voluminous output of children of six or seven working on the P.U.S. scheme upon any subject that they know; with, indeed, the pages they will dictate after a single reading of a chapter of *Robinson Crusoe*, not a 'child's edition.'

Arithmetic follows with, no doubt, as many lessons, 'many mental examples and simple problems dealt with Robinson'; the eighth and last course was in singing and recitation, 'I am monarch of all I survey,' etc. "The lessons lasted about forty-five minutes each. [116] ... Under ordinary conditions the story of 'Robinson Crusoe' would be the leading feature in the work of a whole year ... in comparing the English classes with the German classes I have seen studying 'Robinson Crusoe' I was convinced that the eagerness and interest was as keen among the children here as in the German schools ... One easily sees what a wealth of material there is in the further development of the story." One does indeed! The whole thing must be highly amusing to the teacher, as ingenious amplifications self-produced always are: that the children too were entertained, one does not doubt. The teacher was probably at her best in getting by sheer force much out of little: she was, in fact, acting a part and the children were entertained as at a show, cinema or other; but of one thing we may be sure, an utter distaste, a loathing, on the part of the children ever after, not only for 'Robinson Crusoe' but for every one of the subjects lugged in to illustrate his adventures. We read elsewhere of an apple affording a text for a hundred lessons, including the making of a ladder, (in paper), to gather the apples; but, alas, the eating of the worn-out apple is not suggested! The author whom we quote for 'Robinson Crusoe' and whom we refrain from naming because, as a Greek Chorus might say, 'we cannot praise,' follows the 'Robinson' series with another interminable series on the Armada.

The conscientious, ingenious and laborious teachers who produce these 'concentration series' are little aware that each such lesson is an act of *lese majeste*. The children who are capable of and eager for a wide range of knowledge and literary expression are reduced to inanities; a lifelong *ennui* is set up; every approach to knowledge suggests avenues for boredom, and the children's minds sicken and perish long before their school-days come to an end. I have pursued this subject at some length because we, too, believe in ideas as the [117] proper and only diet upon which children's minds grow. We are more in the dark about Mind than about Mars! We can but judge by effects, and these appear to point to the conclusion that mind is a 'spiritual organism.' (I need not apologize for speaking of that which has no substance as an 'organism,' – no greater a contradiction in terms than Herbart's 'apperception masses.') By an analogy with Body we conclude that Mind requires regular and sufficient sustenance; and that this sustenance is afforded by ideas we may gather from the insatiable eagerness with which these are appropriated, and the evident growth and development manifested under such pabulum. That children like feeble and tedious oral lessons, feeble and tedious story books, does not at all prove that these are wholesome food; they like lollipops but cannot live upon them; yet there is a serious attempt in certain schools to supply the intellectual, moral, and religious needs of children by appropriate 'sweetmeats.'

As I have said elsewhere, the ideas required for the sustenance of children are to be found mainly in books of literary quality; given these the mind does for itself the sorting, arranging, selecting, rejecting, classifying, which Herbart leaves to the struggle of the promiscuous ideas which manage to cross the threshold. Nor is this merely a nominal distinction; Herbart was a philosopher and therefore his thought embraced the universal. Probably few schools of the day are consciously following the theories of this philosopher; but in most schools, in England and elsewhere, so far as any intelligent *rationale* is followed it is that of Herbart. There are many reasons for this fact. A scheme which throws the whole burden of education on the teacher, which

exalts the personality of the teacher as the chief agent in education, which affords ingenious, interesting, and more or less creative work to a vast number of highly intelligent and devoted persons, whose passionate hope is to leave the world a [118] little better than they found it by means of those children whom they have raised to a higher level, must needs make a wide and successful appeal. It appeals equally to Education Committees and school managers. Consider the saving involved in the notion that teachers are compendiums of all knowledge, that they have but, as it were, to turn on the tap and the necessary knowledge flows forth. All responsibility is shifted, and the relief is very great. Not only so but lessons are delightful to watch and to hear; the success of jigsaw puzzles illustrates a tendency in human nature to delight in the ingenious putting together of unlikely things, as, for example, a lifebuoy and Robinson Crusoe. There is a series of small triumphs to be observed any day of the week, and these same triumphs are brought about by dramatic display, – so ingenious, pleasing, fascinating, are the ways in which the teacher chooses to arrive at her point. I say 'her' point because women excel in this kind of teaching, but men do not come far short. What of the children themselves? They, too, are amused and entertained, they enjoy the puzzle-element and greatly enjoy the teacher who lays herself out to attract them. There is no flaw in the practical working of the method while it is being carried out. Later, it gives rise to dismay and anxiety among thoughtful people.

Much water has run under the bridge since several years ago Mr. A. Paterson startled us out of self-complacency with his *Across the Bridges*. We as a nation were well pleased at the time with the result of our efforts; nothing could be more intelligent, alert, brighter, than the seventh standard boy about to leave school and take up his life work. Conditions were unpropitious. We know the old story of inviting blind alleys, present success and then unemployment, with resulting depreciation in character. What is to be done? The question of after conditions is now being taken up seriously. [119] We have Continuation Classes which even if a boy be out of work will help him to the Chinese art of 'saving his face.' But Mr. Paterson condemns the schools for the rapidity with which their best boys run to seed. He does not quote the case of the boy who gets work, earns fair wages, conducts himself respectably, goes to a 'Polytechnic,' the sort of boy with whom Mr. Pett Ridge makes us familiar, who is so much less than he might be, so crude in his notions, so unmoral in his principles, so poor in interests, so meagre if not coarse in his choice of pleasures and after all such a good fellow at bottom. He might have been taught in school to utilize his powers, to come into the enjoyment of the fine mind that is in him; but in schools –

“There is too much learning and too little work. The teacher ready to use the powers that his training and experience have given him works too hard while the boy's share in the struggle is too light. It is possible to make education too easy for children and to rob learning of the mental discipline which often wearies but in the end produces concentration and the capacity to work alone. He is rarely left to himself with the book in his hands, forced to concentrate all his mind on the dull words before him with no one at hand to explain or make the memory work easier by little tricks of repetition and association. The boy who reaches the seventh standard with every promise and enters the service of a railway company is first required to sit down by himself and master the symbols of the telegraphic code. This he finds extremely irksome for the only work he has ever done alone before is the learning of racy poetry which is the very mildest form of mental discipline. 'Silent reading' is occasionally allowed in odd half-hours ... it might well

be a regular subject for reading aloud is but a poor gift compared with the practice of reading in private.”

What does his curriculum do for the boy? Let us again hear Mr. Paterson:

“What is the educational ideal set before the average boy whose school days are to end at fourteen? What type is it that the authorities seek to produce? A glance at the syllabus [120] will reassure the ordinary cynic who still labors under the quaint delusion that French and Algebra and violin-playing are taught in every London Elementary School at the expense of the rate-payer. The syllabus was designed to leave a boy at fourteen with a thoroughly sound and practical knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic and with such grounding in English, geography and history, as may enable him to read a newspaper or give a vote with some idea of what he is doing ... But these are all subsidiary to teaching the three ‘R’s’ which between them occupy more than half the twenty-four hours of teaching in the week. It is certain that the present object in view is dispiriting to master and boy alike for a knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic is no education and no training but merely the elementary condition of further knowledge. In many schools the boy is laboring on with these mere rudiments for two or more years after all reasonable requirements have been satisfied. The intelligent visitor looking at the notebooks of an average class will be amazed at the high standard of the neatness and accuracy but he will find the excellence of a very visible order. The handwriting is admirable, sixteen boys out of thirty can write compositions without a flaw in grammar or spelling. Yet it will occur to him that the powers of voluntary thought and reason, of spontaneous enquiry and imagination, have not been stirred. This very perfection of form makes him suspicious as to the fundamental principles of our State curriculum. In Public Schools boys are not trained to be lawyers, or parsons, or doctors, but to be men. If they have learned to work systematically and think independently they are then fit to be trained for such life and profession as taste or necessity may dictate. But at our Elementary Schools we seem to aim at producing a nation of clerks for it is only to a clerk that this perfection of writing and spelling is a necessary training.”

The very faults of his qualities nullify the work of the teacher. His failing is that he does too much. Once more we quote our authority:

“With the average boy there is a marked waste of mental capital between the ages of ten and thirteen and the aggregate of this loss to the country is heavy indeed. Ten years at school conquer many of the drawbacks of home and discover a quick, receptive mind in the normal child ... Many opportunities have been lost in these years of school but after fourteen there is a more disastrous relapse. The brain is not taxed again and [121] shrivels into a mere centre of limited formulae acting automatically in response to appetite or sensation. The boy’s general education fails utterly. Asia is but a name that it is difficult to spell though at school he spoke of its rivers and ports ... It is probable that the vocabulary of a working man at forty is actually smaller than it was at fourteen so shrunk is the power of the mind to feed upon the growing experience of life ... Of the majority of boys it is true to say that only half their ability is ever used in the work they find to do on leaving school, the other half curls up and sleeps forever.”

Here we have a depressing prospect of grievous waste in the future. We all applaud the Education Act of 1918, are convinced that every boy and girl will receive education until the end of his sixteenth, possibly eighteenth, year. A wave of generous feeling passed over the nation and employers were willing to support the law; and if the eight hours conceded be spent in making the

young people more reliable, intelligent and responsible persons no doubt the employers will be rewarded for their generosity.

But there are rocks ahead. The only way to take advantage of this provision is to make this an eight hours' University course. Now as Mr. Paterson happily remarks the Universities do not undertake to prepare barristers, parsons, stockbrokers, bankers, or even soldiers and sailors, with a specialized knowledge proper for each profession. Their implicit contention is, given a well-educated man with cultivated imagination, trained judgment, wide interests, and he is prepared to master the intricacies of any profession; while he knows at the same time how to make use of himself, of the powers with which nature and education have endowed him for his own happiness; the delightful employment of his leisure; for the increased happiness of his neighbors and the well-being of the community; that is, such a man is able, not only to earn his living, but to live.

The Universities fulfil this claim; the various professions [122] abound with men who, in newspaper phrase, are 'ornaments to their professions,' and who gave up leisure and means to serve their fellow-citizens as magistrates, churchwardens, members of committees, special constables when needed, until lately, members of Parliament, holding service as an honor, and as proud as was 'Godfrey Bertram,' that unhappy laird in *Guy Mannering*, to write 'J.P.' after their names. The enormous amount of voluntary service rendered in such ways throughout the Empire as well as that of insufficiently, or duly, paid service justifies the Universities in their reading of their peculiar function. But not only so, generous disinterested work can never be paid for, and our great statesmen, churchmen, soldiers and civil servants, as well as the members of County, Municipal, and Urban District Councils, have done their *devoir* over and above the bond.

To secure this same splendidly devoted voluntary service from all classes is the task set before us as a nation, a task the more easy because we have all seen it fulfilled in the War when every man was a potential hero. Now is it not the fact that the Army proved itself an unequalled University for our men, offering them increased knowledge, broad views, lofty aims, duty and discipline, along with the finest physical culture? So much so, that instead of going on from where the War left off, we have to be on the watch against retrograde movements, physical, moral, intellectual. The downward grade is always at hand and we know how easy it is. We cannot afford another great war for the education of our people but we must in some way supply the 'University' element and Mr. Fisher's great Act points out such a way. The young people are for four years (a proper academic period) to be under influences that make for 'sweetness and light.' But we must keep to the academic ideal: all preparation for specialized industries should be taboo. [123] Special teaching towards engineering, cotton-spinning, and the rest, is quite unnecessary for every manufacturer knows that given a 'likely' lad he will soon be turned into a good workman in the works themselves. The splendid record of women workers in the war supports our contention. The efforts of Technical Schools and the like are not greatly prized by the heads of firms so far as the technical knowledge they afford goes. Boys from them are employed rather on the off chance that they may turn out intelligent and apt than for what they know beforehand of the business. Here is one more reason for treating the Continuation School as the People's University and absolutely eschewing all money-making arts and crafts. Denmark and Scandinavia have tried this generous policy of educating young people, not according to the requirements of their trade but according to their natural capacity to know and their natural desire for knowledge, that desire to know

history, poetry, science, art, which is natural to every man; and the success of the experiment now a century old is an object lesson for the rest of the world.

Germany has pursued a different ideal. Her efforts, too, have been great, unified by the idea of utility; and, if we will only remember the lesson, the war has shown us how futile is an education which affords no moral or intellectual uplift, no motive higher than the learner's peculiar advantage and that of the State. Germany became morally bankrupt (for a season only, let us hope) not solely because of the war but as the result of an education which ignored the things of the spirit or gave these a nominal place and a poor rendering in a utilitarian syllabus. We are encouraged to face the fact boldly that it is a People's University we should aim at, a University with its thousands of Colleges up and down the land, each of them the Continuation School (the name is not inviting) for some one neighborhood.

[124] But, it will be argued, the subject matter of a University education is conveyed for the most part through the channel of dead languages, Latin and Greek. Our contention is that, however ennobling the literature in these tongues, we cannot honestly allow our English literature to take a second place to any other, and that therefore whatever Sophocles, Thucydides, Virgil, have it in them to do towards a higher education, may be effected more readily by Milton, Gibbon, Shakespeare, Bacon, and a multitude of great thinkers who are therefore great writers. Learning conveyed in our common speech is easier come by than that secreted in a dead language and this fact will help us to deal with the inadequacy of the period allowed. Given absolute attention, and we can do much with four hundred hours a year (1,600 hours in our four years' course) but only if we go to work with a certainty that the young students crave knowledge of what we call the 'humanities,' that they read with absolute attention and that, having read, they know. They will welcome the preparation for public speaking, an effort for which everyone must qualify in these days, which the act of narration offers.

The alternative is some such concentration scheme as that indicated in *Robinson Crusoe* – a year's work on soap, its manufacture, ingredients, the Soap Trade, Soap Transport, the Uses of Soap, how to make out a Soap invoice, the Sorts of Soap, and so on *ad infinitum*. Each process in the iron, cotton, nail, pin, engine, button, – each process in our thousand and one manufactures – will offer its own ingenious Concentration Scheme. The advocates of utilitarian education will be delighted, the young students will be kept busy and will to some extent use their wits all the time. With what result? Some two centuries ago when a movement for adolescent education agitated Europe, devastated by the Napoleonic wars, we English took our part. The current [125] early divided into two streams, the material and the spiritual, the useful and the educative, and England, already great in manufactures, was carried along by the first of these streams, followed by Germany, France, Switzerland; while the Scandinavian group of countries learned at the lips of that 'Father of the People's High Schools' that "spirit is might, spirit reveals itself in spirit, spirit works only in freedom." We see the apotheosis of utilitarian education in the Munich schools on the one hand and in the *morale* of the German army on the other. But we are slow to learn because we have set up a little tin god of efficiency in that niche within our private pantheon which should be occupied by personality. We trouble ourselves about the uses of the young person to society. As for his own use, what he should be in and for himself, why, what matter? Because, say we, if we fit him to earn his living we fit him also to be of service to the world and what better can we do for him personally? We forget that it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live, – whether it be spoken in the way of some truth of religion, poem, picture, scientific discovery, or literary expression; by these things men live and in all such is the life of the spirit. The spiritual life requires the food of ideas for its daily bread. We shall find, in the words of a well-known Swedish professor, that, “just as enrichment of the soil gives the best conditions for the seed sown in it so a well-grounded humanistic training provides the surest basis for a business capacity, and not the least so in the case of the coming farmer.” But we need not go so far afield, we have a prophet of our own, and I will close this part of my subject by quoting certain of Mr. Fisher’s words of wisdom:

“Now let me say something about the content of education, about the things which should be actually taught in the schools, [126] and I am only going to talk in the very broadest possible way. In my afternoon’s reading I came upon another very apposite remark in the letters of John Stuart Mill. Let me read it to you:

‘What the poor, as well as the rich, require is not to be taught other people’s opinions, but to be induced and enabled to think for themselves. It is not physical science that will do this, even if they could learn it much more thoroughly than they are able to do.’

