MIND, CHARACTER, AND PERSONALITY
VOLUME 1

by

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In Ellen G. White’s lifetime (1827-1915) psychology, the science that treats of the mind and its powers and functions, was in its infancy. Yet there emerges throughout her writings a distinctive philosophy in which guidelines in this science and mental health are clearly portrayed.

The purpose of this compilation is to bring together for convenient study the Ellen G. White statements in this broad, important, and sometimes controversial field. Seventh-day Adventists, and others with their conviction that the author wrote under the influence of the Spirit of God, treasure guidance in a field so vital to all humanity at a time when schools of psychological thought are varied and changing.

The soundness of Ellen White’s views in the areas of physiology, nutrition, and education, as well as in other fields, has been well demonstrated. There is no doubt that as research in psychology and mental health progresses, her reputation for setting forth sound psychological principles will also be firmly established. To the devout Adventist this work, Mind, Character, and Personality, will supply many answers. We are certain that as truth unfolds, the positions taken here will be widely accepted.

In these circumstances the occasional appearance of such expressions as “I saw,” “I was shown,” “I have been instructed,” are not only understood, but are welcomed for the assurance they give that the concepts portrayed originated with Him who shaped the human mind.
In assembling this material in the White Estate offices no attempt has been made to select passages that support views advocated by various authorities in the fields of education and psychology. No preconceived views held by the compilers are represented here. Rather, an effort has been made to allow Ellen White to propound her views freely. This has been accomplished by drawing from the vast store of her published writings, penned through six decades, as they appear in current or out-of-print books, pamphlets, thousands of periodical articles, and in her voluminous manuscript and correspondence files.

A large portion of Mind, Character, and Personality presents general guiding principles. This is interspersed and supplemented with materials setting forth practical admonitions and counsels in the setting of the relationship of the teacher and the student, the minister and the parishioner, the physician and the patient, or the parent and the child.

The counsels in scores of instances addressed to an executive, minister, physician, teacher, editor, husband, homemaker, or youth may, in their revelation or circumstances and advice given, partake somewhat of the form of case histories. Attention should be directed to the principles involved.

Obviously Ellen White did not write as a psychologist. She did not employ terminology in common usage in the field of psychology today. In fact, the reader must even approach her uses of the words “psychology,” “phrenology,” etc., with understanding. The knowledgeable reader, however, will be deeply impressed by her unusual insight into basic principles of psychology, which these writings evince. The Ellen G. White statements on the various aspects of the mind, its vital place in the human experience, its potentials, and the factors that lead to its optimum functioning yield a choice addition to the Ellen G. White books issued posthumously. These help us to comprehend what human beings are and to understand their relationship to their earthly environment, to God, and to the universe.

When work was first begun on this compilation, it was
thought that it would have its widest appeal to those studying particularly in the field of mental health. Hence, an arrangement has been followed that would make statements readily available to those considering classified areas. The researcher should understand that while an attempt has been made to avoid redundancy, a few key statements are repeated in some chapters because the student would expect to find them under different appropriate headings. It is now clear that this compilation is of vital interest to all Adventists and to their friends as well, for all of us are involved in the battle for the mind.

The work of the compilers has been confined to the selection of the materials, placing these in what seemed to be a logical sequence, and supplying the headings, including the side headings that introduce the items chosen. An attempt has been made to include, on the subjects presented, all essential statements penned through the years of Ellen White's active service, thus taking advantage of approaching a given point from all angles and presenting the widest possible coverage. In so doing there is here and there repetition of thought in general basic lines, but each phrase makes a contribution to the subject under discussion. Thus Mind, Character, and Personality is somewhat encyclopedic.

