

## Self Culture

Clarke believed that God has placed people on earth to grow in the use of their physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual powers. This is taught by Jesus in the parables of the talents and the pounds. It is not enough to return back what we have received, unimpaired. We are called upon to bring back more than we have received

Clarke's close friend and distant cousin, Margaret Fuller, was a significant stimulus for him in this area. She once declared "Very early I perceived that the object of life is to grow." While he was a student at Harvard they would often meet three times a week to share their enthusiasm for such German writers as Goethe, Schiller, and Schleiermacher and their English interpreters Coleridge and Carlyle. They were particularly impressed by Goethe who developed mastery in so many areas of life— literature (prose and poetry), business, and government. Clarke was amazed at Margaret's widespread knowledge and insight. "Of her it might be said, as Goethe said of Schiller, "if I did not see him for a fortnight, I was astonished to find what progress he had made in the interim.'" Every year she lived she added depth to her thought, largeness of comprehension to her soul" (37) He saw a positive change in her personality over time from being egoistic and disdainful to being modest, sympathetic and kind to everyone. Throughout her whole life, he claims, she was going forward.

Clarke does not suggest that we are able to carve out a character to suit ourselves by dint of effort. We have a certain genetic endowment which equips us for certain possibilities but within this endowment we are free to do, to become, or refuse to become what God means us to be. (Self Culture, 40)

To the contention by some that self culture was a selfish pursuit, Clarke responded: "If we cultivate all the powers of body and soul in order to use them as talents in the service of God, not in order to gain for ourselves, or merely to excel other....,--then I believe that this aim will be in all respects a true and good one. (Self, 48).

## Taking Care of the Body

Clarke notes that many ancient religions viewed the body as an enemy of the soul which had to be kept under control by means of want of sleep, fasting, and even by flagellation. Many in the Christian tradition have followed in this tradition but it is not true to the New Testament. Jesus came eating and drinking and his disciples and apostles did not counsel ascetic practices. The letter and the spirit of the New Testament teach that we are to glorify God with our body.

It is possible for a powerful soul to triumph over bodily ills, claims Clarke, but usually someone sick in body is also sick in thought. He gave as an example John Calvin who was in ill health for much of his life and developed a very gloomy, morbid theology. Clarke did not believe the claim that if we all obeyed the laws of healthy living we would always be healthy, but he does believe that a vast amount of

illness is due to intemperance in eating and drinking, breathing bad air, living in damp homes, getting insufficient exercise, sleep, and rest. He was also concerned about the increase so “nervous diseases” due to “too much brain-work, too little social reaction, too great anxiety and care” (58). He counseled that patience, equanimity, trust in Providence, contentment with our lot, and a good conscience would keep the body from disease.

In terms of public health issues he called for laws mandating and enforcing better drainage and less crowding in Boston’s tenement houses and for more effective governmental curbs on the selling of adulterated food, drink, and lead-laden candy.

Clarke goes on to assert that in addition to keeping our body from disease we should develop its faculties (61)As a singer trains her voice he suggested people learn to modulate their speaking voice . He counseled, as well, that we emulate the gymnastic exercise of the Greeks to bring out the full force, grace, and symmetry of the human body.

Clarke put a great premium on healthy habits personally. At age 75 he attributed his good health and energy to the fact that he had been able to control anxiety, had gotten enough sleep, had not smoked since the age of 20, had always been fond of outdoor exercise, and had thoroughly enjoyed his work as a minister. When he began his studies at Harvard College he had frequent attacks of fever and pulmonary trouble but credits deliverance from these maladies to the gymnastic exercises introduced by Dr. Follen when he joined the faculty. Follen began with a large room filled with apparatus and later added outdoor equipment which included a 70 foot mast held in place by guy wires. Halfway up the mast was a platform reached by a ladder. The rest of the way to the top required climbing the bare mast aided only by a knotted rope. Clarke was very fond of climbing this mast all the way to the top and then standing upright on the little iron cap on the top. (Hale, 44) When on his convalescent leave in Meadville, Pa. 185-1853, the introduced gymnastics to the student body at Meadville Theological School.