“The young people of this country are not to be regenerated by economic doctrine or economic history or physical science; they can only be elevated by ideas which act upon the imagination and act upon the ‘character and influence the soul, and it is the function of all good teachers to bring those ideas before them.’ I have sometimes heard it said that you should not teach patriotism in the school. I dissent from that doctrine. I think that patriotism should be taught in the schools. I will tell you what I mean by patriotism. By patriotism I do not mean Jingoism, but what I mean by patriotism is an intelligent appreciation of all things noble in the romances, in the literature and in the history of one’s own country. Young people should be taught to admire what is great while they are at school. And remember that for the poor of this country the school is a far more important factor than it is for the rich people of this country ...

“I say that I want patriotism in the larger sense of the term taught in the schools. Of course there is a great deal to criticize in any country, and I should be the last person to suggest that the critical faculty should not be exercised and trained at school. But before we teach children to criticize the institutions of their country, before we teach them to be critical of what is bad, let us teach them to recognize and admire what is good. After all life is very short; we all of us have only one life to live, and during that life let us get into ourselves as much love, as much admiration, as much elevating pleasure as we can, and if we view education merely as discipline in critical bitterness, then we shall lose all the sweets of life and we shall make ourselves unnecessarily miserable. There is quite enough sorrow and hardship in this world as it is without introducing it prematurely to young people.”

N.B. – Probably some educational authorities may decide to give one hour or two weekly to physical training and handicrafts, in which case the time-table must allow for so much the less [127] reading. But I should like to urge that, with the long evening leisure of which there is promise, Club life will become an important feature in every village and district. Classes will certainly be arranged for military and other drills, gymnastics, dancing, singing, swimming, carpentry, cooking, nursing, dress-making, weaving, pottery, acting – in fact, whatever the quickened intelligence of the community demands. No compulsion would be necessary to enforce attendance at classes, for which the machinery is already in

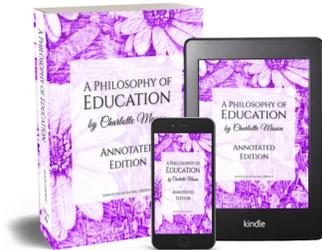
existence in most places, and which, associated with Club life, would have certain social attractions in the way of public displays, prize-givings and so on. The intellectual life of the Continuation School should give zest to these evening occupations as well as to the Saturday Field Club which no neighborhood should be without.

I have put the case for Continuation Schools as strongly as may be, but there is a more excellent way. In these days of high wages it may well happen that parents will be willing to let their children remain at school until the end of their seventeenth year, in which case they will be able to go on with the 'secondary education' which they have begun at the age of six and we shall see a new thing in the world. Every man and woman will have received a liberal education; life will no longer discount the ideas and aims of the schoolroom, and, if according to the Platonic saying, "Knowledge is virtue," knowledge informed by religion, we shall see even in our own day how righteousness exalteth a nation.

Study Questions

PRINCIPLES #9 & #10

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the Volume 6 audio here in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. Narrate your understanding of the educational philosophy of Johann Friedrich Herbart.
3. Why was Charlotte against Herbart's philosophy?
4. Have you ever used Unit Studies as a teaching tool? If so, what are your thoughts about Unit Studies after reading this chapter?
5. Why does Charlotte say that Unit Studies are an insult to the student?
6. Why is "Utilitarianism" not an adequate goal in education?
7. Did any quotes really resonate with you?
8. What point is Charlotte making when she compares the educational systems of Scandinavia and Germany?
9. Charlotte quotes Herbert Allen Fisher at the end of this chapter. What does he have to say about patriotism? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?



Need more help with reading Volume 6? Try [The Annotated Charlotte Mason Series](#) published by A Charlotte Mason Plenary! The annotations help you understand Charlotte's context, include historical background information, as well as definitions. We try to make it easier for you to really dive in to Charlotte Mason's philosophy.

Principles # 11, # 12, & # 13

The Science of Relations

Principles #11, #12, #13

VOLUME 3: CH. 17: EDUCATION IS THE SCIENCE OF RELATIONS WE ARE EDUCATED BY OUR INTIMACIES

THE PRELUDE AND PRAETERITA

But who shall parcel out
His intellect by geometric rules,
Split like a province into round and square?
Who knows the individual hour in which
His habits were first sown, even as a seed?
Who that shall point as with a wand and say,
'This portion of the river of my mind
Came from yon fountain'? -*Prelude*

I need not again insist upon the nature of our educational tools. We know well that "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life." In other words, we know that parents and teachers should know how to make sensible use of a child's *circumstances* (atmosphere) to forward his sound education; should train him in the discipline of the *habits* of the good life; and should nourish his life with *ideas*, the food upon which personality waxes strong.

Only Three Educational Instruments These three we believe to be the only instruments of which we may make lawful use in the upbringing of children; and any short cut we take by trading on their sensibilities, [183] emotions, desires, passions, will bring us and our children to grief. The reason is plain; habits, ideas, and circumstances are external, and we may all help each other to get the best that is to be had of these; but we may not meddle directly with the personality of child or man. We may not work upon his vanity, his fears, his love, his emulation, or anything that is his by very right, anything that goes to make him a person.

Our Limitations Most thinking people are in earnest about the bringing-up of children; but we are in danger of taking too much upon us, and of not recognizing the limitations which confine us to the outworks of personality. Children and grown-up persons are the same, with a difference; and a thoughtful writer has done us good service by carefully tracing the method of our Lord's education of the Twelve.

"Our Lord," says this author, "reverenced whatever the learner had in him of his own, and was tender in fostering this native growth ... Men, in His eyes, were not mere clay in the hands of the potter, matter to be molded to shape. They were organic beings, each growing from within, with a life of his own – a personal life which was exceedingly precious in His and His Father's eyes – and He would foster this growth so that it might take after the highest type." -*Pastor Pastorum* by H. Latham, M.A., pg 6

We temper Life too much for Children I am not sure that we let life and its circumstances have free play about children. We temper the wind too much to the lambs; pain and sin, want and suffering, disease and death – we shield them from [184] the knowledge of these at all hazards. I do not say that we should wantonly expose the tender souls to distress, but that we should recognize that life has a ministry for them also; and that Nature provides them with a subtle screen, like that of its odor to a violet, from damaging shocks. Some of us will not even let children read fairy tales because these bring the ugly facts of life too suddenly before them. It is worthwhile to consider Wordsworth's experience on this point. Indeed, I do not think we make enough use of two such priceless boons to parents and teachers as the educational autobiographies we possess of the two great philosophers, Wordsworth and Ruskin.

Fairy Lore a Screen and Shelter The former tells us how, no sooner had he gone to school at Hawkshead, than the body of a suicide was recovered from Esthwaite Lake; a ghastly tale, but full of comfort as showing how children are protected from shock. The little boy was there and saw it all;

Yet no soul-debasing fear,
 Young as I was, a child not nine years old,
 Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen
 Such sights before, among the shining streams
 Of fairyland, the forests of romance:
 Their spirit hallowed the sad spectacle
 With decoration of ideal grace;
 A dignity, a smoothness, like the works
 Of Grecian art, and purest poesy.

It is delightful to know, on the evidence of a child who went through it, that a terrible scene was separated from him by an atmosphere of poetry a curtain woven of fairy lore by his etherealising imagination.

But we may run no needless risks, and must keep [185] a quiet, matter-of-fact tone in speaking of fire, shipwreck, or any terror. There are children to whom the thought of Joseph in the pit is a nightmare; and many of us elders are unable to endure a ghastly tale in newspaper or novel. All I would urge is a natural treatment of children, and that they be allowed their fair share of life, such as it is; prudence and not panic should rule our conduct towards them.

Spontaneous Living The laws of habit are, we know, laws of God, and the forming of good and the hindering of evil habits are among the primary duties of a parent. But it is just as well to be reminded that habits, whether helpful or hindering, only come into play occasionally, while a great deal of spontaneous living is always going on towards which we can do no more than drop in vital ideas as opportunity occurs. All this is old matter, and I must beg the reader to forgive me for reminding him again that our educational instruments remain the same. We may not leave off the attempt to form good habits with tact and care, to suggest fruitful ideas, without too much insistence, and to make wise use of circumstances.

On what does Fullness of Living depend? What is education after all? An answer lies in the phrase – *Education is the Science of Relations*. I do not use this phrase, let me say once more, in the Herbartian sense – that things are related to each other, and we must be careful to pack the right things in together, so that, having got into the brain of a boy, each thing may fasten on its cousins, and together they may make a strong clique or ‘apperception mass.’ What we are concerned with is the fact that we personally have relations with all that there is in the present, all that [186] there has been in the past, and all that there will be in the future – with all above us and all about us – and that fullness of living, expansion, expression, and serviceableness, for each of us, depend upon how far we apprehend these relationships and how many of them we lay hold of.

George Herbert says something of what I mean:

Man is all symmetry,
 Full of proportions, one limb to another,
 And *all to all the world besides*;
 Each part may call the farthest brother,
 For head with foot hath private amity,
 And *both with moons and tides*. (The italics are mine)

Every child is heir to an enormous patrimony, heir to all the ages, inheritor of all the present. The question is, what are the formalities (educational, not legal) necessary to put him in possession

of that which is his? You perceive the point of view is shifted, and is no longer subjective, but objective, as regards the child.

The Child a Person We do not talk about developing his faculties, training his moral nature, guiding his religious feelings, educating him with a view to his social standing or his future calling. The joys of 'child-study' are not for us. We take the child for granted, or rather, we take him as we find him – a person with an enormous number of healthy affinities, embryo attachments; and we think it is our chief business to give him a chance to make the largest possible number of these attachments valid.

An Infant's Self-Education An infant comes into the world with a thousand such embryonic [187] feelers, which he sets to work to fix with amazing energy:

The Babe,
Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep
Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul
Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye!
For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
Objects through widest intercourse of sense.
No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:
Along his infant veins are interfused
The gravitation and the filial bond
Of nature that connects him with the world.

He attaches his being to mother, father, sister, brother, 'nanna,' the man in the street whom he calls 'dada,' cat and dog, spider and fly; earth, air, fire, and water attract him perilously; his eyes covet light and color, his ears sound, his limbs movement; everything concerns him, and out of everything he gets

That calm delight
Which, if I err not, surely must belong
To those first-born affinities that fit
Our new existence to existing things,
And, in our dawn of being, constitute
The bond of union between life and joy. -*The Prelude*

He gets also, when left to himself, the real knowledge about each thing which establishes his relation with that particular thing.

Our Part, to Remove Obstructions and to Give Stimulus Later, we step in to educate him. In proportion to the range of living relationships we put in his way, will he have wide and vital interests, fullness of joy in living. In proportion as he is made [188] aware of the laws which rule every relationship, will his life be dutiful and serviceable: as he learns that no relation with persons or with things, animate or inanimate, can be maintained without strenuous effort, will he learn the laws of work and the joys of work. Our part is to remove obstructions and to give stimulus and guidance to the child who is trying to get into touch with the universe of things and thoughts which belongs to him.

Our Error Our deadly error is to suppose that we are his showman to the universe; and, not only so, but that there is no community at all between child and universe unless such as we choose to set up. We are the people! and if we choose that a village child's education should be confined

to the 'three R's,' why, what right has he to ask for more? If life means for him his Saturday night in the ale-house, surely that is not our fault! If our own boys go through school and college and come out without quickening interests, without links to the things that are worthwhile, we are not sure that it is our fault either. We resent that they should be called 'muddled oafs' because we know them to be fine fellows. So they are, splendid stuff which has not yet arrived at the making!

Business and Desire Quoth Hamlet –

“Every man hath business and desire.”

Doubtless that was true in the spacious days of great Elizabeth; for us, we have business, but have we desire? Are there many keen interests soliciting us outside of our necessary work? Perhaps not, or we should be less enslaved by the vapid joys of Ping-Pong, Patience, Bridge, and their like. The [189] fact is that 'interests' are not to be taken up on the spur of the moment; they spring out of affinities we have found and laid hold of. Or, in the words of an old writer: “In worldly and material things, what is Used is spent; in intellectual and spiritual things, what is not Used is not Had.”

Supposing we have realized that we must make provision for the future of our children otherwise than by safe investments, the question remains, how to set about it.

The Setting-up of Dynamic Relations We say a child should have what we will call Dynamic Relations with earth and water, must run and leap and dance, must ride and swim. This is how not to do it, as set forth in *Praeterita*:

“And so on to Llanberis and up Snowdon And if only then my father and mother had seen the real strengths and weaknesses of their little John; if they had given me but a shaggy scrap of a Welsh pony, and left me in charge of a good Welsh guide, and of his wife, if I needed any coddling, they would have made a man of me there and then If only! But they could no more have done it than thrown me like my cousin Charles into Croydon Canal, trusting me to find my way out by the laws of nature. Instead, they took me back to London; my father spared time from his business hours, once or twice a week, to take me to a four-square, sky-lighted, sawdust floored prison of a riding school in Moorfields, the smell of which, as we turned in at the gate of it, was a terror and horror and abomination to me: and there I was put on big horses that jumped and reared, and circled, and sidled, and fell off them regularly whenever they did any of these things; and was a disgrace to my family, and a burning shame and misery to myself, till at last the riding school was given up on my spraining my right hand fore-finger (it has never come straight again since); and a well-broken Shetland pony bought for me, and the two of us led about the Norwood roads by a riding master with a leading string.

[190] “I used to do pretty well as long as we went straight, and then get thinking of something and fall off as we turned a corner. I might have got some inkling of a seat in heaven's good time, if no fuss had been made about me, nor inquiries instituted whether I had been off or on; but as my mother the moment I got home made searching scrutiny into the day's disgraces, I merely got more nervous and helpless after every tumble; and this branch of my education was at last abandoned, my parents consoling themselves as best they might, in the conclusion that my not being able to learn to ride was the sign of my being a singular genius.”