Each quotation carries a specific credit to its source in the Ellen G. White materials, making it possible for the reader in many cases to turn to the full original context. In the interest of conserving space, the commonly accepted abbreviations to the E. G. White writings are employed in the source references. A key to these abbreviations follows in the introductory pages. In all cases the date of writing or of first publication is supplied. The original sources are given as primary references, and if currently available in book form the appropriate current published references appear. Credits to The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary are to the E. G. White supplementary statements appearing at the close of each of the Commentary volumes, or in volume 7a of The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary.
Limitation of space has precluded the inclusion in these volumes of some mind-related topics, such as "insanity," etc., for which the reader is referred to the Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White or the CD-ROM of her published works.

This compilation has been prepared in the offices of the Ellen G. White Estate under the direction of the Board of Trustees as authorized by Ellen White in her will. Unlike most compilations of Ellen G. White materials, it was first released in temporary form under the title Guidelines to Mental Health, for classroom testing and for critical reading by Adventist educators, psychologists, and psychiatrists. It was the desire of the White Estate to make certain that all known statements relevant to the topics represented were taken into account and that the arrangement of materials was acceptable.

In its present form it represents somewhat of a revision in the selection of items and an improvement in the order of their appearance. A chapter titled "Love and Sexuality in the Human Experience" has been added. Additions have rounded out certain chapters, and some deletions have eliminated unnecessary repetition. Paging is continuous through the two volumes, and the Scripture and subject indexes to the entire work are at the close.

That the clearly traced picture of the great controversy between the forces of good and evil for the control of the human mind may warn and enlighten readers and provide suggestions and direction for choosing that which will give safe guidance today and ensure a future inheritance in the life to come is the earnest hope of

The Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate

Silver Spring, Maryland
April 2001
Contents

VOLUME I

SECTION I  THE STUDY OF THE MIND
1. Its Importance ................................................. 3
2. The Christian and Psychology ................................. 10
3. Dangers in Psychology ........................................... 18
4. Spiritual Influences and the Mind ............................ 27
5. The Fanatical Mind ............................................... 38
6. A Healthy Normality ............................................ 48

SECTION II  BASIC RELATIONSHIPS
7. Disease That Begins in the Mind ............................... 59
8. Religion and the Mind ............................................. 65
9. Mind, the Citadel .................................................. 72
10. Understanding .................................................... 78

SECTION III  DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIND
11. Bible Study and the Mind ......................................... 89
12. Diligence .......................................................... 99
13. Food for the Mind ................................................ 107
14. Exercise .......................................................... 115
15. Emotional Factors ............................................... 123

SECTION IV  THE GROWING PERSONALITY
16. Prenatal Influences ............................................... 131
17. Heredity and Environment ..................................... 142
18. Security in the Home ............................................ 152
19. Parental Influences .............................................. 163
20. The Home Atmosphere ........................... 174
21. Christ Deals With Minds .......................... 181
22. The School and the Teacher ......................... 187

SECTION V  LIFE’S ENERGIZING FORCE
23. Love—A Divine, Eternal Principle .................. 205
24. Love in the Home .................................. 211
25. Love and Sexuality in the Human Experience .... 218
26. Brotherly Love ..................................... 240
27. God’s Love .......................................... 247

SECTION VI  SELFISHNESS AND SELF-RESPECT
28. Self-respect ......................................... 255
29. Dependence and Independence ....................... 261
30. Selfishness and Self-centeredness ..................... 271

SECTION VII  ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH
31. Problems of Youth ................................ 281
32. Infatuation and Blind Love .......................... 295
33. Dangers Facing Youth ................................ 308
34. Conscience ........................................... 319

SECTION VIII  GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN EDUCATION
35. The Influence of Perception ......................... 331
36. Principles of Motivation ............................. 341
37. Principles of Study and Learning ..................... 350
38. Balance in Education ................................. 359