In 1849 at age 39 while visiting the Salisbury Cathedral in England, Clarke set out to climb to the top of the spire, some 400 feet above the street. The first 370 feet he ascended by means of ladders that led to a little window. This was as far as visitors were usually allowed to go. When he got this far, however, he spied a series of lead handles leading to the weathervane at the very top of the spire. He swung himself out so he could grasp the lead handles and climb up until he reached a large metal ball just below the weathervane. He pulled himself up onto the top of the ball. At this point there is a difference of opinion. Biographer Edward Everet Hale says that, according to most versions of the story he stood on top of the ball with as much support as he could get by hanging on to the weathervane. Bolster says that he sat atop the ball. After surveying the scene for awhile he lowered himself down over the side of the ball while holding on to the vane in order to fin the lead handle. To his dismay, he learned that he had come down on the wrong side of the ball and had to work around the ball, honing by his hands until he was able to place his foot upon the lead handle. All this time, friends watched from the street in great dismay. Clarke climbed to the top of the spires at Cathedrals in Antwerp and

Strasburg as well, and when in Naming, England, at age 64 he climbed to the top of the tower in the church there.

## Intellect

An important aspect of intellectual development is knowledge of one's own capacities or personal gifts. He suggested a good deal of this may be learned from reading history biography, drama, poetry and novels, but he thought phrenology was the most convenient means of self understanding because it was based on actual observations of life. He does not mean craniology, or analysis of the shape of the human head as being particularly helpful, but rather phrenology's arrangement of human powers into three categories-- mental, moral, and passional. The intellectual region involves perceptive, reasoning, and imaginative powers. The moral region involves sympathy, reverence, conscience, and firmness. Then comes the passional power involving self-reliance, the desire for approbation, the desire for home, the love of family and friends and, the passion for battling difficulties.

His whole point here is that we each can study our personal nature and when we come to know it we can cultivate what we know as our positive points and discourage that which is likely to be harmful to us.

He gives as an example of this the time a phrenologist came to Louisville and examined the heads of all the ministers in town. He found that they were all deficient in the organ of reverence and had chosen the wrong profession. Clarke protested that conclusion. He agreed that he did not have a natural tendency to pray but that he had developed his prayer capacity. So what he lacked in sentiment and feeling, he was able to compensate for by conviction and faith.

"If he finds himself too hopeful, he studies to supplement his hope by greater caution; if he sees that he is too timid, he encourages himself to do his work more bravely. If his sympathy runs away with him, he meets this by educating his self-reliance. If his imagination is too active, he supplies the fault by a habit of increased reflection, and by more devoted attention to facts." (10p8-109)

Clarke also counsels development of the powers of observation, similar to the Buddhist call to mindfulness. "He {God} has made this earth so rich and so lovely, with its sights and sounds, its mountain precipices, its rolling prairies, its vast blue lakes, its tumbling cataracts, its ocean with long swell, rolling night and day on the shore, like the perpetual beating of the human heart. He has made the varieties of plants, leaves, flowers, trees; the birds, fishes, insects. Since he has thought it fit to create this vast and wonderful world, shall we not think it worth our while to see it? Is there not an irreverence in this?" He goes on to suggest that people work hard all week, and go to church on Sunday but never really pause to enjoy the beauty and the marvels of the natural world. He often quoted

Wordsworth, "The World is too much with us; late and soon,

Getting and spending, we laity waste our powers!

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

A moral aspect is involved here as well in that Nature contents the soul. “She satisfies us with herself. Go into the fields and woods; row your boat on the ocean, or the river, or lake; spend a day in climbing a mountain; pass a week in the wilderness,—and all cares seem to drift out of your mind and heart. What has become of all those anxieties about our life, about our success and failure? What has become of our ambitions, our desires for social triumphs, our rivalries, OUR SMALL VANITIES? They have all been washed away by this bath of mountain air.” P. 121

He suggests that every child ought to learn how to sketch so that he or she is able to record that which he or she sees and wishes to remember. He claimed that the ability to draw in perspective can be acquired in a week and lead to a lifetime of satisfaction. Clarke took a course in drawing as adult and often sketched natural scenes. When travelling he would often include a sketch of his environs in a letter to his wife.

Clarke was a keen observer of the night sky and became an accomplished amateur astronomer and even patented and marketed an illuminated lantern which helped the novice locate stars.