Ruskin's Indictment of the Limitations of his Condition Ruskin suffered from the malady of his

condition. He was of the suburban dwellers of the rich middle class who think, not wisely but too much, about the bringing up of their children, who choke a good deal of life with care and coddling, and are apt to be persuaded that their children want no outlets but such as it occurs to them to provide. Suburban life is a necessity, but it is also a misfortune, because, in a rich suburb, people live too much with their own sort. They are cut off from the small and the great, from labor, adventure, and privation. Let me recommend all rich educated parents who live in suburbs to read *Praeterita*. With all his chivalrous loyalty to his parents, Ruskin has left here a grave indictment, not of them, but of the limitations of his condition. One hears the cry of the child, like that of Laurence Sterne's caged starling – 'I can't get out, I can't get out' – repeated from page to page.

You will say, whatever were the faults of his education, *Ruskin* emerged from it, such as it was; and we look for no more. But it is not for us to say how much greater an apostle among men even [191] Ruskin would have become had he been allowed his right of free living as a child. And it may be, on the other hand, safe to admit that not every child, born and bred in a villa, will certainly be another Ruskin!

We cannot follow Mr. Ruskin further in the setting up of the dynamic relations proper to him, because his parents forbade, and nothing happened. His mother, he says, 'never allowed me to go to the edge of a pond or be in the same field with a pony.' But he notes 'with thankfulness the good I got out of the tadpole-haunted ditch in Croxted Lane.' Camberwell Green had a pond, and, he says, 'it was one of the most valued privileges of my early life to be permitted by my nurse to contemplate this judicial pond with awe from the other side of the way.'

Wordsworth's Recognition of His Opportunities Wordsworth tells us of a much more rough-and-tumble bringing up. When he was nine, he was sent to the Grammar School in the little village of Hawkshead and lodged with Dame Tyson in the cottage many of us know; and found most things, at home and abroad, congenial to his soul. He had no lessons in riding and skating, hockey and tennis; but no doubt the other boys made it plain to the little chap that he must do as they did or be thought a fool. But then he went to school a hardy youngster; his mother had let her little boy *live*:

Oh, many a time have I, a five years' child,
In a small mill-race severed from his stream,
Made one long bathing of a summer's day;
Basked in the sun, and plunged, and basked again.

Of his childhood, he says:

"Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear."

[192] Ere he had told ten birthdays, he was transplanted to that 'beloved Vale' of which he says:

"There were we let loose
For sports of wider range."

What was there those Hawkshead boys did not do! He tells us of times,

When I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill-sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag.

The boys skated:

All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures – the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.

They played:

From week to week, from month to month, we lived
A round of tumult. Duly were our games
Prolonged in summer till the daylight failed.

They boated:

When summer came,
Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,
To sweep along the plain of Windermere
With rival oars ...
In such a race
So ended disappointment could be none,
Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy:
We rested in the shade, all pleased alike,
Conquered and conqueror.

The young Wordsworth, too, had his essays on horseback when he and his schoolmates came back [193] rich from the half-yearly holidays and hired horses from 'the courteous innkeeper,' and off they went, 'proud to curb, and eager to spur on, the galloping steed'; and then, the homecoming:

Through the walls we flew
And down the valley, and, a circuit made
In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth
We scampered homewards.

Principles #11, #12, #13

VOLUME 3: CH. 8: CERTAIN RELATIONS PROPER TO A CHILD

GEOLOGY, mineralogy, physical geography, botany, natural history, biology, astronomy – the whole circle of the sciences is, as it were, set with gates ajar in order that a child may go forth furnished, not with scientific knowledge, but with, what Huxley calls, common information, so that he may feel for objects on the earth and in the heavens the sort of proprietary interest which the son of an old house has in its heirlooms.

We are more exacting than the Jesuits. They are content to have a child till he is seven; but we want him till he is twelve or fourteen, if we may not have him longer. You may do what you like with him afterwards. Given this period for the establishing of relations, we may undertake to prepare for the world a man, vital and vigorous, full of living interests, available and serviceable. I think we may warrant him even to pass examinations, because he will know how to put living interest into the dullest tasks.

DYNAMIC RELATIONS But we have not yet done with his relations with mother earth. There are, what I may call, *dynamic* relations to be established. He must stand and walk and run and jump with [80] ease and grace. He must skate and swim and ride and drive, dance and row and sail a boat. He should be able to make free with his mother earth and to do whatever the principle of gravitation will allow. This is an elemental relationship for the lack of which nothing compensates.

POWER OVER MATERIAL Another elemental relationship, which every child should be taught and encouraged to set up, is that of power over material. Every child makes sandcastles, mud-pies, paper boats, and he or she should go on to work in clay, wood, brass, iron, leather, dress-stuffs, food-stuffs, furnishing-stuffs. He should be able to *make* with his hands and should take delight in making.

INTIMACY WITH ANIMALS A fourth relation is to the dumb creation; a relation of intelligent comprehension as well as of kindness. Why should not each of us be on friendly terms with the 'inmates of his house and garden'? Every child longs for intimacy with the creatures about him; and

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

THE GREAT HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS Perhaps the main part of a child's education should be concerned with the great human relationships, relationships of love and service, of authority and obedience, of reverence and pity and neighborly kindness; relationships to kin and friend and neighbor, to 'cause' and country and kind, to the past and the present History, literature, archaeology, art, languages, whether ancient or modern, travel and tales of travel; all of these are in one way or other the record or the [81] expression of persons; and we who are persons are interested in all persons, for we are all one flesh, and we are all of one spirit, and whatever any of us does or suffers is interesting to the rest. If we will approach them with living thought, living books, if we will only awaken in them the sense of personal relation, there are thousands of boys and girls to-day capable of becoming apostles, saviors, great orientalists who will draw the East and

the West together, great archaeologists who will make the past alive for us and make us aware in our souls of men who lived thousands of years ago.

THE AWAKENING IDEA It rests with us to give the awakening idea and then to form the habit of thought and of life. Here is an example of what a youth could do. “Young Rawlinson had” (I quote from the *Academy*) “from the outset of his career, a taste for the history and antiquities of Persia, a leaning which he himself attributed to his conversations with Sir John Malcolm on his first passage to India; and when with the Shah’s army he chanced to be quartered at Kirmanshah, in Persian Kurdistan. Close to this stands the Rock of Behistun, bearing on its face a trilingual inscription which we now know to be due to Darius Hystaspes, the restorer of Cyrus’ Empire. The cuneiform or wedge-shaped letters in which it is written had long baffled all attempts to decipher them. Rawlinson contrived, at the risk of life and limb, to climb the almost inaccessible face of the rock and to copy the easiest of the three versions of the inscription. A prolonged study of it enabled him to pronounce it to be in the Persian language, and, two years later, he succeeded in discovering the system by which the Persian words were reproduced [82] in cuneiform characters.” What is the result? “We can now produce the chronicles of empires, more highly-organized than was ever any Greek state, going back to dates millennia before that which our fathers used to assign to the earliest appearance of man upon the earth. The changes of thought consequent upon these discoveries are incalculable”; and all are more or less due to Rawlinson’s climb up the face of the Behistun Rock, which again was due to the awakening of an idea by his conversation with Sir John Malcolm.

HUMAN INTELLIGENCE LIMITED TO HUMAN INTERESTS We are not all Henry Rawlinsons, but there seems good reason to believe that *the limit to human intelligence arises largely from the limit to human interests*, that is, from the failure to establish personal relations on a wide scale with the persons who make up humanity – relations of love, duty, responsibility, and, above all, of interest, living interest, with the near and the far-off, in time and in place. We hammer away for a dozen years at one or two languages, ancient or modern, and rarely know them very well at the end of that time, but directly they become to us the languages of persons whom we are aching to get at and can only do so through the medium of their own tongues, there seems no reason why many of us should not be like the late Sir Richard Burton, able to talk in almost any known tongue.

THE FULL HUMAN LIFE I think we should have a great educational revolution once we ceased to regard ourselves as assortments of so-called faculties and realized ourselves as persons whose great business it is to get in touch with other persons of all sorts and [83] conditions, of all countries and climes, of all times, past and present. History would become entrancing, literature, a magic mirror for the discovery of other minds, the study of sociology, a duty and a delight. We should tend to become responsive and wise, humble and reverent, recognizing the duties and the joys of the full human life. We cannot, of course, overtake such a programme of work, but we can keep it in view; and, I suppose, every life is molded upon its ideal. We talk of lost ideals, but perhaps they are not lost, only changed; when our ideal for ourselves and for our children becomes limited to prosperity and comfort, we get these, very likely, for ourselves and for them, but we get no more.

DUTY NOT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF PRESENT-DAY PSYCHOLOGY The psychology of the hour has had a curious effect upon the sense of duty. Persons who are no more than a ‘state of consciousness’ cannot be expected to take up moral responsibilities, except such as appeal to them at the moment. Duty, in the sense of relations imposed by authority and *due* to our fellows, does not fall within the scope of present-day psychology. It would be interesting to know how many children of

about ten years of age can say the Ten Commandments, and those most clear interpretations of them which children are taught to call 'my duty towards God and my duty towards my neighbor'; or, if they are not members of the Church of England, whatever explanation their own Church offers of the law containing the whole duty of man. With the Ten Commandments as a basis, children used to get a fairly thorough ethical teaching from the Bible. They knew St. Paul's mandates: 'Love the brethren,' 'Fear God,' 'Honor the King,' [84] 'Honor all men,' 'Study to be quiet.' They knew that thoughts of hatred and contempt were of the nature of murder. They knew what King Solomon said of the virtuous woman, of the sluggard, of the fool. Their knowledge was not confined to precepts; from history, sacred and profane, they were able to illustrate every text. We in England have not the wealth of moral teaching carved in wood and stone so that the unlettered may read and learn which some neighboring countries rejoice in, but our teaching, until the present generation, has been systematic and thorough.

CASUAL ETHICAL TEACHING I appeal to common experience as to whether this is now the case. We eschew for our children (and we often eschew wisely) all stories with a moral; their books must be amusing, and we ask little more; next after that, they must be literary, and then, perhaps, a little instructive. But we do not look for a moral impulse fitly given. It is not that we give no ethical teaching, but our teaching is casual. If we happen on a story of heroism or self-denial, we are glad to point the moral. But children rarely get now a distinct ethical system resting on the broad basis of the brotherhood of man. It is something for a child only to recite – 'My duty towards my neighbor is to love him as myself' and 'to do unto all men as I would that they should do unto me.' A great many fine things are said today about the brotherhood of man and the solidarity of the race, but I think we shall look in vain in modern writings for a sentence which goes to the root of the matter as does this authoritative code of duty.

THE MORAL RELATION OF PERSON TO PERSON If we receive it, that the whole of education consists [85] in the establishment of relations, then, the relations with our fellow-beings must be of the first importance; and all associations formed upon any basis except that of 'my duty towards my neighbor,' – as upon sympathy in art or literature, for example, – are apt to degenerate into sentimental bonds; and the power of original thought appears curiously to depart with that of moral insight. If you ask, 'But how are we to get a scheme of ethical teaching for our children?' I really do not know, if we choose to forego the Ten Commandments and the old-fashioned teaching of exposition and example founded upon them. There are a thousand supplementary ways of giving such teaching; but these are apt to be casual and little binding if they do not rest upon the solid foundation of *duty* imposed upon us by God, and *due* to each other, whether we will or no. This moral relation of person to person underlies all other relations. We owe it to the past to use its gains worthily and to advance from the point at which it left off. We owe it to the future to prepare a generation better than ourselves. We owe it to the present to *live*, to live with all expansion of heart and soul, all reaching out of our personality towards those relations appointed for us.

THE SENSE OF WHAT IS DUE FROM US DOES NOT COME BY NATURE We owe knowledge to the ignorant, comfort to the distressed, healing to the sick, reverence, courtesy and kindness to all men, especially to those with whom we are connected by ties of family or neighborhood; and the sense of these dues does not come by nature. We all know the vapid young man and the vapid young woman who care for none of these things; but do we always [86] ask ourselves – why? and whether there are not many children today growing up in good homes as untrained in their moral relations as are these young people whom we despise and blame, perhaps more than they

deserve, for have they not been neglected children?

RELATIONS OF ONESELF WITH ONESELF Another preparation for his relations in life which we owe to a young person is, that he should be made familiar with such a working system of psychology or philosophy, whichever one likes to call it, as shall help him to conduct his relations with himself and with other people. The world is not ripe, perhaps, for a *bond fide* science of life, but we are unhappily more modest than the ancients, who made good use of what they had, and turned out a Marcus Aurelius, an Epictetus, a Socrates. Neither did they think that their youth were furnished for life without instruction in philosophy. Modern scientists have added a great deal to the sum of available knowledge which should bear on the conduct of those relations of oneself with oneself which are implied in the terms, self-management, self-control, self-respect, self-love, self-help, self-abnegation, and so on. This knowledge is the more important because our power to conduct our relations with other people depends upon our power of conducting our relations with ourselves. Every man carries in his own person the key to human nature, and, in proportion as we are able to use this key, we shall be tolerant, gentle, helpful, wise and reverent. The person who has 'given up expecting anything' of servants or of dependents, of employees, or of working people, proclaims his ignorance of those springs of conduct common to us all.

[87] I think we may really take a little credit to ourselves as a Society¹ for an advance in this direction. Most people associated with us know something of the treatment of sensations, the direction of the will, the treatment of temper, the psychology of attention, the desires and affections which are the springs of conduct, and other practical matters concerned with the management of one's life. We hear of people who use that fine old nursery plan expressed in 'change your thoughts' with method and success in the case of cross, or even delirious, or morbid patients. We (of the Parents' Union) feel as if we had a tool in our hands and knew how to set to work. The principle, anyhow, we perceive to be right, and, if we blunder in its application, we try again, whether for ourselves or for our children. We know that 'one custom overcometh another,' and that one idea supplants another. We do not give up a child to be selfish, or greedy, or lazy. These are cases for treatment; and a child who has been cured by his mother of some such blemish will not be slow to believe when he grows up in the possibility of reform for others, and in the use of simple, practical means.

INTIMACY WITH PERSONS OF ALL CLASSES Sociology is a long word, but it implies a practical relation with other people which children should begin to get, and it is a kind of knowledge they are very ready for. The carpenter, the gardener, the baker, the candlestick maker, are all delightful persons; and it is surprising how much a child at the seaside will get to know about boats and sails and fishermen's lives that will pass by his unobservant elders. Most working men are on their honor with [88] children, and every craftsman is a valuable acquaintance to a child. Later, when his working neighbors come before him in the shape of 'causes' and 'questions,' he will see the men and their crafts behind the veil of words; and in his 'Book of Trades,' a *Who's Who* for the million, he will look out for the heading *Recreation*, for shoemaker, tailor, factory-hand, as well as for the distinguished author and the member of Parliament. There is nothing like early intimacy for helping one to know people. That is why what the tub-orator calls 'the bloated aristocrat' knows how to get on with everybody; he has been intimate with all sorts and conditions of men since his babyhood.

FITNESS AS CITIZENS The value of self-managed clubs and committees, debating societies, etc., for young people, is becoming more and more fully recognized. Organizing capacity, business habits, and some power of public speaking, should be a part of our fitness as citizens. To secure the

power of speaking, I think it would be well if the habit of narration were more encouraged, in place of written composition. On the whole, it is more useful to be able to speak than to write, and the man or woman who is able to do the former can generally do the latter.