VOLUME II

SECTION IX  INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BODY AND MIND
39. Harmonious Action of the Whole Personality Necessary ........ 373
40. Body Affects Mind .................................. 380
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section X</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mental Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Laws Governing the Mind</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Human Relations</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>Mental Hygiene</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section XI</strong></td>
<td><strong>Emotional Problems</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Grief</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Worry and Anxiety</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td>Controversy—Positive and Negative</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>Overstudy</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>Hatred and Revenge</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section XII</strong></td>
<td><strong>Problems in Adjustment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.</td>
<td>Character Formation</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td>Conflict and Conformity</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.</td>
<td>The Vital Function of God’s Laws</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section XIII</strong></td>
<td><strong>Personality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>Imagination</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>Habits</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>Indolence</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>Emotional Needs</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.</td>
<td>Disposition</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
68. Social Relationships ........................................... 621
69. Rejection ......................................................... 630
70. Criticism ......................................................... 635
71. Happiness ....................................................... 641

SECTION XIV  THOUGHTS AND THEIR INFLUENCES
72. Thought Habits .................................................. 655
73. Right Thinking .................................................. 665
74. Doubts ............................................................ 671
75. Imagination and Illness ......................................... 681
76. Decision and the Will ........................................... 685

SECTION XV  FALSE SYSTEMS OF THERAPY
77. Pseudoscience ................................................... 697
78. Mind Controlling Mind ........................................... 704
79. Hypnotism and Its Dangers ..................................... 711
80. Satan's Science of Self-exaltation ............................. 722

SECTION XVI  PRINCIPLES AND THEIR APPLICATION
81. Safe Mind Therapy ............................................... 731
82. Working With Science ........................................... 739
83. Geriatrics ......................................................... 745

SECTION XVII  PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGY
84. Dealing With Emotions .......................................... 755
85. Counseling ........................................................ 763
86. Sharing Confidences ............................................. 775
87. Psychology and Theology ....................................... 781
88. Negative Influences on the Mind .............................. 789
89. Positive Influences on the Mind .............................. 797

APPENDIX A .......................................................... 807
APPENDIX B .......................................................... 811
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>The Acts of the Apostles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>The Adventist Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>An Appeal to Mothers Relative to the Great Cause of the Physical, Mental, and Moral Ruin of Many of the Children of Our Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1BC</td>
<td>The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1 (2BC, etc., for vols. 2-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Counsels on Diet and Foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Christian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Child Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChS</td>
<td>Christian Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>Counsels on Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Colporteur Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>Christ's Object Lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Counsels on Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Counsels on Sabbath School Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTBH</td>
<td>Christian Temperance (E. G. White) and Bible Hygiene (James White)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW</td>
<td>Counsels to Writers and Editors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>The Desire of Ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ev</td>
<td>Evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EW</td>
<td>Early Writings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Christian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC</td>
<td>The Great Controversy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCB</td>
<td>General Conference Bulletin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GH</td>
<td>Good Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GW</td>
<td>Gospel Workers (1892, 1915)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>Health: or How to Live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>In Heavenly Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPM</td>
<td>Health, Philanthropic, and Medical Missionary Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Health Reformer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Life Sketches of Ellen G. White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION I

THE STUDY OF THE MIND
The Nicest Work. To deal with minds is the nicest work in which men ever engaged. 3T 269 (1873).

To Know the Laws That Govern Mind and Body. It is the duty of every person, for his own sake and for the sake of humanity, to inform himself in regard to the laws of life and conscientiously to obey them. All need to become acquainted with that most wonderful of all organisms, the human body. They should understand the functions of the various organs and the dependence of one upon another for the healthy action of all. They should study the influence of the mind upon the body and of the body upon the mind, and the laws by which they are governed. M H 128 (1905).

Train and Discipline the Mind. No matter who you are... the Lord has blessed you with intellectual faculties capable of vast improvement. Cultivate your talents with persevering earnestness. Train and discipline the mind by study, by observation, by reflection. You cannot meet the mind of God unless you put to use every power. The mental faculties will strengthen and develop if you will go to work in the fear of God, in humility, and with ear-
nest prayer. A resolute purpose will accomplish wonders. LS 275 (1915).

**Potential of the Disciplined Mind.** Self-discipline must be practiced. An ordinary mind, well disciplined, will accomplish more and higher work than will the most highly educated mind and the greatest talents without self-control. COL 335 (1900).