His descriptions of stage coach travels cross-country from Boston to Louisville, his first sight of Niagara Falls, and his first glimpse of the Alps are all inspirational as he recorded them. It is evident that he received keen enjoyment and appreciation by these observations.

Also important in the area of the intellect, of course, is thinking, or what Clarke calls the reflective power. Involved here are the categories of comparison, causality and adaptation. They are used in the every-day concerns of life—housekeeping, sewing, carpentry, and plumbing. Each of these skills requires reflective thinking. He does not believe that the academic study of metaphysics or logic is as helpful in developing this faculty as much “putting your mind to each question as it arises, and thinking it out, is the best discipline. Everything which exercises the reasoning powers, whether it be the study of a science, a debating society, a game of chess, or an intellectual game of questions and answers, helps to develop these faculties. Perhaps one of the best methods is to read books in which important questions are discussed, and carefully to examine the reasons and arguments as you proceed; not hurrying, but going very slowly, thinking out everything as you advance.” (150-151) Central to the whole practice of reflection is the love and pursuit of truth.

Clarke believed that God has revealed truth and that He has given us our reason with which to ‘examine, investigate, define, and arrange it. The best and highest view of Christianity must come from the general exercise of reason in regard to it.” (149) Clarke claimed that he saw an advance of this rational Christianity in all churches and said. “I hail its approach as the surest proof of the triumph of Christ, and the coming Kingdom of God.” (149)

A very important aspect of this intellectual development is the reading of books in order to develop “mental breadth, poise and authority.” He has several suggestions for us in reading. First he

counsels thorough grounding in religion beginning with the Hebrew and Christian Bible and then the scriptures of the Hindus, Persians, Muslims, Chinese and Buddhists. Next come what he terms religious books of the second class—the works of Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Pindar; the great poems of Dante and Milton, and after these the lives of the saints the manuals of devotion and the works of Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Swedenborg, and Channing. (314)

Secondly, he warns us against mindlessly reading novels with no depth, but puts in a good word for “The Vicar of Wakefield”, “Don Quixote, and the works of Walter Scott and Charles Dickens.

Third, he suggests we read directly the works of the great teachers—Bacon, Milton, Shakespeare, Dante, Homer Herodotus, Thucydides, Schiller, Goethe, Lessing before reading magazine accounts of them.

Fourth, he suggests there is great benefit in totally immersing yourself in a book for several hours, if possible, in order to get the full force of it. It remembers his childhood in Newton where he had constructed a reading room in the massive limbs of a chestnut tree. There he would spend the whole day reading the plays of Shakespeare, the songs of Burns, and the poems of Wordsworth. To read a good book in this way, he suggests, is an event in one’s life.

Fifth, he suggests that we read what interests us, rather than just reading mechanically and he has some books in mind which he thinks we will find particularly interesting. The two finest prose essays in the English language are Lord Bacon’s Essay on the Advancement of Learning, “ and Milton’s tract on “The Freedom of the Press. In the realm of biography he suggests Plutarch’s lives, Xenophon’s Memorabilia of Socrates, Johnson’s lives of the Poets, and the biographical essays by Macaulay and Carlyle.

Sixth, he suggests that we read actively and not passively, exercising memory judgment, and reason as we interact with what we read. He suggests repeating in our own words what we have read, taking notes on it, discussing it with others, and comparing it with other books on the same subject.

Seventh, he suggests we read with some system or method. He and Margaret Fuller read a large part of Goethe and Schiller together in this fashion, reading a portion and then discussing it two or three evenings a week. He suggests one might take a particular author or a particular subject and read systematically until one has a thorough knowledge of an author or subject.

Clarke was a voracious and thoughtful reader, following his own suggestions. He began to study German in 1832, quickly developing a reading facility. He set a goal of regular reading of German literature and within two years had read thirty or forty volumes of Goethe, six or seven of Schiller and some of Richter, Novalis, Schleiermacher, and Jacobi.