RELATIONS WITH EACH OTHER AS HUMAN BEINGS But the subject of our relations with each other as human beings is inexhaustible, and I can do no more than indicate a point here and there, and state again my conviction that a system of education should have for its aim, not the mastery of certain 'subjects,' but the establishment of these relations in as many directions as circumstances will allow.

[89] **RELATION TO ALMIGHTY GOD** I have set before the reader the proposition that a human being comes into the world, not to develop his faculties nor to acquire knowledge, nor even to earn his living, but to establish certain relations; which relations are to him the means of immeasurable expansion and fulness of living. We have touched upon two groups of these relations – his relations to the universe of matter and to the world of men. To complete his education, I think there is but one more relation to be considered – his relation to Almighty God. How many children are today taught to say at their mother's knee, to learn from day to day and from hour to hour, in all its fullness of meaning 'My duty towards God is to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put my whole trust in Him, to call upon Him, to honor His holy name and His word, and to serve Him truly all the days of my life'? Whether children are taught their duty towards God in these or other words matters little; but few of us will venture to say that, in this short summary, more is demanded than it is our bounden duty and service to yield. But I fear that many children grow up untaught in these matters. The idea of *duty* is not wrought into the very texture of their souls; and *duty* to Him who is invisible, which should be the very foundation of life, is least taught of all. I do not say that children are allowed to grow up without religious sentiments and religious emotions, and that they do not say quaint and surprising things, showing that they have an insight of their own into the higher life.

[90] **SENTIMENT IS NOT DUTY** But duty and sentiment are two things. Sentiment is optional; and young people grow up to think that they *may* believe in God, *may* fear God, *may* love God in a measure – but that they must do these things, that there is no choice at all about the love and service of God, that it is their duty, that which they *owe*, to love Him 'with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their soul, with all their strength,' these things are seldom taught and understood as they should be. Even where our sentiment is warm, our religious notions are lax; and children, the children of good, religious parents, grow up without that intimate, ever-open, ever-cordial, ever-corresponding relation with Almighty God, which is the very fulfilment of life; which, whoso hath, hath eternal life; which, whoso hath not, is, like Coleridge's 'lovely Lady Geraldine,' ice-cold and dead at heart, however much he may labor for the free course of all other relations.

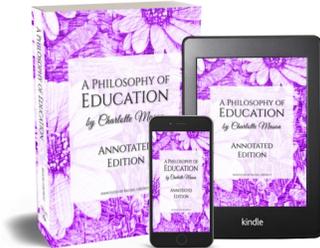
I want, am made for, and must have a God,
 Ere I can be aught, do aught; no mere Name
 Want, but the True Thing, with what proves its truth,
 To wit, a relation from that Thing to me,
 Touching from head to foot: which Touch I feel,
 And with it take the rest, this Life of ours!

Browning

Study Questions

PRINCIPLES #11, #12, & #13

1. [Watch the video here in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. If you had previously heard of the quote “*Education is the science of relations,*” did you have any preconceived ideas about what it meant?
3. What does it mean to you now that you have read more about it? How did your understanding of it change, if any?
4. Did any quotes really resonate with you?
5. What is your role as the teacher?
6. How do the stories about Ruskin’s childhood and Wordsworth’s childhood differ?
7. In which set of parents do you see yourself?
8. How can you find a balance between the two?
9. What steps do you need to take in order to establish the science of relations for your child?



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Principles # 14 & # 15

Narration from a Single Reading

Principles #14 & #15

VOLUME I, CH. 9: THE ART OF NARRATING

[231] **CHILDREN NARRATE BY NATURE** Narrating is an *art*, like poetry-making or painting, because it is *there*, in every child's mind, waiting to be discovered, and is not the result of any process of disciplinary education. A creative fiat calls it forth. "Let him narrate"; and the child narrates, fluently, copiously, in ordered sequence, with fit and graphic details, with a just choice of words, without verbosity or tautology, so soon as he can speak with ease. This amazing gift with which normal children are born is allowed to lie fallow in their education. Bobbie will come home with a heroic narrative of a fight he has seen between 'Duke' and a dog in the street. It is wonderful! He has seen everything, and he tells everything with splendid vigor in the true epic vein; but so ingrained is our contempt for children that we see nothing in this but Bobbie's foolish childish way! Whereas here, if we have eyes to see and grace to build, is the ground-plan of his education.

Until he is six, let Bobbie narrate only when and what he has a mind to. He must not be called upon to *tell* anything. Is this the secret of the strange long talks we watch with amusement between creatures of two, and four, and five? Is it possible that they narrate while they are still inarticulate, and that the other inarticulate person takes it all in? They try us, poor dear elders, and we reply 'Yes,' 'Really!' 'Do you think so?' to the babble of whose meaning we have no comprehension. Be this as it may; of what goes on in the dim region of 'under two' we have no assurance. But wait till the little fellow has words and he will 'tell' without end to [232] whomsoever will listen to the tale, but, for choice, to his own compeers.

THIS POWER SHOULD BE USED IN THEIR EDUCATION Let us take the goods the gods provide. When the child is six, not earlier, let him narrate the fairy-tale which has been read to him, episode by episode, upon one hearing of each; the Bible tale read to him in the words of the Bible; the well-written animal story; or all about other lands from some such volume as *The World at Home*. The seven-year-old boy will have begun to read for himself, but must get most of his intellectual nutriment, by ear, certainly, but read to him out of books. Geography, sketches from ancient history, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Tanglewood Tales*, *Heroes of Asgard*, and much of the same caliber, will occupy him until he is eight. The points to be borne in mind are, that he should have no book which is not a child's classic; and that, given the right book, it must not be diluted with talk or broken up with questions, but given to the boy in fit portions as wholesome meat for his mind, in the full trust that a child's mind is able to deal with its proper food.

The child of eight or nine is able to tackle the more serious material of knowledge; but our business for the moment is with what children under nine can narrate.

METHOD OF LESSON In every case the reading should be consecutive from a well-chosen book. Before the reading for the day begins, the teacher should talk a little (and get the children to talk) about the last lesson, with a few words about what is to be read, in order that the children may be animated by [233] expectation; but she should beware of explanation, and, especially, of forestalling the narrative. Then, she may read two or three pages, enough to include an episode; after that, let her call upon the children to narrate, – in turns, if there be several of them. They not only narrate with spirit and accuracy, but succeed in catching the style of their author. It is not wise

to tease them with corrections; they may begin with an endless chain of 'ands,' but they soon leave this off, and their narrations become good enough in style and composition to be put in a 'print book'!

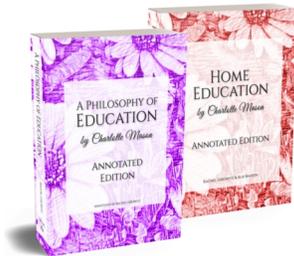
This sort of narration lesson should not occupy more than a quarter of an hour.

The book should always be deeply interesting, and when the narration is over, there should be a little talk in which moral points are brought out, pictures shown to illustrate the lesson, or diagrams drawn on the blackboard. As soon as children are able to read with ease and fluency, they read their own lesson, either aloud or silently, with a view to narration; but where it is necessary to make omissions, as in the Old Testament narratives and Plutarch's *Lives* for example, it is better that the teacher should always read the lesson which is to be narrated.

Study Questions

PRINCIPLES #14 & #15

1. [Watch the video here in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. Why do you think Charlotte includes the practices of *narration* and *a single, careful reading* in her 20 Principles?
3. Why are they important?
4. Are they important for the teacher or the student? Why?
5. How are these two Principles different from the previous Principles?
6. Did any quotes really resonate with you?
5. How can you help your students narrate better?
6. Why is it important to one read *once*?
7. Have you ever tried to narrate from a single reading? Was it difficult?
8. If you need help with implementation of these two practices, please see the article [Tips for Establishing the Habit of Attention for a Single Careful Reading](#).



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Principles # 16 - # 19

*The Way of the Will
& The Way of the Reason*

Principles #16-#19

VOLUME 6, CH. 8: THE WAY OF THE WILL

We may offer to children two guides to moral and intellectual self-management which we may call 'the Way of the Will' and 'the Way of the Reason.' The Way of the Will: Children should be taught:

- (a) to distinguish between 'I want' and 'I will.'*
- (b) That the way to will effectively is to turn our thoughts away from that which we desire but do not will,*
- (c) That the best way to turn our thoughts is to think of or do some quite different thing, entertaining or interesting,*
- (d) That after a little rest in this way, the will returns to its work with new vigor.*

(This adjunct of the will is familiar to us as diversion, whose office it is to ease us for a time from will effort that we may 'will' again with added power. The use of suggestion as an aid to the will is to be deprecated, as tending to stultify and stereotype character. It would seem that spontaneity is a condition of development, and that human nature needs the discipline of failure as well as of success.)

The great things of life, life itself, are not easy of definition. The Will, we are told, is 'the sole practical faculty of man.' But who is to define the Will? We are told again that 'the Will is the man'; and yet most men go through life without a single definite act of willing. Habit, convention, the customs of the world have done so much for us that we get up, dress, breakfast, follow our morning's occupations, our later relaxations, without an act of choice. For this much at any rate we know about the will. Its function is to *choose*, to decide, and there seems to be no doubt that the greater becomes the effort of decision the weaker grows the general will. Opinions are provided for us, we take our principles at second or third hand, our habits are suitable and convenient, and what more is necessary for a decent and orderly life? But the one achievement possible and necessary for every man is character; and character is as finely wrought metal beaten into shape and beauty by the repeated and accustomed action of will. We who teach should make it clear to ourselves that our aim in education is less conduct than character; conduct may be arrived at, as we have seen, by indirect routes, but it is of value to the world only as it has its source in character.

Every assault upon the flesh and spirit of man is an attack however insidious upon his personality, his will; but a new Armageddon is upon us in so far as that the attack is no longer indirect but is aimed consciously and directly at the will, which is the man; and we shall escape becoming a nation of imbeciles only because there will always be persons of good will amongst us who will resist the general trend. The office of parents and teachers is to turn out such persons of good will; that they should deliberately weaken the moral fiber of their children by suggestion is a very grave offence and a thoughtful examination of the subject should act as a sufficient deterrent. For, let us consider. What we do *with the will* we describe as voluntary. What we do *without the* conscious action of *will* is involuntary. The will has only one mode of action, its function is to 'choose,' and with every choice we make we grow in force of character.

From the cradle to the grave suggestions crowd upon us, and such suggestions become part of our education because we must choose between them. But a suggestion given by intent and

supported by an outside personality has an added strength which few are able to resist, just because the choice has been made by another and not by ourselves, and our tendency is to accept this vicarious choice and follow the path of least resistance. No doubt much of this vicarious choosing is done for our good, whether for our health of body or amenableness of mind; but those who propose suggestion as a means of education do not consider that with every such attempt upon a child they weaken that which should make a man of him, his own power of choice. The parasitic creatures who live upon the habits, principles and opinions of others may easily become criminal. They only wait the occasion of some popular outburst to be carried into such a fury of crime as the Gordon Riots presented: a mad fury of which we have had terrible examples in our own day, though we have failed to ascribe them to their proper cause, the undermining of the will of the people, who have not been instructed in that ordering of the will which is their chief function as men and women. His will is the safeguard of a man against the unlawful intrusion of other persons. We are taught that there are offences against the bodies of others which may not be committed, but who teaches us that we may not intrude upon the minds and overrule the wills of others; that it is indecent to let another probe the thoughts of the 'unconscious mind' whether of child or man? Now the thought that we choose is commonly the thought that we ought to think and the part of the teacher is to afford to each child a full reservoir of the right thought of the world to draw from. For right thinking is by no means a matter of *self*-expression. Right thought flows upon the stimulus of an idea, and ideas are stored as we have seen in books and pictures and the lives of men and nations; these instruct the conscience and stimulate the will, and man or child 'chooses.' An accomplished statesman¹ exhibited to us lately how the disintegration of a great empire was brought about by the weakness of its rulers who allowed their will-power to be tampered with, their judgment suggested, their actions directed, by those who gained access to them.

There is no occasion for panic, but it is time that we realized that *to fortify the will* is one of the great purposes of education, and probably some study of the map of the City of Mansoul would afford us guidance: at least, a bird's eye view of the riches of the City should be spread before children. They should themselves know of the wonderful capacities to enter upon the world as a great inheritance which exist in every human being. All its beauty and all its thought are open to everyone. Everyone may take service for the world's use; everyone may climb those delectable mountains from whence he gets the vision of the City of God. He must know something of his body with its senses and its appetites: of his intellect, imagination and aesthetic sense: of his moral nature, ordered by love and justice. Realizing how much is possible to Mansoul and the perils that assail it, he should know that the duty of self-direction belongs to him; and that powers for this direction are lodged in him, as are intellect and imagination, hunger and thirst. These governing powers are the conscience and the will. The whole ordering of education with its history, poetry, arithmetic, pictures, is based on the assumption that conscience is incapable of ordering life without regular and progressive instruction. We need instruction also concerning the will. Persons commonly suppose that the action of the will is automatic, but no power of Mansoul acts by itself and of itself, and some little study of the 'way of the will' – which has the ordering of every other power – may help us to understand the functions of this Premier in the kingdom of Mansoul.

Early in his teens we should at least put clearly before a child the possibility of a drifting, easy life led by appetite or desire in which will plays no part; and the other possibility of using the power

and responsibility proper to him as a person and *willing* as he goes. He must be safeguarded from some fallacies. No doubt he has heard at home that Baby has a strong will because he cries for a knife and insists on pulling down the tablecloth. In his history lessons and his readings of tale and poem, he comes across persons each of whom carries his point by strong willfulness. He laughs at that rash boy Phaeton, measures Esau with a considering eye, finds him more attractive than Jacob who yet wins higher approval; perceives that Esau is willful but that Jacob has a strong will, and through this and many other examples, recognizes that a strong will is not synonymous with 'being good,' nor with a determination to have your own way. He learns to distribute the characters he comes across in his reading on either side of a line, those who are willful and those who are governed by will; and this line by no means separates between the bad and the good.

It does divide, however, between the impulsive, self-pleasing, self-seeking, and the persons who have an aim beyond and outside of themselves, even though it be an aim appalling as that of Milton's Satan. It follows for him that he must not only *will*, but will with a view to an object outside himself. He will learn to recognize in Louis XI a mean man and a great king, because France and not himself was the object of his crooked policy. The will, too, is of slow growth, nourished upon the ideas proposed to it, and so all things work together for good to the child who is duly educated. It is well that children should know that while the turbulent person is not ruled by will at all but by impulse, the movement of his passions or desires, yet it is possible to have a constant will with unworthy or evil ends, or, even to have a steady will towards a good end and to compass that end by unworthy means. The simple rectified will, what our Lord calls 'the single eye,' would appear to be the one thing needful for straight living and serviceableness. But always the first condition of will, good or ill, is an object outside of self. The boy or girl who sees this will understand that self-culture is not to be accepted as an ideal, will not wonder why *Bushido* is mighty in Japan, will enter into the problem which Browning raises in *The Statue and the Bust*. By degrees the scholar will perceive that just as to *reign* is the distinctive function of a king, so to *will* is the function of a man. A king is not a king unless he reigns, and a man is less than a man unless he wills. Another thing to be observed is that even the constant will has its times of rise and fall, and one of the secrets of living is how to tide over the times of fall in will power.