**To Deal With Minds a Paramount Work.** The future of society is indexed by the youth of today. In them we see the future teachers and lawmakers and judges, the leaders and the people, that determine the character and destiny of the nation. How important, then, the mission of those who are to form the habits and influence the lives of the rising generation.

To deal with minds is the greatest work ever committed to men. The time of parents is too valuable to be spent in the gratification of appetite or the pursuit of wealth or fashion. God has placed in their hands the precious youth, not only to be fitted for a place of usefulness in this life but to be prepared for the heavenly courts. HS 209 (1886) (Te 270).

**Teacher’s Usefulness Depends Upon a Trained Mind.** The teacher’s usefulness depends not so much upon the actual amount of his acquirements as upon the standard at which he aims. The true teacher is not content with dull thoughts, an indolent mind, or a loose memory. He constantly seeks higher attainments and better methods. His life is one of continual growth. In the work of such a teacher there is a freshness, a quickening power, that awakens and inspires his pupils. Ed 278 (1903).

**He Will Strive for the Highest Mental and Moral Excellence.** To know oneself is a great knowledge. The teacher who rightly estimates himself will let God mold
and discipline his mind. And he will acknowledge the source of his power. . . . Self-knowledge leads to humility and to trust in God, but it does not take the place of efforts for self-improvement. He who realizes his own deficiencies will spare no pains to reach the highest possible standard of physical, mental, and moral excellence. No one should have a part in the training of youth who is satisfied with a lower standard. SpTEd 50 (1896) (CT 67).

**Prepares for Eternity.** In all your work you must do as the husbandman does in laboring for the fruits of the earth. Apparently he throws away the seed; but, buried in the soil, the seed germinates. The power of the living God gives it life and vitality, and there is seen “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” (Mark 4:28). Study this wonderful process. Oh, there is so much to learn, so much to understand! If we improve our minds to the utmost of our ability we shall through the eternal ages continue to study the ways and works of God and to know more and more of Him. CT 252 (1913).

**Science of Christianity and the Mind.** There is a science of Christianity to be mastered—a science as much deeper, broader, higher, than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for men are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. Often the training and education of a lifetime must be discarded that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. The heart must be educated to become steadfast in God. Old and young are to form habits of thought that will enable them to resist temptation. They must learn to look upward. The principles of the Word of God—principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity—are to be understood in their bearing on the daily life. Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles. CT 20 (1913).
**Advancement Only Through Conflict.** No other science is equal to that which develops in the life of the student the character of God. Those who become followers of Christ find that new motives of action are supplied, new thoughts arise, and new actions must result. But they can make advancement only through conflict, for there is an enemy who ever contends against them, presenting temptations to cause the soul to doubt and sin. There are hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil that must be overcome. Appetite and passion must be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. There is no end to the warfare this side of eternity. But while there are constant battles to fight, there are also precious victories to gain; and the triumph over self and sin is of more value than the mind can estimate. CT 20 (1913).

**The Duty of Every Christian to Develop Mind.** It is the duty of every Christian to acquire habits of order, thoroughness, and dispatch. There is no excuse for slow bungling at work of any character. When one is always at work and the work is never done, it is because mind and heart are not put into the labor. The one who is slow and who works at a disadvantage should realize that these are faults to be corrected. He needs to exercise his mind in planning how to use the time so as to secure the best results. By tact and method, some will accomplish as much in five hours as others do in ten.

Some who are engaged in domestic labor are always at work, not because they have so much to do but because they do not plan so as to save time. By their slow, dilatory ways they make much work out of very little. But all who will may overcome these fussy, lingering habits. In their work let them have a definite aim. Decide how long a time is required for a given task, and then bend every effort toward accomplishing the work in the given time. The exercise of the willpower will make the hands move deftly. COL 344 (1903).
To Train Every Power of Mind and Body. God has given to every human being a brain. He desires that it shall be used to His glory. . . . We have none too much brain-power or reasoning faculties. We are to educate and train every power of mind and body—the human mechanism that Christ has bought—in order that we may put it to the best possible use. We are to do all we can to strengthen these powers, for God is pleased to have us become more and still more efficient colaborers with Him. Sermon at St. Helena Sanitarium, Jan. 23, 1904 (1SM 100).

