

**MENTAL DISCIPLINE; OR,
HINTS ON THE CULTIVATION
OF INTELLECTUAL AND
MORAL HABITS**

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Mental Discipline; Or, Hints on the Cultivation of Intellectual and Moral Habits by Henry Forster Burder

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HENRY FORSTER BURDER

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MENTAL DISCIPLINE;

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INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL HABITS:

ADDRESSED PARTICULARLY TO

STUDENTS IN THEOLOGY

AND

YOUNG PREACHERS.

BY

HENRY FORSTER BURDER, M. A.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN every system of liberal education, there are two objects to be proposed and accomplished,—the communication of valuable knowledge, and the formation of those mental habits which may facilitate subsequent attainments. Of these two objects, the latter is indisputably the more important; although by many “it has been unfortunately forgotten, that the communication of truth is only one half of the business of education, and is not even the most important half.” In this opinion, expressed by Dr. Barrow, Mr. Locke also concurs. “As it is in the body,” observes this great philosopher, “so it is in the mind: practice makes it what it is; and most even of those excellencies which are looked on as natural endowments, will be found, when examined into more minutely, to be the product of exercise, and to be raised to that pitch by repeated actions.” In another part of his *Essay on the Conduct of the Human Understanding*, he observes, to the same effect, that, “the faculties of the soul are improved and made useful to us, just after the same manner as our bodies are. Would you have a

man," he asks, "write or paint well, or perform any other mechanical operation dexterously and with ease; let him have ever so much vigour and activity, suppleness and address, yet nobody expects this from him, unless he has been used to it, and has employed time and pains in fashioning and forming his hand or other parts to these motions. Just so it is in the mind. Would you have a man reason well, you must use him to it betimes, exercise his mind in it, observing the connexion of ideas, and following them in train."

If then the cultivation of habits favourable to mental improvement be the most important object at which an instructor can aim in his plan of education, it is in a high degree desirable that he should adopt that mode of communicating knowledge to his pupils, by which their powers of mind may be excited to the most vigorous exercise, and subjected to the control of the most beneficial discipline.

In the course of the Author's Academic engagements, considerations relative to various points of mental discipline have been perpetually occurring to his mind, and have been very frequently suggested by him to his young friends and pupils, without being reduced to writing. He has, however, entertained the idea that an attempt to convey them in a form more explicit, connected and permanent, might not be unacceptable to them, and perhaps not altogether without benefit to others. He by no means imagines that the following pages embrace all the principles connected with the subject of Mental Discipline; he presents them to the reader simply as "*Hints*," with the hope that they will be found to comprehend those principles of Intellectual and Moral Improvement which may be justly deemed of the highest importance.

He is fully aware that a complete system of Mental

Discipline should commence with an inquiry into the powers of the mind, and should be pursued by the guidance of a philosophical analysis. This the Author has not neglected in his course of Academic Lectures, but, in the following pages, his object is merely to offer, in the most concise form, such advices as he deems of primary importance.

Perhaps some apology may be deemed necessary for the peculiar form in which the following Hints are conveyed. The Author has only to observe, that it is the style in which, without any undue assumption of authority or of importance, a Tutor may be supposed respectfully to address those whose intellectual progress he anxiously desires to facilitate. It is also a mode of address most favourable to conciseness and to clearness of expression. It may possibly be thought by some, who may honour these pages with a perusal, that conciseness has been too much studied, and that more extended illustrations would have rendered the Work more interesting and acceptable. On this point it may be sufficient to reply, that the object proposed is simply to present to the student those outlines, of which reading and reflection will, without difficulty, supply ample illustrations.

The class of Students for whose use the following Hints are particularly designed, is that of young men, either engaged in a course of study preparatory to the Christian Ministry, or desirous of still advancing in a career of mental improvement after they have actually entered on the duties of the Pastoral Office. The advices conveyed in the following pages are therefore distributed and arranged under three general divisions: the First, Hints to aid the cultivation of Mental Habits with a view to the acquisition of Knowledge, in a course of Preparato-

ry Study :—The Second, Hints to aid the cultivation of Mental Habits, with a view to the *communication* of Knowledge in the engagements of the Christian Ministry.—The Third, Hints to aid the cultivation of *Moral* Habits with a view to the successful discharge of Pastoral Duties.

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