The boy must learn too that the will is subject to solicitations all round, from the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life; that will does not act alone; it takes the whole man to will and a man wills wisely, justly and strongly, in proportion as all his powers are in training and under instruction. We must understand in order to will. "How is that ye *will* not understand?" said our Lord to the Jews; and that is the way with most of us, we *will* not understand. We look out for great occasions which do not come and do not see that the sphere for the action of our wills is in ourselves. Our concern with life is to be fit, and according to our fitness come our occasions and the uses we shall be put to.

Unlike every other power in the kingdom of Mansoul, the will is able to do what it likes, is a free agent, and the one thing the will has to do is to prefer. "Choose ye this day," is the command that comes to each of us in every affair and on every day of our lives, and the business of the will is to choose. But, choice, the effort of decision, is a heavy labor, whether it be between two lovers or two gowns. So, many people minimize this labor by following the fashion in their clothes, rooms, reading, amusements, the pictures they admire and the friends they select. We are zealous in choosing for others but shirk the responsibility of decisions for ourselves.

What is to be said about obedience, to the heads of the house first, to the State, to the Church, and always to the laws of God? Obedience is the test, the sustainer of personality, but it must be the obedience of choice; because choice is laborious, little children must be trained in the obedience of habit; but every gallant boy and girl has learned to *choose* to obey all who are set in authority.

Such obedience is of the essence of chivalry and chivalry is that temper of mind opposed to self-seeking. The chivalrous person is a person of constant will for, as we have seen, will cannot be exercised steadily for ends of personal gain.

It is well to know what it is we choose between. Things are only signs which represent ideas and several times a day we shall find two ideas presented to our minds and must make our choice upon right and reasonable grounds. We shall thus be on our guard against the weak allowance which we cause to do duty for choice and against such dishonest fallacies as, that it is our business to get the best that is to be had at the lowest price; and it is not only in matters of dress and ornament, household use and decoration, that we run after the cheapest and newest. We chase opinions and ideas with the same restlessness and uncertainty; any fad, any notion in the newspapers, we pick up with eagerness. Once again, the will is the man. The business of the will is to choose. There are many ways to get out of the task of choosing but it is always, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." There are two services open to us all, the service of God, (including that of man) and the service of self. If our aim is just to get on, 'to do ourselves well,' to get all possible ease, luxury and pleasure out of our lives, we are serving self and for the service of self no act of will is required. Our appetites and desires are always at hand to spur us into the necessary exertions. But if we serve God and our neighbor, we have to be always on the watch to choose between the ideas that present themselves. What the spring is to the year, school days are to our life. You meet a man whose business in the world appears to be to eat and drink, play golf and motor; he may have another and deeper life that we know nothing about, but, so far as we can see, he has enlisted in the service of self. You meet another, a man of position, doing important work, and his ideas are those he received from the great men who taught him at school and College. The Greek Plays are his hobby. He is open to great thoughts and ready for service, because that which we get in our youth we keep through our lives.

Though the will affects all our actions and all our thoughts, its direct action is confined to a very little place, to that postern at either side of which stand conscience and reason, and at which ideas must needs present themselves. Shall we take an idea in or reject it? Conscience and reason have their say, but *will* is supreme and the behavior of will is determined by all the principles we have gathered, all the opinions we have formed. We accept the notion, ponder it. At first we vaguely intend to act upon it; then we form a definite purpose, then a resolution and then comes an act or general temper of mind. We are told of Rudyard Kipling that his great ambition and desire at one time was to keep a tobacconist's shop. Why? Because in this way he could get into human touch with the men who came to buy their weekly allowance of tobacco. Happily for the world, he did not become a tobacconist but the idea which moved him in the first place has acted throughout his life. Always he has men, young men, about him and who knows how many he has moved to become 'Captains Courageous' by his talk as well as by his books!

But suppose an unworthy idea present itself at the postern, supported by public opinion, by reason, for which even conscience finds pleas? The will soon wearies of opposition, and what is to

be done? Fight it out? That is what the medieval Church did with those ideas which it rightly regarded as temptations; the lash, the hair shirt, the stone couch, the emaciated frame told of these not too successful Armageddons.

When the overstrained will asks for repose, it may not relax to yielding point but may and must seek recreation, diversion – Latin thought has afforded us beautiful and appropriate names for that which we require. A change of physical or mental occupation is very good, but if no other change is convenient, let us *think* of something else, no matter how trifling. A new tie, or our next new hat, a story book we are reading, a friend we hope to see, anything does so long as we do not suggest to ourselves the thoughts we *ought* to think on the subject in question. The will does not want the support of arguments but the recreation of rest, change, diversion. In a surprisingly short time it is able to return to the charge and to choose this day the path of duty, however dull or tiresome, difficult or dangerous. This 'way of the will' is a secret of power, the secret of self-government, with which people should be furnished, not only for ease in practical right doing, or for advance in the religious life, but also for their intellectual well-being. Our claim to free will is a righteous claim; will can only be free, whether its object be right or wrong; it is a matter of choice and there is no choice but free choice. But we are apt to translate free will into free thought. We allow ourselves to sanction intellectual anarchism and forget that it rests with the will to order the thoughts of the mind fully as much as the feelings of the heart or the lusts of the flesh. Our thoughts are not our own and we are not free to think as we choose. The injunction – "Choose ye this day," applies to the thoughts which we allow ourselves to receive. Will is the one free agent of Mansoul, will alone may accept or reject; and will is therefore responsible for every intellectual problem which has proved too much for a man's sanity or for his moral probity. We may not think what we please on shallow matters or profound. The instructed conscience and trained reason support the will in those things, little and great, by which men live.

The ordering of the will is not an affair of sudden resolve; it is the outcome of a slow and ordered education in which precept and example flow in from the lives and thoughts of other men, men of antiquity and men of the hour, as unconsciously and spontaneously as the air we breathe. But the moment of choice is immediate and the act of the will voluntary; and the object of education is to prepare us for this immediate choice and voluntary action which every day presents. While affording some secrets of 'the way of the will' to young people, we should perhaps beware of presenting the ideas of 'self-knowledge, self-reverence, and self-control.' All adequate education must be outward bound, and the mind which is concentrated upon self-emolument, even though it be the emolument of all the virtues, misses the higher and the simpler secrets of life. Duty and service are the sufficient motives for the arduous training of the will that a child goes through with little consciousness. The gradual fortifying of the will which many a schoolboy undergoes is hardly perceptible to himself however tremendous the results may be for his city or his nation. Will, free will, must have an object outside of self; and the poet has said the last word so far as we yet know –

Our wills are ours we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

Principles #16-#19

VOLUME 6, CH. 9: THE WAY OF THE REASON

We should teach children, also, not to lean (too confidently) unto their own understanding because the function of reason is to give logical demonstration of (a) mathematical truth and (b) of initial ideas accepted by the will.

In the former case reason is, perhaps, an infallible guide but in the latter is not always a safe one, for whether the initial idea be right or wrong reason will confirm it by irrefragable proofs.

Therefore children should be taught as they become mature enough to understand such teaching that the chief responsibility which rests upon them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of ideas presented to them. To help them in this choice we should afford them principles of conduct and a wide range of fitting knowledge.

Every child, every man, who comes to a sudden halt watching the action of his own reason, is another Columbus, the discoverer of a new world. Commonly we let reason do its work without attention on our part, but there come moments when we stand in startled admiration and watch the unfolding before us point by point of a score of arguments in favor of this carpet as against that, this route in preference to the other, our chosen chum as against Bob Brown; because every *pro* suggested by our reason is opposed to some *con* in the background. How else should it happen that there is no single point upon which two persons may reason – food, dress, games, education, politics, religion – but the two may take opposite sides, and each will bring forward infallible proofs which must convince the other were it not that he too is already convinced by stronger proofs to strengthen his own argument. Every character in history or fiction supports this thesis; and probably we cannot give a better training in right reasoning than by letting children work out the arguments in favor of this or that conclusion.

Thus, Macbeth, a great general, returns after a brilliant victory, head and heart are inflated, what can he not achieve? Could he not govern a country as well as rule an army? Reason unfolds the steps by which he might do great things; great things, ay, but are they lawful, these possible exploits? And then in the nick of time he comes across the ‘weird Sisters,’ as we are all apt to take refuge in fatalism when conscience no longer supports us. He shall be Thane of Cawdor, and, behold, confirmation arrives on the spot. He shall also be king. Well, if this is decreed, what can he do? He is no longer a free agent. And a score of valid arguments unfold themselves showing how Scotland, the world, his wife, himself, would be enhanced, would flourish and be blessed if he had the opportunity to do what was in him. Opportunity? The thing was decreed! It rested with him to find the means, the tools. He was not without imagination, had a poetic mind and shrank before the horrors he vaguely foresaw. But reason came to his aid and step by step the whole bloody tragedy was wrought out before his prescient mind. When we first meet with Macbeth he is rich in honors, troops of friends, the generous confidence of his king. The change is sudden and complete, and, we may believe, reason justified him at every point. But reason did not begin it. The will played upon by ambition had already admitted the notion of towering greatness or ever the ‘weird Sisters’ gave shape to his desire. Had it not been for this countenance afforded by the will, the forecasts of fate would have influenced his conduct no more than they did that of Banquo.

But it must not be supposed that reason is malign, the furtherer of ill counsels only. Nurse Cavell, Jack Cornwell, Lord Roberts, General Gordon, Madame Curie, leave hints enough to enable us to follow the trains of thought which issued in glorious deeds. We know how Florence Nightingale received, welcomed, reasoned out the notion of pity which obsessed her, and how through many difficulties her great project for the saving of the sick and suffering of her country's army worked itself out; how she was able to convey to those in power the same convincing arguments which moved herself. That was a happy thought of the mediaeval Church which represented the leading idea of each of the seven Liberal Arts by a chosen exponent able to convince others by the arguments which his own reason brought forward. So Priscian taught the world Grammar; Pythagoras, Arithmetic; and the name of Euclid still stands for the science which appealed to his reason. But it is not only great intellectual advances and discoveries or world-shaping events for good or evil, that exhibit the persuasive power of reason. There is no object in use, great or small, upon which some man's reason has not worked exhaustively. A sofa, a chest of drawers, a ship, a box of toy soldiers, have all been thought out step by step, and the inventor has not only considered the *pros* but has so far overcome the *cons* that his invention is there, ready for use; and only here and there does anyone take the trouble to consider how the useful, or, perhaps, beautiful article came into existence. It is worthwhile to ask a child, How did you think of it? when he comes to tell you of a new game he has invented, a new country of the imagination he has named, peopled and governed. He will probably tell you what first 'put it into his head' and then how the reasons one after another came to him. After – How did *you* think of it? – the next question that will occur to a child is – How did *he* think of it? – and he will distinguish between the first notion that has 'put it into his head' and the reasoned steps which have gone to the completion of an object, the discovery of a planet, the making of a law. Sometimes a child should be taken into the psychology of crime, and he will see that reason brings infallible proofs of the rightness of the criminal act. From Cain to the latest great offender every criminal act has been justified by reasoned arguments which come of their own accord to the criminal. We know the arguments before which Eve fell when the Serpent played the part of the 'weird Sisters.' It is pleasant to the eye; it is good for food; it shall make you wise in the knowledge of good and evil – good and convincing arguments, specious enough to overbear the counter-pleadings of Obedience. Children should know that such things are before them also; that whenever they want to do wrong capital reasons for doing the wrong thing will occur to them. But, happily, when they want to do right no less cogent reasons for right doing will appear.

After abundant practice in reasoning and tracing out the reasons of others, whether in fact or fiction, children may readily be brought to the conclusions that reasonable and right are not synonymous terms; that reason is their servant, not their ruler – one of those servants which help Mansoul in the governance of his kingdom. But no more than appetite, ambition, or the love of ease, is reason to be trusted with the government of a man, much less that of a state; because well-reasoned arguments are brought into play for a wrong course as for a right. He will see that reason works involuntarily; that all the beautiful steps follow one another in his mind without any activity or intention on his own part; but he need never suppose that he was hurried along into evil by thoughts which he could not help, because reason never begins it. It is only when he chooses to think about some course or plan, as Eve standing before the apples, that reason comes into play; so, if he chooses to think about a purpose that is good, many excellent reasons will hurry up to

support him; but, alas, if he choose to entertain a wrong notion, he, as it were, rings the bell for reason, which enforces his wrong intention with a score of arguments proving that wrong is right.

A due recognition of the function of reason should be an enormous help to us all in days when the air is full of fallacies, and when our personal modesty, that becoming respect for other people which is proper to well-ordered natures whether young or old, makes us willing to accept conclusions duly supported by public opinion or by those whose opinions we value. Nevertheless, it is something to recognize that probably no wrong thing has ever been done or said, no crime committed, but has been justified to the perpetrator by arguments coming to him involuntarily and produced with cumulative force by his own reason. Is Shakespeare ever wrong? And, if so, may we think that a Richard III who gloats over his own villainy as villainy, who is in fact no hypocrite, in the sense of acting, to himself – is hardly true to human nature? Great is Shakespeare! So perhaps Richard was the exception to the rule which makes a man go out and hang himself when at last he sees his incomparable villainy, and does not Richard say in the end – “I myself find in myself no pity for myself”? For ourselves and our children it is enough to know that reason will put a good face on any matter we propose; and, that we can prove ourselves to be in the right is no justification for there is absolutely no theory we may receive, no action we may contemplate, which our reason will not affirm. Of course we know by many infallible proofs that Bacon wrote Shakespeare, and an ingenious person has worked out a chain of arguments proving that Dr. Johnson wrote the Bible! Why not? For a nation of logical thinkers, the French made an extraordinary *faux-pas* when they elected the Goddess of Reason to divine honors. But, indeed, perhaps they did it because they are a logical nation; for logic gives us the very formula of reason, and that which is logically proved is not necessarily right. We need no longer wonder that two men equally upright, equally virtuous, selected out of any company, will hold opposite views on almost any question; and each will support his views by logical argument. So we are at the mercy of the *doctrinaire* in religion, the demagogue in politics, and, dare we say, of the dreamer in science; and we think to save our souls by being in the front rank of opinion in one or the other. But not if we have grown up cognizant of the beauty and wonder of the act of reasoning, and also, of the limitations which attend it.

We must be able to answer the arguments in the air, not so much by counter reasons as by exposing the fallacies in such arguments and proving on our own part the opposite position. For example, “that very lovable, very exasperating but essentially real, though often wrong-headed enthusiast,” Karl Marx, dominates the socialistic thought of today. Point by point, for good or for evil, the Marxian Manifesto of 1848 is coming into force. “For the most advanced countries,” we are told, “the following measures might come into very general application.”

(1) “Expropriation of landed property and application of rent to State Expenditure.”