The Cultivated Mind Measures the Man. Never think that you have learned enough and that you may now relax your efforts. The cultivated mind is the measure of the man. Your education should continue during your lifetime; every day you should be learning and putting to practical use the knowledge gained. MH 499 (1905).

The similarity between an uncultivated field and an untrained mind is striking. Children and youth already have in their minds and hearts corrupt seed, ready to spring up and bear its perverting harvest; and the greatest care and watchfulness are needed in cultivating and storing the mind with precious seeds of Bible truth. RH, Nov. 9, 1886 (OHC 202).

Acquiring Knowledge and Mental Culture. Upon the right improvement of our time depends our success in acquiring knowledge and mental culture. The cultivation of the intellect need not be prevented by poverty, humble origin, or unfavorable surroundings. . . . A resolute purpose, persistent industry, and careful economy of time will enable men to acquire knowledge and mental discipline which will qualify them for almost any position of influence and usefulness. COL 343, 344 (1900).
Understanding Minds of Great Value in Dealing With the Sick. Great wisdom is needed in dealing with diseases caused through the mind. A sore, sick heart, a discouraged mind, needs mild treatment. . . . Sympathy and tact will often prove a greater benefit to the sick than will the most skillful treatment given in a cold, indifferent way. MH 244 (1905).

Understanding Minds and Human Nature Aids in Work of Salvation. Be determined to become as useful and efficient as God calls you to be. Be thorough and faithful in whatever you undertake. Procure every advantage within your reach for strengthening the intellect. Let the study of books be combined with useful manual labor, and by faithful endeavor, watchfulness, and prayer secure the wisdom that is from above. This will give you an all-round education. Thus you may rise in character, and gain an influence over other minds, enabling you to lead them in the path of uprightness and holiness. COL 334 (1900).

Mechanics, lawyers, merchants, men of all trades and professions, educate themselves that they may become masters of their business. Should the followers of Christ be less intelligent, and while professedly engaged in His service be ignorant of the ways and means to be employed? The enterprise of gaining everlasting life is above every earthly consideration. In order to lead souls to Jesus there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind. Much careful thought and fervent prayer are required to know how to approach men and women upon the great subject of truth. 4T 67 (1876).

Cultivated Powers Increase Demand for Our Services. Through lack of determination to take themselves in hand and reform, persons can become stereotyped in a wrong course of action; or by cultivating their
powers they may acquire ability to do the very best of service. Then they will find themselves in demand anywhere and everywhere. They will be appreciated for all that they are worth. C O L 344 (1900).

**We May Attain Almost the Excellence of Angels.** The Lord has given man capacity for continual improvement, and has granted him all possible aid in the work. Through the provisions of divine grace we may attain almost to the excellence of the angels. R H, June 20, 1882 (O H C 218).
Laws of the Mind Ordained by God. He who created the mind and ordained its laws, provided for its development in accordance with them.* Ed 41 (1903).

True Principles of Psychology in Scriptures. The true principles of psychology are found in the Holy Scriptures. Man knows not his own value. He acts according to his unconverted temperament of character because he does not look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith. He who comes to Jesus, he who believes on Him and makes Him his Example, realizes the meaning of the words “To them gave He power to become the sons of God.” . . .

Those who pass through the experience of true conversion will realize, with keenness of perception, their responsibility to God to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, their responsibility to make complete their recovery from the leprosy of sin. Such an experience will lead them humbly and trustfully to place their dependence upon God. MS 121, 1902 (ML 176).

*Note: There is perfect harmony between the Bible and true science. Psychology is the science and study of the mind and human behavior.—Compilers.
Mind Devoted to God Develops Harmoniously. God takes men as they are and educates them for His service if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, quickens all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the mind that is devoted unrestrainedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciples that the Christian becomes like his master in character. He has clearer, broader views. His discernment is more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. So quickened is he by the life-giving power of the Sun of righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. GW 285, 286 (1915).