His 32 published books represent a wide-ranging reading in many divergent fields— biography, history, social problems, philosophy, theology, comparative religion, hymnody, a novel, and even a work on astronomy.” (Thomas, 129)

In summing on his section on reading, he says: “When I consider what some books have done for the world, and what they are doing, how they keep up our hope, awaken new courage and faith, soothe pain, give an ideal life to those whose homes are cold and hard, bind together distant ages and foreign lands, create new worlds of beauty, bring down truth from heaven,—I give eternal blessings for this gift, and pray that we may all use it a right, and abuse it never.

### Moral Self Culture

Foremost in this area is education of the conscience. By conscience he means the instinct, or power within every person, in all cultures, showing the distinction between right and wrong.

Clarke thought of an educated, trained and enlightened conscience as the cornerstone of society, but believed a diseased and ignorant conscience as being worse than no conscience at all.

“Many of the worst actions done in the world have been done by honest people, who conscientiously believed that they were doing right.” He gives as examples the Apostle Paul before his conversion, Cotton Mather in the Salem Witch Trials, and the Spanish Inquisitors. The instruction of the conscience is therefore of the utmost importance. But where is the code? What is the standard?”

Clarke answers that there is no systematic code of ethics for all purposes given in the New Testament, but there are principles given. the “Such is the golden rule of doing to others as we would wish them to do to us; or, putting ourselves in their place. Such are the large directions like these: “Overcome evil with good;” “Speak the truth in love;” “Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself;” “Let your yea be yea, and your nay nay;” ‘Love your enemies, bless those that persecute you;” “Forgive, that ye may be forgiven;” “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;” “ It is more blessed to give than receive.”

These may be summarized in the overarching principles of truth and love. All real moral difficulties come from the conflict of these two principles. “Is it right for a physician to lie to his patient about this disease, when telling the truth might injure him? May I lie to another for his good, or to a highway robber to save his victim, or to a murderer to prevent a crime? On the other hand, must I sacrifice love to the truth by telling the truth which will injure my friend; by standing by my principles and convictions when they will injure those I love? Must I be scrupulously honest when no one requires it of me, and when a great apparent injury will result from it? He who sacrifices all expediency to a theory or a belief is in danger of becoming a fanatic. He who gives up his principles whenever some risk or some evil seems likely to follow their application will soon do evil that good may come>” (213)

After the instruction of conscience comes its training which requires self knowledge and discipline. Everyone has moral strength and a special moral danger, a besetting sin and might profitably arrange one’s life to maximize the strength and minimize the danger. “If a man is indolent, he should

put himself where he will be obliged to work. If he is irritable, he should avoid occasions will excite his temper. If he is tempted to insincerity and falsehood, he should surround himself with all possible influences and helps to keep him to the strictest verity. And in all this he needs the help of religion, of daily prayer, and of living always in the great Taskmaster, eye.” (215)

The best exercise for conscience is to hold fast to integrity in small things. The real temptations in life are to tell the small lie, utter an unkind word, or to cheat in some small matter.

Another aspect of moral self-development involves education by means of money. Clarke concedes that the most precious things in life cannot be purchased—health, knowledge, genius, character, friendship, or love (264 (264) He decries the unscrupulous pursuit of money by such persons as gamblers, adulterers of food, producers of shoddy merchandise, quack doctors, manufacturers of poisonous liquors, unscrupulous lawyers and politicians, speculators and preachers who teach sectarian self satisfaction, narrow dogmas and arouse sensational emotions. All this being said, he reminds us that the Bible does not say that money is the root of all evil but that the love of money is the root of all evil.

“Money in itself, is neither good nor bad; it is good or bad according as it is sought for in right or wrong ways; as it is used wisely or unwisely; lavished foolishly, or hoarded meanly; squandered where it does harm, or bestowed where it does good. It is nothing in itself, but the best thing or the worst thing, according as it is treated.” (265)

According to Clarke there are many positive aspects to the accumulation of wealth. First, It has led to progress in the area of property rights. “Property, to exist, must be protected by the community from violence. Thus law becomes superior to force. In order that anyone should hold his property securely, all must be defended “The weakest child, the feeblest woman or old man, holds his property as safely to-day, in Christian countries, as, in the Middle Ages, the baron, living in his castle of stone and behind iron gates, held his. Thus the rule of law has been extended as people feel law as an ever-active power defending right and punishing wrong