We have not space to examine the Marxian proposition in detail but let us consider a single fallacy. It is assumed that the rent of landed property is for the sole use, enrichment and enjoyment of the owner. Now the schedule of the Duke of Bedford, for example, published recently, shows that the income derived from park property is inadequate to its upkeep and to the taxes imposed upon the owner. Again, landowners are not only large employers of labor, generally under favorable conditions, but they keep up a very important benefaction; most of the extensive landowners make of their places *public* parks kept in beautiful order at their *private* expense.

(2) “Heavy progressive taxation.”

The fallacy lies in the fact that the proletariat in whose interest the Manifesto was issued must necessarily on account of their numbers be large taxpayers. Therefore it is upon them that heavy progressive taxation will press – as we have all seen in Russia – to the point of their extinction.

(3) “Abolition of inheritance.”

A measure designed to reduce all persons to the same level. As we know, the abolition of class is the main object of socialism. But the underlying fallacy is the assumption that class is stable and is not in a state of continual flux, the continual upward and downward movement as of watery particles in the ocean. The man at the bottom today may be at the top to-morrow, as we see, not only in Soviet Russia, but in most civilized countries. Attempts to control this natural movement are as vain as King Canute’s command to the ocean.

(4) “Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.”

Assumed authority must be supported by tyranny, that worst tyranny which requires all men to think to order, as they must in a Soviet State, or be penalized to make them powerless. The fallacy lies in a misconception of human nature. There is nothing that men will not sacrifice for an idea, for such an idea as that of freedom of thought and of movement.

(5), (6), (7), deal with centralization, credit, of transport, of factories, of instruments of production in the hands of the State – the State, that is, Everyman – the Proletariat, in fact – in whose hands all wealth and means of obtaining wealth shall be lodged.

Here we have a logically thought-out preparation for the government of the people, by the people, for the people; but the underlying fallacy is that it makes for revolution which effects no change but a mere change of rulers, better or worse as may be. In the Soviet Republic, according to the law of perpetual social flux, new rulers would come to the top, arbitrary and tyrannical, because not hemmed in by precedent and custom; and children will be at no loss to show how the last state of a nation so governed is worse than the first.

(8) “Compulsory obligation of labor upon all.”

The initial idea of a Soviet State is that it shall afford due liberty and equal conditions for all. But even in the contemplation of such a State it was necessary to postulate for everybody conscription and the discipline of an army.

(9) “Joint prosecution for Agriculture and Manufacture.”

The aim being the gradual removal of the distinction of town and country. Here is a point in the Manifesto which we should all like to see in practice but – is it possible?

(10) “Public and gratuitous education for all children.”

This happily we have seen carried out with the proviso, ‘for whom it may be necessary or desirable.’ The difficulty lies in the conception of education formed by a Soviet community; and the plea for free education is a specious blind, the intention being such an education as shall train the coming generation in rabid revolutionary principles.

To continue our examination of the Tenth Maxim; the next clause

(b) requires “abolition of children’s labor in factories in its present form.”

So far so good. Happily, we have lived to see this abolition; there may be a sinister reading of the clause but on the surface, it carries the assent of all good citizens.

(c) “Union of education with material production.”

Here from motives of economy we are going the way of the Communists in our Continuation Schools; but a fallacy underlies the maxim which may well frustrate our efforts towards the better education of the people. The assumption is that the boy who learns, say, certain manufacturing processes, *pari passu* with his intellectual education does better in the future than he who gives the full period to education. There is no consensus of the opinion of employers to prove that this is the case. On the contrary, given a likely boy, and a manufacturer will be satisfied that he will soon learn his business in the 'works.' But the function of education is not to give technical skill but to develop a person; the more of a person, the better the work of whatever kind; and as I have said before, the idea of the Continuation School is, or should be, a University course in the 'humanities'; not in what have been called the 'best humanities,' *i.e.*, the Classics, though whether these are in any sense 'best' is a moot question, but in the singularly rich 'humanities' which the English tongue affords.

These Ten Marxian Maxims give us ample ground for discussion not for lectures or for oral lessons, but for following for a few minutes any opening suggested by 'current events,' a feature in the children's Programme of work. But they must follow arguments and detect fallacies for themselves. Reason like the other powers of the mind, requires material to work upon whether embalmed in history and literature, or afloat with the news of a strike or uprising. It is madness to let children face a debatable world with only, say, a mathematical preparation. If our business were to train their power of reasoning, such a training would no doubt be of service; but the power is there already, and only wants material to work upon.

This caution must be borne in mind. Reason, like all other properties of a person, is subject to habit and works upon the material it is accustomed to handle. Plato formed a just judgment on this matter, too,¹ and perceived that mathematics afford no clue to the labyrinth of affairs whether public or private.

We have seen that their reading and the affairs of the day should afford scope and opportunity for the delight in ratiocination proper to children. The fallacies they themselves perpetrate when exposed make them the readier to detect fallacies elsewhere. What are we to do? Are we to waste time in discussing with children every idle and blasphemous proposition that comes their way? Surely not. But we may help them to principles which should enable them to discern these two characters for themselves. A proposition is idle when it rests on nothing and leads to nothing. Again, blasphemy is a sin, the sin of being impudent towards Almighty God, Whom we all know, without any telling, and know Him to be fearful, wonderful, loving, just and good, as certainly as we know that the sun shines or the wind blows. Children should be brought up, too, to perceive that a miracle is not less a miracle because it occurs so constantly and regularly that we call it a law; that sap rises in a tree, that a boy is born with his uncle's eyes, that an answer that we can perceive comes to our serious prayers; these things are not the less miracles because they happen frequently or invariably, and because we have ceased to wonder about them. No doubt so did the people of Jerusalem when our Lord performed many miracles in their streets.

When children perceive that – "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" – is the law which orders nations and individuals: that "My spirit shall not always strive with man," is an awful warning to every people and every person; that to hinder the misdoing, encourage the well-doing of men and nations is incessant labor, the work of the Father and the Son – to a child who

perceives these things miracles will not be matters of supreme moment because all life will be for him matter for wonder and adoration.

Again, if we wish children to keep clear of all the religious clamors in the air, we must help them to understand what religion is:

“Will religion guarantee me my private and personal happiness? To this on the whole I think we must answer, No; and if we approach it with a view to such happiness, then most certainly and absolutely No.”¹

Here is a final and emphatic answer to the quasi-religious offers which are being clamorously pressed upon hesitating souls. Ease of body is offered to these, relief of mind, reparation of loss, even of the final loss when those they love pass away. We may call upon mediums, converse through table-rappings, be healed by faith – faith, that is, in the power of a Healer who manipulates us. Sin is not for us, nor sorrow for sin. We may live in continual odious self-complacency, remote from the anxious struggling souls about us, because, forsooth, there is no sin, sorrow, anxiety or pain, if we will that these things shall not be. That is to say, religion will “guarantee me my private and personal happiness,” will make me immune from every distress and misery of life; and this happy immunity is all a matter within the power of my own will; the person that matters in my religion is myself only. The office of religion for me in such a case is to remove all uneasiness, bodily and spiritual, and to float me into a Nirvana of undisturbed self-complacency. But we must answer with Professor Bosanquet, “absolutely NO.” True religion will not do this for me because the final form of the religion that will do these things is idolatry, self-worship, with no intention beyond self.

To go on with our quotation:

“Well, but if not that then what? We esteem the thing as good and great, but if it simply does nothing for us, how is it to be anything to us? But the answer was the answer to the question and it might be that to a question sounding but slightly different, a very different answer would be returned. We might ask, for instance – ‘does it make my life more worth living?’ And the answer to this might be – ‘It is the only thing that makes life worth living at all.’”

In a word, “I want, am made for and must have a God.”

No doubt through the sweetness of their faith and love children have immediate access to God, and what more would we have? ‘Gentle Jesus’ is about their path and about their bed; angels minister to them; they enjoy all the immunities of the Kingdom. But we may not forget that reason is as active in them as the affections. Towards the end of the last century people had a straight and easy way of giving a reasonable foundation to a child’s belief. All the articles of the Christian Faith were supported by a sort of little catechism of ‘Scripture Proofs’; and this method was not without its uses. But, today, we have to prove the Scriptures if we rely upon Scripture proofs and we must change our point of attack. Children must know that we cannot prove any of the great things of life, not even that we ourselves live; but we must rely upon that which we know without demonstration. We know, too, and this other certainty must be pressed home to them, that reason, so far from being infallible, is most exceedingly fallible, persuadable, open to influence on this side and that; but is all the same a faithful servant, able to prove whatsoever notion is received by the will. Once we are convinced of the fallibility of our own reason we are able to detect the

fallacies in the reasoning of our opponents and are not liable to be carried away by every wind of doctrine. Every mother knows how intensely reasonable a child is and how difficult it is to answer his quite logical and foolishly wrong conclusions. So we need not be deterred from dealing with serious matters with these young neophytes, but only as the occasion occurs; we may not run the risk of boring them with the great questions of life while it is our business to send them forth assured.

We find that, while children are tiresome in arguing about trifling things, often for the mere pleasure of employing their reasoning power, a great many of them are averse to those studies which should, we suppose, give free play to a power that is in them, even if they do not strengthen and develop this power. Yet few children take pleasure in Grammar, especially in English Grammar, which depends so little on inflexion. Arithmetic, again, Mathematics, appeal only to a small percentage of a class or school, and, for the rest, however intelligent, its problems are baffling to the end, though they may take delight in reasoning out problems of life in literature or history. Perhaps we should accept this tacit vote of the majority and cease to put undue pressure upon studies which would be invaluable did the reasoning power of a child wait upon our training, but are on a different footing when we perceive that children come endowed to the full as much with reason as with love; that our business is to provide abundant material upon which this supreme power should work; and that whatever development occurs comes with practice in *congenial fields of thought*. At the same time, we may not let children neglect either of these delightful studies. The time will come when they will delight in words, the beauty and propriety of words; when they will see that words are consecrated as the vehicle of truth and are not to be carelessly tampered with in statement or mutilated in form; and we must prepare them for these later studies. Perhaps we should postpone parsing, for instance, until a child is accustomed to weigh sentences for their sense, should let them dally with figures of speech before we attempt minute analysis of sentences, and should reduce our grammatical nomenclature to a minimum. The fact is that children do not generalize, they gather particulars with amazing industry, but hold their impressions fluid, as it were; and we may not hurry them to formulate. If the use of words be a law unto itself, how much more so the language of figures and lines! We remember how instructive and impressive Ruskin is on the thesis that 'two and two make four' and cannot by any possibility that the universe affords be made to make five or three. From this point of view, of immutable law, children should approach Mathematics; they should see how impressive is Euclid's 'Which is absurd,' just as absurd as would be the statements of a man who said that his apples always fell upwards, and for the same reason. The behavior of figures and lines is like the fall of an apple, fixed by immutable laws, and it is a great thing to begin to see these laws even in their lowliest application. The child whose approaches to Arithmetic are so many discoveries of the laws which regulate number will not divide fifteen pence among five people and give them each sixpence or ninepence; 'which is absurd' will convict him, and in time he will perceive that 'answers' are not purely arbitrary but are to be come at by a little boy's reason. Mathematics are delightful to the mind of man which revels in the perception of law, which may even go forth guessing at a new law until it discover that law; but not every boy can be a champion prize-fighter, nor can every boy 'stand up' to Mathematics. Therefore, perhaps the business of teachers is to open as many doors as possible in the belief that Mathematics is one out of many studies which make for education, a study by no means accessible to everyone. Therefore, it should not monopolize undue time, nor should persons be hindered from useful careers by the fact that they show no great proficiency in studies which are in favor with examiners, no doubt, because solutions are final, and work can be

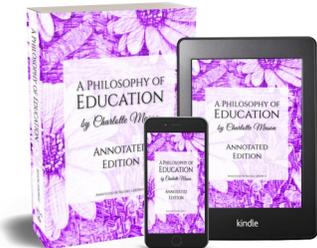
adjudged without the tiresome hesitancy and fear of being unjust which beset the examiners' path in other studies.

We would send forth children informed by "the reason firm, the temperate will, endurance, foresight, strength and skill," but we must add resolution to our good intentions and may not expect to produce a reasonable soul of fine polish from the steady friction, say, of mathematical studies only.

Study Questions

PRINCIPLES #16 - #19

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the Volume 6 audio here in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. Define “the Will.”
3. How is Charlotte’s concept of the Will different from the usual way in which society defines it?
4. What is the difference between having a weak Will and having a strong Will?
5. Why does Charlotte say that having “a strong will is not synonymous with being good”?
6. How do we train the Will?
7. Define “Reason.”
8. What is Reason’s chief function?
9. How is Reason fallible?
10. How do we help students detect fallacies in arguments?
11. If you watched the video linked above, what are your thoughts on the warning to teachers from Haim Ginott?
12. How do Will and Reason play a part in building a student’s character?
13. What is your main job as a teacher / parent when it comes to your child’s Will and Reason?



Need help reading Charlotte’s Volumes? Try [The Annotated Charlotte Mason Series](#) published by A Charlotte Mason Plenary! The annotations help you understand Charlotte’s context, include historical background information, as well as definitions. We try to make it easier for you to really dive in to Charlotte Mason’s philosophy.

Principle # 20

We allow no separation between the intellectual and “spiritual” life of children

Principle #20

VOLUME 6, CH. 10: PART I – THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

I. The Knowledge of God

Of the three sorts of knowledge proper to a child—the knowledge of God, of man, and of the universe—the knowledge of God ranks first in importance, is indispensable, and most happy-making. Mothers are on the whole more successful in communicating this knowledge than are teachers who know the children less well and have a narrower, poorer standard of measurement for their minds. Parents do not talk down to children, but we might gather from educational publications that the art of education as regards young children is to bring conceptions down to their “little” minds. If we give up this foolish prejudice in favor of the grown-up we shall be astonished at the range and depth of children’s minds; and shall perceive that their relation to God is one of those “first-born affinities” which it is our part to help them to make good. A mother knows how to speak of God as she would of an absent father with all the evidences of his care and love about her and his children. She knows how to make a child’s heart beat high in joy and thankfulness as she thrills him with the thought, “my Father made them all,” while his eye delights in flowery meadow, great tree, flowing river. “His are the mountains and the valleys his and the resplendent rivers, whose eyes they fill with tears of holy joy,” and this is not beyond children. We recollect how “Arthur Pendennis” walked in the evening light with his mother and recited great passages from Milton and the eyes of the two were filled “with tears of holy joy,” when the boy was eight. The teacher of a class has not the same tender opportunities but if he take pains to get a just measure of children’s minds it is surprising how much may be done.

The supercilious point of view adopted by some teachers is the cause of the small achievements of their scholars. The “kiddies” in a big girls’ school are not expected to understand and know and they live down to the expectations formed of them. We (of the P.N.E.U.) begin the definite “school” education of children when they are six; they are no doubt capable of beginning a year or two earlier but the fact is that nature and circumstances have provided such a wide field of education for young children that it seems better to abstain from requiring *direct* intellectual efforts until they have arrived at that age.