The Science of a Pure Christian Life. The science of a pure, wholesome, consistent Christian life is obtained by studying the Word of the Lord. This is the highest education that any earthly being can obtain. These are the lessons that the students in our schools are to be taught, that they may come forth with pure thoughts and clean minds and hearts, prepared to ascend the ladder of progress and to practice the Christian virtues. This is why we wish our schools connected with our sanitariums and our sanitariums with our schools. These institutions are to be conducted in the simplicity of the gospel given in the Old Testament and in the New. MS 86, 1905.

Surrounded With an Atmosphere of Peace. All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. . . . We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, “Be still, and know that I am God.” . . . Amid the hurrying throngs and
the strain of life’s intense activities he who is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. MH 58 (1905).

**The Religion of Christ an Effectual Remedy.** Satan is the originator of disease; and the physician is warring against his work and power. Sickness of the mind prevails everywhere. . . . Infidels have made the most of these unfortunate cases [in which home troubles, remorse for sin, fear of an eternally burning hell, have unbalanced the mind], attributing insanity to religion; but this is a gross libel and one which they will not be pleased to meet by and by. The religion of Christ, so far from being the cause of insanity, is one of its most effectual remedies; for it is a potent soother of the nerves. 5T 443, 444 (1885).

**Entering the Region of Peace.** When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light. Rest in Christ’s love and under His protecting care. . . . Entering into communion with the Saviour, we enter the region of peace. MH 250 (1905).

**All Undue Anxieties Dismissed.** When men go forth to their daily toil, as when they engage in prayer; when they lie down at night, and when they rise in the morning; when the rich man feasts in his palace, or when the poor man gathers his children about the scanty board, each is tenderly watched by the heavenly Father. No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark.

If we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed. Our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now; for everything, whether great or small, would be left in the hands of God, who is not perplexed by the multiplicity of
cares or overwhelmed by their weight. We should then enjoy a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers. SC 86 (1892).

**Training the Soul by Discipline.** Christians, is Christ revealed in us? We must labor to have sound bodies and strong minds that are not easily enfeebled, minds that look beyond self to the cause and result of every movement made. Then we are in a fair way to endure hardness as good soldiers. We need minds that can see difficulties and go through with them with the wisdom that comes from God, that can wrestle with hard problems and conquer them. The hardest problem is to crucify self, to endure hardness in spiritual experiences, training the soul by severe discipline. This will not, perhaps, bring the very best satisfaction at the first, but the aftereffect will be peace and happiness. Lt 43, 1899.

**Christ Has Power to Invigorate and Restore.** And while Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ's mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted. Ed 28, 29 (1903).

**Either God or Satan Controls.** Satan takes control of every mind that is not decidedly under the control of the Spirit of God. Lt 57, 1895 (TM 79).

**Every Sin Cherished Weakens the Character.** And let none flatter themselves that sins cherished for a time can easily be given up by and by. This is not so. Every sin cherished weakens the character and strengthens habit;
and physical, mental, and moral depravity is the result. You may repent of the wrong you have done, and set your feet in right paths; but the mold of your mind and your familiarity with evil will make it difficult for you to distinguish between right and wrong. Through the wrong habits formed, Satan will assail you again and again. *COL* 281 (1900).

**The Teacher’s Psychological Qualifications.** The habits and principles of a teacher should be considered of even greater importance than his literary qualifications. If he is a sincere Christian, he will feel the necessity of having an equal interest in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars.

In order to exert the right influence he should have perfect control over himself, and his own heart should be richly imbued with love for his pupils, which will be seen in his looks, words, and acts. He should have firmness of character, and then he can mold the minds of his pupils as well as instruct them in the sciences. The early education of youth generally shapes their characters for life. Those who deal with the young should be very careful to call out the qualities of the mind, that they may better know how to direct its powers so that they may be exercised to the very best account. *3T* 135 (1872).