Also accumulated capital which is used in production and consumption raises the standard of living. “Capital, associated with labor, spins and weaves cotton; makes carpets, glass, bricks; erects houses; brings water into a city; prints newspapers and books; paints pictures; builds railroads. These, which were once the luxuries of a few gradually became the comforts, and at last the necessities of all...All this is the result of the love of accumulation planted by the Creator in the human soul, and the large accumulation of capital in all Christian lands. (267-268)”

There is another educational, self culture aspect involved in the accumulation of property. “The love of money is often the root of evil, but it is also a motive to prudence, economy, industry, and skill. It develops the powers of observation, thought, care, patience, perseverance and

exactitude. The work done each day in Boston, under the mighty stimulus of this motive, gives an education to the people far greater than all the schools and colleges can supply in the same time. (268)

He goes on to assure us that the wealth of a community does not consist solely in outward possessions but in all things which add value to life. "Good pictures, fine poems, good lyceum lectures, scientific discoveries, health, safety, good manners, good morals, good behavior, make life more valuable. Consequently we may place among productive laborers the poet, the painter, the judges and lawyers, the physician, the orators, the professors, the clergyman." (269)

Clarke writes "To be rich means to be able to have a comfortable house in a healthy situation, with plenty of sunshine and air; to have good books to read, fine pictures to look at: to go to the mountains or to the sea in summer; to travel in Europe; to have time and leisure for study; good society, pleasant acquaintances, recreation of all sorts,--horses, sail-boats and the like." (p. 263) This is a very accurate description of the scale of Clarke's wealth. He went on to say that being rich also enables one to be generous, not in thoughtless ways which take away recipients self reliance and self respect but in ways that enable people to help themselves.

"Instead of giving money in the street, we establish societies which visit those who are in want at their own houses; which provide work for those out of work; which provide hospitals for the sick, homes for the aged; industrial schools for young men and women; model lodging-houses, where comfort and health can be secured at reasonable rates; homes where inebriates can be saved; reform schools, farm schools, help for discharged prisoners, bright and cheery holly-tree inns instead of drinking saloons; free music, free libraries, free baths in summer. This is all a movement in the right direction, for it is the practical form of the doctrine of the atonement, the reconciliation of love and truth; it is thought put into our love; it is mercy and truth met together; it is the happy conjunction of good nature and good sense. (279)

We know that Clarke raised money for such efforts and contributed himself. He suggests that the person with a \$1,000 annual salary give \$50 to charity (5 percent), the person with \$10,000 give 20% and the person who has \$20,000 give a half, a third, or a fourth.

Clarke also believes in self culture by mean so amusement. He is much taken by play. He delights to see dogs playing on the Boston Common and kittens playing with a ball of thread. . He is enthralled by the play of children as well. "The intense enjoyment of play enables Children to support pain, teaches them to obey rules, to control themselves, to submit to discipline, to bear fatigue without complaint, and so largely helps in the formation of character." (386)

He contends that the desire for play and amusement continues into adulthood. In the past the Christian church has not properly recognized this, and has been much too ascetic and . "You must not do this, it said; you must abstain from that. This world is a vale of tears." (391) The church has branded social dancing and the theatre as evil, but has been unable to stamp them out.

In this approach the church has not been true to the spirit of Jesus whose first miracle was to make wine at a wedding, thus adding to the gaiety of the occasion,. He said of himself, "The Son of Man comes eating and drinking." For doing so was called a glutton and winebibber> In addition he made his religious and moral instruction interesting and amusing by telling parables, or amusing stories.

Theatre can be the means of great influence for good, but this will likely not be the case if those of uplifted tastes stay away. Theatre managers will play to their audience. "Vulgarity, profanity, licentious exhibitions, and immoral plots," are presented because there is a market for them. Those who really wish to reform the theatre should go to the managers and say they will agree to buy so many thousands of tickets if they will exclude that which is vulgar and immoral. Clarke staged Shakespearian play readings at his congregation. We know that he played the role of Brutus in such a production held during the West Brookline years.

Clarke believed that "Amusements are good and not evil in proportion as they are (1) inexpensive, and so within the reach of all; (2) Not exclusive, but social; (3) Not leaving one exhausted and with distaste for work, but more able to return to work; (4) Not degrading the tastes but elevating them.