As for all the teaching in the nature of “told to the children,” most children get their share of that whether in the infant school or at home, but this is practically outside the sphere of that part of education which demands a *conscious mental effort*, from the scholar, the mental effort of telling again that which has been read or heard. That is how we all learn, we tell again, to ourselves if need be, the matter we wish to retain, the sermon, the lecture, the conversation. The method is as old as the mind of man, the distressful fact is that it has been made so little use of in general education. Let us hear Dr. Johnson on the subject:

“Little people should be encouraged always to tell whatever they hear particularly striking to some brother, sister, or servant, immediately, before the impression is erased by the intervention of newer occurrences.” He perfectly remembered the first time he heard of heaven and hell because when his mother had made out such a description of both places as she thought likely to seize the attention of her infant auditor who was then in bed with her, she got up and dressing him before the usual time, sent him directly to call the favorite

workman in the house to whom she knew he would communicate the conversation while it was yet impressed upon his mind. The event was what she wished and it was to that method chiefly that he owed the uncommon felicity of remembering distant occurrences and long past conversations. (Mrs. Piozzi).

Now our objective in this most important part of education is to give the children the knowledge of God. We need not go into the question of intuitive knowledge, but the expressed knowledge attainable by us has its source in the Bible, and perhaps we cannot do a greater indignity to children than to substitute our own or some other benevolent person's rendering for the fine English, poetic diction and lucid statement of the Bible.

Literature at its best is always direct and simple and a normal child of six listens with delight to the tales both of Old and New Testament read to him passage by passage, and by him narrated in turn, with delightful touches of native eloquence. Religion has two aspects, the attitude of the will towards God which we understand by Christianity, and that perception of God which comes from a gradual slow-growing comprehension of the divine dealings with men. In the first of these senses, Goethe was never religious, but the second forms the green reposeful background to a restless and uneasy life and it is worthwhile to consider how he arrived at so infinitely desirable a possession. He gives us the whole history fully in *Aus Meinem Leben*, a treatise on education very well worth our study. There he says,

“Man may turn where he will, he may undertake what he will but he will yet return to that road which Dante has laid down for him. So it happened to me in the present case: my efforts with the language” (Hebrew, when he was ten) “with the contents of the Holy Scriptures, resulted in a most lively presentation to my imagination of that beautiful much-sung land and of the countries which bordered it as well as of the people and events which have glorified that spot of earth for thousands of years ... Perhaps someone may ask why I set forth here in such detail this universally known history so often repeated and expounded. This answer may serve, that in no other way could I show how with the distractions of my life and my irregular education I concentrated my mind and my emotion on one point because I can in no other way account for the peace which enveloped me however disturbed and unusual the circumstances of my life. If an ever active imagination of which the story of my life may bear witness led me here and there, if the medley of fable, history, mythology, threatened to drive me to distraction, I betook myself again to those morning lands, I buried myself in the five books of Moses and there amongst the wide-spreading, shepherd people I found the greatest solitude and the greatest comfort.”

It is well to know how Goethe obtained this repose of soul, this fresh background for his thoughts, and in all the errors of a willful life this innermost repose appears never to have left him. His eyes, we are told, were tranquil as those of a god, and here is revealed the secret of that large tranquility. Here, too, Goethe unfolds for us a principle of education which those who desire their children to possess the passive as well as the active principle of religion would do well to consider; for it is probably true that the teaching of the New Testament, not duly grounded upon or accompanied by that of the Old, fails to result in such thought of God, wide, all-embracing, all-permeating, as David, for example, gives constant expression to in the Psalms. Let us have faith and courage to give children such a full and gradual picture of Old Testament history that they

unconsciously perceive for themselves a panoramic view of the history of mankind typified by that of the Jewish nation as it is unfolded in the Bible. Are our children little sceptics, as was the young Goethe, who take a laughing joy in puzzling their teachers with a hundred difficulties? Like that wise old Dr. Albrecht, let us be in no haste to explain. Let us not try to put down or evade their questions, or to give them final answers, but introduce them as did he to some thoughtful commentator who weighs difficult questions with modesty and scrupulous care. If we act in this way, difficulties will assume their due measure of importance, that is to say, they will be lost sight of in the gradual unfolding of the great scheme whereby the world was educated. I know of no commentator for children, say, from six to twelve, better than Canon Paterson Smyth (*The Bible for the Young*). He is one of the few writers able to take the measure of children's minds, to help them over real difficulties, give impulse to their thoughts and direction to their conduct.

Between the ages of six and twelve children cover the whole of the Old Testament story, the Prophets, major and minor, being introduced as they come into connection with the Kings. The teacher opens the lesson by reading the passage from *The Bible for the Young*, in which the subject is pictorially treated; for example—

“It is the battle field of the valley of Elah. The camp of Israel is on one slope, the big tents of the Philistines on the other. The Israelites are rather small men, lithe and clever, the Philistines are big men, big, stupid, thick-headed giants, the same as when Samson used to fool them and laugh at them long ago. There is great excitement on both sides,” etc.

There will be probably some talk and discussion after this reading. Then the teacher will read the Bible passage in question which the children will narrate, the commentary serving merely as a background for their thoughts. The narration is usually exceedingly interesting; the children do not miss a point and often add picturesque touches of their own. Before the close of the lesson, the teacher brings out such new thoughts of God or new points of behavior as the reading has afforded, emphasizing the moral or religious lesson to be learnt rather by a reverent and sympathetic manner than by any attempt at personal application.

Forms III and IV (twelve to fifteen) read for themselves the whole of the Old Testament as produced by the Rev. H. Costley-White in his *Old Testament History*. Wise and necessary omissions in this work make it more possible to deal with Old Testament History, in the words of the Authorized Version, than if the Bible were used as a single volume. Then, “each period is illustrated by reference to contemporary literature (e.g., Prophets and Psalms and monuments).” Again, “Brief historical explanations and general commentary are inserted in their proper places.” For example, after Genesis iii, we read, as an introduction to the story of Cain and Abel—

“The original object of this story was to explain the development of sin amongst mankind and the origin of homicide which in this first instance was actual murder. There are difficulties in the story which do not admit of satisfactory explanation. It may be asked, “Why did God not accept Cain's offering?” “How was His displeasure shown?” “What was the sign appointed for Cain?” “Whom did he marry?” The best way to answer such questions is to admit that we do not know, but we may add that these early stories are only a selection which do not necessarily form a consistent and complete whole, and that in this very case there are signs that the original story has been cut down and edited.

Among the lessons taught are the following—(1) God judges man's motives rather than his acts. The service of the heart is worth more than any ceremonial. (2) It is not the sin of murder that is condemned so much as the sin of jealousy and malice: cf. the Sermon on the Mount, Matt, xxi, 6. (3) The great doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man, that each man is his brother's keeper and has his share of responsibility for the conditions of the lives of others. (4) Sin always brings its own punishment. (5) God remonstrates with man before the climax of sin is reached.

The footnotes which form the only commentary upon the text are commendably short and to the point.

Having received a considerable knowledge of the Old Testament in detail from the words of the Bible itself and having been trained to accept difficulties freely without giving place to the notion that such difficulties invalidate the Bible as the oracle of God and our sole original source of knowledge concerning the nature of Almighty God and the manner of His government of the world, children are prepared for a further study of divinity, still following the Bible text.

When pupils are of an age to be in Forms V and VI (from 15 to 18) we find that Dummelow's *One Volume Bible Commentary* is of great service. It is designed to provide in convenient form—

“A brief explanation of the meaning of the Scriptures. Introductions have been supplied to the various books and Notes which will help to explain the principal difficulties, textual, moral or doctrinal, which may arise in connection with them. A series of articles has also been prefixed dealing with the larger questions suggested by the Bible as a whole. It is hoped that the Commentary may lead to a perusal of many of the books of Holy Scripture which are often left unread in spite of their rare literary charm and abundant usefulness for the furtherance of the spiritual life ... In recent years much light has been thrown upon questions of authorship and interpretation and the contributors to this volume have endeavored to incorporate in it the most assured results of modern scholarship whilst avoiding opinions of an extreme or precarious kind. Sometimes these results differ from traditional views but in such cases it is not only hoped but believed that the student will find the spiritual value and authority of the Bible have been enhanced rather than diminished by the change.”

The Editor has in these words set forth so justly the aims of the Commentary that I need only say we find it of very great practical value. The pupils read the general articles and the introductions to the separate Books; they read too the Prophets and the poetical books with the notes supplied. Thus they leave school with a fairly enlightened knowledge of the books of the Old Testament and of the aids modern scholarship has brought towards their interpretation; we hope also with increased reverence for and delight in the ways of God with men.

The New Testament comes under another category. The same commentaries are used and the same methods followed, that is, the reverent reading of the text, with the following narration which is often curiously word perfect after a single reading; this is the more surprising because we all know how difficult it is to repeat a passage which we have heard a thousand times; the single attentive reading does away with this difficulty and we are able to assure ourselves that children's minds are stored with perfect word pictures of every tender and beautiful scene described in the Gospels; and are able to reproduce the austere if equally tender teaching which enforces the object lessons of the miracles. By degrees the Person of Our Lord as revealed in His words and His

works becomes real and dear to them, not through emotional appeals but through the impression left by accurate and detailed knowledge concerning the Savior of the World, Who went about doing good. Dogmatic teaching finds its way to them by inference through a quiet realization of the Bible records; and loyalty to a Divine Master is likely to become the guiding principle of their lives.

I should like to urge the importance of what may be called a poetic presentation of the life and teaching of Our Lord. The young reader should experience in this study a curious and delightful sense of harmonious development, of the rounding out of each incident, of the progressive unfolding which characterizes Our Lord's teaching; and, let me say here, the custom of narration lends itself surprisingly to this sort of poetic insight. Every related incident stands out in a sort of bas-relief; every teaching so rendered unfolds its meaning; every argument convinces; and the personages reveal themselves to us more intimately than almost any persons we know in real life. Probably very little hortatory teaching is desirable. The danger of boring young listeners by such teaching is great, and there is also the further danger of provoking counter-opinions, even counter-convictions, in the innocent-looking audience. On the whole we shall perhaps do well to allow the Scripture reading itself to point the moral.

"We are at present in a phase of religious thought, Christian and pseudo-Christian, when a synthetic study of the life and teaching of Christ may well be of use. We have analyzed until the mind turns in weariness from the broken fragments; we have criticized until there remains no new standpoint for the critic; but if we could only get a whole conception of Christ's life among men and of the philosophic method of His teaching, His own words should be fulfilled and the Son of Man lifted up, would draw all men unto Himself. It seems to me that *verse* offers a comparatively new medium in which to present the great theme. It is more impersonal, more condensed, is capable of more reverent handling than is prose; and what Wordsworth calls the "authentic comment" may be essayed in verse with more becoming diffidence. Again, the supreme moment of a very great number of lives, that in which a person is brought face to face with Christ, comes before us with great vividness in the Gospel narratives, and it is possible to treat what we may call dramatic situations with more force, and at the same time with more reticence, in verse than in prose.

We have a single fragment of the great epic which the future may bring forth—

Those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage to the bitter cross.

If Shakespeare had given us the whole how rich should we be! Every line of verse dealing directly with Our Lord from the standpoint of His personality is greatly treasured. We love the lines in which Trench tells us –

"Of Jesus sitting by Samaritan well
Or teaching some poor fishers on the shore."

and Keble's –

"Meanwhile He paces through the adoring crowd

Calm as the march of some majestic cloud.”

or his –

“In His meek power He climbs the mountain’s brow.”

Every line of such verse is precious, but the lines are few, no doubt because the subject is supremely august. Meantime we are waiting for the great epic: because the need seems to be urgent the writer has ventured to offer a temporary stop-gap in the six volumes of *The Saviour of the World*.” (From the Preface to the first volume).

A girl of thirteen and a half (Form IV) in her Easter examination tackled the question: “*The people sat in darkness . . . I am the Light of the World*.” Show as far as you can the meaning of these statements.

She was not asked to write in verse, and was she not taught by a beautiful instinct to recognize that the phrases she had to deal with were essential poetry and that she could best express herself in verse?

The people sat in darkness—all was dim.
 No light had yet come unto them from Him,
 No hope as yet of Heaven after life,
 A peaceful haven far from war and strife.
 Some warriors to Valhalla’s halls might go
 And fight all day, and die. At evening, lo!
 They’d wake again, and drink in the great hall.
 Some men would sleep for ever at their fall;
 Or with their fickle Gods for ever be:
 So all was dark and dim. Poor heathens, see!
The Light ahead, the clouds that roll away,
 The golden, glorious, dawning of the Day;
 And in the birds, the flowers, the sunshine, see
 The might of Him who calls, “Come unto Me.”

A girl of seventeen (Form V) answered the question: *Write an essay or a poem on the Bread of Life*, by the following lines –

“How came He here,” ev’n so the people cried,
 Who found Him in the Temple: He had wrought
 A miracle, and fed the multitude.
 On five small loaves and fish: so now they’d have
 Him king; should not they then have ev’ry good,
 Food that they toiled not for and clothes and care,
 And all the comfort that they could require? –
 So thinking sought the king ...

Our Saviour cried:

“Labor ye not for meat that perisheth,
 But rather for the everlasting bread,
 Which I will give”—Where is this bread, they cry,

They know not 'tis a heavenly bread He gives
 But seek for earthly food—"I am the Bread of Life
 And all who come to Me I feed with Bread.
 Receive ye then the Bread. Your fathers eat
 Of manna in the wilderness—and died –
 But whoso eats this Bread shall have his part
 In everlasting life: I am the Bread,
 That cometh down from Heaven; unless ye eat
 Of me ye die, but otherwise ye live."
 So Jesus taught, in Galilee, long since.
 The people murmured when they heard His Word,
 How can it be? How can He be our Bread?
 They hardened then their hearts against His Word,
 They would not hear, and could not understand,
 And so they turned back to easier ways,
 And many of them walked with Him no more.
 May He grant now that we may hear the Word
 And harden not our hearts against the Truth
 That Jesus came to teach: so that in vain
 He may not cry to hearts that will not hear,
 "I am the Bread of Life, for all that come,
 I have this gift, an everlasting life.
 And room within my Heavenly Father's House."

The higher forms in the P.U.S. read *The Saviour of the World* volume by volume together with the text arranged in chronological order. The lower forms read in turns each of the Synoptic Gospels; Form IV adds the Gospel of St. John and The Acts, assisted by the capital Commentaries on the several Gospels by Bishop Walsham How, published by the S.P.C.K. The study of the Epistles and the Book of Revelation is confined for the most part to Forms V and VI. The Catechism, Prayer-book, and Church History are treated with suitable text-books much in the same manner and give opportunities for such summing-up of Christian teaching as is included in the so-called dogmas of the Church. We find that Sundays together with the time given to preparation for Confirmation afford sufficient opportunities for this teaching.¹

Principle #20

VOLUME 2, CH. 25: THE GREAT RECOGNITION

THE GREAT RECOGNITION REQUIRED OF PARENTS

Ruskin on the “Vaulted Book” – Mr. Ruskin has done a great service to modern thought in interpreting for us the harmonious and ennobling scheme of education and philosophy recorded upon one quarter of what he calls the “Vaulted Book,” that is, the Spanish Chapel attached to the Church of Sta. Maria Novella, in Florence.