**Man to Become a New Creature.** Men are to become the subjects of Christ’s kingdom. Through the divine power imputed to them they are to return to their allegiance. By laws and resources God has ordained a heavenly communication with man’s spiritual life that in its action is as mysterious as the science and operation of the wind (John 3:7, 8). Christ declared, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). While it imprints its influence upon earthly governments, it cannot take the slightest imprint from them without marring the divine similitude.

So spiritual is the character of God’s work upon the
human heart that receives it that it makes every one a new creature without destroying or weakening any capability God has given to man. It purifies every attribute fit for connection with the divine nature. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, and when man is born from above, a heavenly peace pervades the soul. MS 1, 1897 (SpTBC, No. 3, pp. 8, 9).

**Right Excludes Wrong.** Parents, you are the ones to decide whether the minds of your children shall be filled with ennobling thoughts or with vicious sentiments. You cannot keep their active minds unoccupied, neither can you frown away evil. Only by the inculcation of right principles can you exclude wrong thoughts. Unless parents plant the seeds of truth in the hearts of their children, the enemy will sow tares. Good, sound instruction is the only preventive of the evil communications that corrupt good manners. Truth will protect the soul from the endless temptations that must be encountered. CT 121 (1913).

**Only One Day Is Mine.** Day by day we are all to be trained, disciplined, and educated for usefulness in this life. Only one day at a time—think of this. One day is mine. I will in this one day do my best. I will use my talent of speech to be a blessing to some other one, a helper, a comforter, an example which the Lord my Saviour shall approve. I will exercise myself in patience, kindness, forbearance, that the Christian virtues may be developed in me today.

Every morning dedicate yourself, soul, body, and spirit, to God. Establish habits of devotion and trust more and more in your Saviour. You may believe with all confidence that the Lord Jesus loves you and wishes you to grow up to His stature of character. He wishes you to grow in His love, to increase and strengthen in all the fullness of divine love. Then you will gain a knowledge of the highest value for time and for eternity. Lt 36, 1901 (HP 227).
How Well-balanced Minds May Be Developed. Labor is a blessing. It is impossible for us to enjoy health without labor. All the faculties should be called into use that they may be properly developed and that men and women may have well-balanced minds. 3T 154, 155 (1872).

Knowledge and Science Must Be Vitalized by the Holy Spirit. It is only when brought under the full control of the Spirit of God that the talents of an individual are rendered useful to the fullest extent. The precepts and principles of religion are the first steps in the acquisition of knowledge and lie at the very foundation of true education. Knowledge and science must be vitalized by the Spirit of God in order to serve the noblest purposes.

The Christian alone can make the right use of knowledge. Science, in order to be fully appreciated, must be viewed from a religious standpoint. Then all will worship the God of science. The heart which is ennobled by the grace of God can best comprehend the real value of education. The attributes of God as seen in His created works can be appreciated only as we have a knowledge of the Creator.

The teachers must be acquainted not only with the theory of the truth but must have an experimental knowledge of the way of holiness in order to lead the youth to the fountains of truth, to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Knowledge is power for good only when united with true piety. A soul emptied of self will be noble. Christ abiding in the heart by faith will make us wise in God's sight. MS 44, 1894.

Whole Being Open to Healing Agencies of Heaven. Christ is the wellspring of life. That which many need is to have a clearer knowledge of Him; they need to be patiently and kindly, yet earnestly, taught how the whole being may be thrown open to the healing agencies of heaven. When the sunlight of God's love illuminates the
darkened chambers of the soul, restless weariness and dissatisfaction will cease and satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind and health and energy to the body. MH 247 (1905).

Graces Not Developed in a Moment. The precious graces of the Holy Spirit are not developed in a moment. Courage, fortitude, meekness, faith, unwavering trust in God's power to save, are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right the children of God are to seal their destiny. MH 454 (1905).