Many of my readers have probably studied under Mr. Ruskin’s guidance the illuminating teaching of the frescoes which cover roof and walls; but all will like to be reminded of the lessons they have pondered with reverence and wonder.

“The descent of the Holy Ghost is on the left hand (of the roof) as you enter. The Madonna and Disciples are gathered in an upper chamber: underneath are the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, etc., who hear them speak in their own tongues. Three dogs are in the foreground – their mythic purpose, to mark the share of the lower animals in the gentleness given by the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ ... On this and the opposite side of the Chapel are represented by Simon Memmi’s hand, the teaching power of the Spirit of God and the saving power of the Christ of God in the world, according to the understanding of Florence in his time.

We will take the side of intellect first. Beneath the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit in the point of the arch beneath are the three Evangelical Virtues. Without these, says Florence, you can have no science. Without Love, Faith, and Hope – no intelligence.

Under these are the four Cardinal Virtues ... Temperance, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude. Under these are the great Prophets and Apostles ... Under the line of Prophets, as powers summoned by their voices, are the mythic figures of the seven theological or spiritual and the seven geological or natural sciences; and under the feet of each of them the figure of its Captain-teacher to the world.”

The Seven Natural Sciences – I hope the reader will continue to study Mr. Ruskin’s exposition of the “Vaulted Book” in *Mornings in Florence*: it is wonderfully full of teaching and suggestion. Our immediate concern is with the seven mythic figures representing the natural sciences, and with the figure of the Captain-teacher of each. First, we have Grammar, a gracious figure teaching three Florentine children; and, beneath, Priscian. Next, Rhetoric, strong, calm, and cool; and below, the figure of Cicero with a quite beautiful face. Next, Logic, with perfect pose of figure and lovely countenance; and beneath her, Aristotle – intense keenness of search in his half-closed eyes. Next, Music, with head inclined in intent listening to the sweet and solemn strains she is producing from her antique instrument; and underneath, Tubal Cain, not Jubal, as the inventor of harmony – perhaps the most marvelous record that Art has produced of the impact of a great idea upon the soul of a man but semi-civilized. Astronomy succeeds, with majestic brow and upraised hand, and

below her, Zoroaster, exceedingly beautiful – “the delicate Persian head made softer still by the elaborately wreathed silken hair.” Next, Geometry, looking down, considering some practical problem, with her carpenter’s square in her hand, and below her, Euclid. And lastly, Arithmetic, holding two fingers up in the act of calculating, and under her, Pythagoras wrapped in the science of number.

“The thoughts of God are broader than the measures of man’s mind,”

but here we have the breadth of minds so wide in the sweep of their intelligence, so profound in their insight, that we are almost startled by the perception that, pictured on these walls, we have indeed a true measure of the thoughts of God. Let us glance for a moment at the conception of education in our own century.

Education not Religious and Secular – In the first place, we divide education into religious and secular. The more devout among us insist upon religious education as well as secular. Many of us are content to do without religious education altogether; and are satisfied with what we not only *call* secular but *make* secular, in the sense in which we understand the word, *i.e.* entirely limited to the uses of this visible world.

The Great Recognition – Many Christian people rise a little higher; they conceive that even grammar and arithmetic may in some not very clear way be used for God ; but the great recognition, that God the Holy Spirit is Himself, personally, the Imparter of knowledge, the Instructor of youth, the Inspirer of genius, is a conception so far lost to us that we should think it distinctly irreverent to conceive of the divine teaching as co-operating with ours in a child’s arithmetic lesson, for example. But the Florentine mind of the Middle Ages went further than this: it believed, not only that the seven Liberal Arts were fully under the direct outpouring of the Holy Ghost, but that every fruitful idea, every original conception, whether in Euclid, or grammar, or music, was a direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit, without any thought at all as to whether the person so inspired named himself by the name of God, or recognized whence his inspiration came. All of these seven figures are those of persons whom we should roughly class as pagans, and whom we might be lightly inclined to consider as outside the pale of the divine inspiration. It is truly difficult to grasp the amazing boldness of this scheme of the education of the world which Florence accepted in simple faith.

Knowledge, like Virtue, Divine – But we must not accept even an inspiring idea blindly. Were these people of the Middle Ages right in this plan and conception of theirs? Plato hints at some such thought in his contention that knowledge and virtue are fundamentally identical, and that if virtue be divine in its origin, so must knowledge be also. Ancient Egypt, too, was not in the dark in this matter.

“Pharaoh said unto his servants, can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?” Practical discernment and knowledge of everyday matters, and of how to deal with emergencies, were not held by this king of Egypt to be teachings unworthy of the Spirit of God.

“The Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied among them,” we are told of Saul, and we may believe that this is the history of every great invention and every great discovery of the secrets of Nature.

“Then David gave to Solomon his son ... the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord.” We have here a suggestion of the source of every conception of beauty to be expressed in forms of art.

Science, Art and Poetry “by the Spirit” – But it is not only with high themes of science, art and poetry that the divine Spirit concerns Himself. It sometimes occurs to one to wonder who invented, in the first place, the way of using the most elemental necessities of life. Who first discovered the means of producing fire, of joining wood, of smelting ores, of sowing seed, of grinding corn?

Ideas of Common Things – We cannot think of ourselves as living without knowing these things; and yet each one must have been a great idea when it first made a stir in the mind of the man who conceived it. Where did he get his first idea? Happily, we are told, in a case so typical that it is a key to all the rest:

“Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches and scatter the cumin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cumin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cumin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”

“God doth Instruct” – in the things of science, in the things of art, in the things of practical everyday life, his God doth instruct him and doth teach him, her God doth instruct her and doth teach her. Let this be the mother’s key to the whole of the education of each boy and each girl; not of her *children*; the divine Spirit does not work with nouns of multitude, but with each single child. Because He is infinite, the whole world is not too great a school for this indefatigable Teacher, and because He is infinite, He is able to give the whole of his infinite attention for the whole time to each one of his multitudinous pupils. We do not sufficiently rejoice in the wealth that the infinite nature of our God brings to each of us.

Subjects Divinely Taught – And what subjects are under the direction of this Divine Teacher? The child’s faith and hope and charity – that we already knew; his temperance, justice, prudence and fortitude – that we might have guessed; his grammar, rhetoric, logic, music, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic – this we might have forgotten, if these Florentine teachers had not reminded us; his practical skill in the use of tools and instruments, from a knife and fork to a microscope, and in the sensible management of all the affairs of life – these also come from the Lord, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. His God doth instruct him and doth teach him. Let the mother visualize the thought as an illuminated scroll about her newborn child, and let her never contemplate any kind of instruction for her child, except under the sense of the divine co-operation. But we must remember that here as everywhere the infinite and almighty Spirit of God works under limitations.

Our Co-operation Indispensable – Our co-operation appears to be the indispensable condition of all the divine workings. We recognize this in what we call spiritual things, meaning the things that have to do more especially with our approaches to God; but the new thing to us is, that grammar, for example, may be taught in such a way as to invite and obtain the co-operation of the Divine Teacher, or in such a way as to exclude His illuminating presence from the schoolroom. We do not mean that spiritual virtues may be exhibited by the teacher, and encouraged in the child in the course of a grammar lesson; this is no doubt true, and is to be remembered; but perhaps the immediate point is that the teaching of grammar by its guiding ideas and simple principles, the true, direct, and humble teaching of grammar, without pedantry and without verbiage, is, we may venture to believe, accompanied by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, of whom is all knowledge.

Teaching that Invites and that Repels Divine Co-operation – The contrary is equally true. Such teaching as enwraps a child's mind in folds of many words that his thought is unable to penetrate, which gives him rules and definitions, and tables, in lieu of ideas – this is teaching which excludes and renders impossible the divine co-operation.

Discord in our Lives Resolved – This great recognition resolves that discord in our lives of which most of us are, more or less, aware. The things of sense we are willing to subordinate to the things of spirit; at any rate we are willing to endeavor ourselves in this direction. We mourn over our failures and try again and recognize that here lies the Armageddon for every soul of man. But there is a debatable land. Is it not a fact that the spiritual life is exigent, demands our sole interest and concentrated energies? Yet the claims of intellect – mind, of the aesthetic sense – taste, press upon us urgently. We must think, we must know, we must rejoice in and create the beautiful. And if all the burning thoughts that stir in the minds of men, all the beautiful conceptions they give birth to, are things apart from God, then we too must have a separate life, a life apart from God, a division of ourselves into secular and religious – discord and unrest. We believe that this is the fertile source of the unfaith of the day, especially in young and ardent minds. The claims of intellect are urgent; the intellectual life is a necessity not to be foregone at any hazard. It is impossible for these to recognize in themselves a dual nature; a dual spirituality, so to speak; and, if there are claims which definitely oppose themselves to the claims of intellect, those other claims must go to the wall; and the young man or woman, full of promise and power, becomes a free-thinker, an agnostic, what you will. But once the intimate relation, the relation of Teacher and taught in all things of the mind and spirit, be fully recognized, our feet are set in a large room; there is space for free development in all directions, and this free and joyous development, whether of intellect or heart, is recognized as a Godward movement.

We are Safeguarded from Intellectual as from Moral Sin – Various activities, with unity of aim, bring harmony and peace into our lives; more, this perception of the intimate dealings of the divine Spirit with our spirit in the things of the intellect, as well as in those of the moral nature, makes us as keenly alive in the one case as in the other to the insidious promptings of the spirit of evil; we become aware of the possibility of intellectual sin as of moral sin; we perceive that in the region of pure reason, also, it behooves us to see that we enter not into temptation. We rejoice in the expansion of intellect and the expansion of heart and the ease and freedom of him who is always in touch with the inspiring Teacher, with whom are infinite stores of learning, wisdom, and virtue,

graciously placed at our disposal.

Harmony in our Efforts – Such a recognition of the work of the Holy Spirit as the Educator of mankind, in things intellectual as well as in things moral and spiritual, gives us “new thoughts of God, new hopes of Heaven,” a sense of harmony in our efforts and of acceptance of all that we are. What stands between us and the realization of this more blessed life? This; that we do not realize ourselves as spiritual beings invested with bodies, living, emotional, a snare to us and a joy to us, but which are, after all, the mere organs and interpreters of our spiritual intention. Once we see that we are dealing spirit with spirit with the friend at whose side we are sitting, with the people who attend to our needs, we shall be able to realize how incessant is the commerce between the divine Spirit and our human spirit. It will be to us as when one stops one’s talk and one’s thoughts in the springtime, to find the world full of bird-music unheard the instant before. In like manner we shall learn to make pause in our thoughts, and shall hear in our intellectual perplexities, as well as in our moral, the clear, sweet, cheering and inspiring tones of our spiritual Guide. We are not speaking here of what is commonly called the religious life, or of our definite approaches to God in prayer and praise; these things all Christian people comprehend more or less fully; we are speaking only of the intellectual life, the development of which in children is the aim of our subjects and methods of instruction.

Conditions of Divine Co-operation – Supposing we are willing to make this great recognition, to engage ourselves to accept and invite the daily, hourly, incessant co-operation of the divine Spirit, in, to put it definitely and plainly, the schoolroom work of our children, how must we shape our own conduct to make this co-operation active, or even possible? We are told that the Spirit is life; therefore, that which is dead, dry as dust, mere bare bones, can have no affinity with Him, can do no other than smother and deaden his vitalizing influences. A first condition of this vitalizing teaching is that all the thought we offer to our children shall be *living* thought; no mere dry summaries of facts will do; given the vitalizing idea, children will readily hang the mere facts upon the idea as upon a peg capable of sustaining all that it is needful to retain. We begin by believing in the children as spiritual beings of unmeasured powers – intellectual, moral, spiritual – capable of receiving and constantly enjoying intuitions from the intimate converse of the Divine Spirit.

Teaching Must be Fresh and Living – With this thought of a child to begin with, we shall perceive that whatever is stale and flat and dull to us must needs be stale and flat and dull to him, and also that there is no subject which has not a fresh and living way of approach. Are we teaching geography? The child discovers with the explorer, journeys with the traveler, receives impressions new and vivid from some other mind which is immediately receiving these impressions; not after they have been made stale and dull by a process of filtering through many intermediate minds, and have found at last their way into a little text-book. Is he learning history? his concern is not with strings of names and of dates, nor with nice little reading-made-easy stories, brought down, as we mistakenly say, to the level of his comprehension; we recognize that his power of comprehension is at least equal to our own, and that it is only his ignorance of the attendant circumstances we have to deal with as luminously as we can.

Books Must be Living – We recognize that history for him is, to live in the lives of those strong personalities which at any given time impress themselves most upon their age and country. This is not the sort of thing to be got out of nice little history books for children, whether “Little Arthur’s,”

or somebody's "Outlines." We take the child to the living sources of history – a child of seven is fully able to comprehend *Plutarch*, in Plutarch's own words (translated), without any diluting and with little explanation. Give him living thought in this kind, and you make possible the co-operation of the living Teacher. The child's progress is by leaps and bounds, and you wonder why. In teaching music, again, let him once perceive the beautiful laws of harmony, the personality, so to speak, of Music, looking out upon him from among the queer little black notes, and the piano lesson has ceased to be drudgery.

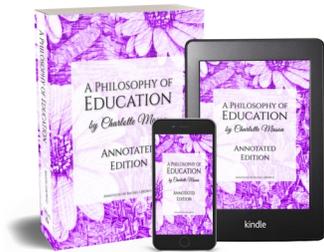
No Neat System is of Use – It is unnecessary to go further into details; every subject has its living way, with what Coleridge calls "its guiding idea" at the head, and it is only as we discover this living way in each case that a subject of instruction makes for the education of a child. No neat system is of any use; it is the very nature of a system to grow stale in the using; every subject, every division of a subject, every lesson, in fact, must be brought up for examination before it is offered to the child as to whether it is living, vital, of a nature to invite the living Intellect of the universe.

Children Must Have the Best Books – One more thing is of vital importance; children must have books, living books; the best are not too good for them; anything less than the best is not good enough; and if it is needful to exercise economy, let go everything that belongs to soft and luxurious living before letting go the duty of supplying the books, and the frequent changes of books, which are necessary for the constant stimulation of the child's intellectual life. We need not say one word about the necessity for living thought in the teacher; it is only so far as he is intellectually alive that he can be effective in the wonderful process which we glibly call "education."

Study Questions

PRINCIPLE #20

1. [Watch the video and/or listen to the Volume 6 audio here in our free 20 Principles Course.](#)
2. How has society separated the divine life and the intellectual life?
3. What does “divine life” mean to you and your family?
4. What does “Knowledge of God” mean to you and your family?
5. What is “The Great Recognition” that Charlotte speaks of?
6. How can you ensure that the divine life and the intellectual life are not separated?



Need help reading Charlotte’s Volumes? Try [The Annotated Charlotte Mason Series](#) published by A Charlotte Mason Plenary! The annotations help you understand Charlotte’s context, include historical background information, as well as definitions. We try to make it easier for you to really dive in to Charlotte Mason’s philosophy.