He believed that these conditions were fulfilled by the many free public recreations available in Boston—public gardens, libraries, concerts, zoological gardens, museums of natural history and science, galleries of art. He also was a proponent of large community halls for conversation, reading, and games, open to the poorest people in order to compete with the saloons. He saw to it that an article regarding public coffee houses in London which provided such social centers was reprinted and distributed around Boston.

As to alcoholic beverages, he would have prohibited their sale if he could have done so because of all the evils he had seen arising from intemperate drinking. He didn't feel that it was wrong to enjoy a glass of wine or beer, but he was willing to forego that enjoyment in order to put an end to the frightful evils of alcohol abuse. Realizing that national prohibition was not likely any time soon, he was in favor of local option and as mentioned earlier he strongly recommended to all temperance organizations that they promote attractive alternatives to the saloons. He was open to people taking the pledge to totally abstain from alcohol but he also encouraged of people t take a pledge to be moderate in their alcohol consumption.

Throughout his writings, one sees his commitment to the theme of enjoyment in life. He believed that people were created to be happy. Learning should be enjoyable, the quest for moral and spiritual growth, should be enjoyable, family life should be enjoyable, and recreation should be enjoyable. He was constantly encouraging people to lighten up. He had great admiration for his ministerial colleague, Ezra Stiles Gannett, William Ellery Channing's successor at Federal Street Church but felt that his overwhelming sense of duty robbed him of a sense of joy.

It is regrettable that more of Clarke's humor did not find its way into his sermons. I don't know how much of his humor and wit was evident in social contact with his congregation, but we do know that he shared it with his fellow ministers. Rev. S.W. Bush and six other ministers travelled in a railway parlor car to a conference and Rev. Bush claims that he was a charming companion: "While he never lost his grave and slow manner of speaking, he was a very interesting storyteller. He was a keen observer of men, and what he saw as well as what he read was storied in his retentive memory. He had the dramatic talent of impersonation and flashing wit and playfulness, so that in his talk of men he reproduced admirable portraiture of character." (In Hale, 404).

Clarke, along with his fellow transcendentalist Christopher Cranch drew a number of cartoons poking light fun at transcendentalism. In his Journal, he wrote, "Cranch and I amused ourselves with illustrating some of Mr. Emerson's queer sayings—such as "I expand and grow in the warm sun like corn and melons"—"I become a transparent eyeball." We drew some twenty of thirty between us, those of Cranch being executed in much the best style, and I happening on a good idea only now and then." (Journal for 1839-1840, in Coleville, p. 50) One of them was inspired by Emerson's dictum, "Do you not see that if the single man plant himself indomitably upon his instincts and there abide, the huge world will come round him?" Their cartoon showed the planted man and the world transformed into a racetrack.

He ends his treatise on amusement with these words: "Let us try to be like God, who opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. He sends abounding pleasure to childhood and youth in the mere exercise and development of their faculties. He makes everything beautiful after its kind and its time; he covers the prairies with flowers, the dawning sky with rosy clouds, and fills the early air of morning with the songs of birds. He nowhere leaves the bare skeleton of utility uncovered by the rounded forms of grace." (Self-Culture, 395)

## Spiritual

Clarke begins his discussion of reverence by saying: "Phrenologists say that on the very summit of the brain is an organ, which they call the organ of veneration, which impels men to look up and adore higher beings; which prompts to the worship of God; which inspires reverence for parents, superiors, and elders; and which is, in their opinion, the religious organ. Whether such an organ exists, or whether it does not exist, there is no doubt that there is such a tendency in the human soul,—a tendency to look up with reverence to things higher, nobler, and better than we are ourselves." (246)

Clarke believes this human propensity leads to devotion and piety and the enjoyment of prayer, worship, hymns, religious reading, but it is not a prominent, developed organ in some people. They come to God through doing good works and may not be particularly adept at lengthy prayer, but yet

their prayers will be heard, for "five words from a deep conviction are better than fifty said by rote, or coming merely from a religious sentimentalism." (Self Culture, 250)

Another aspect of this organ, says Clark, is that it gives a sense of what is harmonious, suitable, and in accord with that universal harmony which descends from God.

There is a danger in this human gift becoming distorted into worshipping in idolatrous fashion the sun, fire, the sky, thunder, or the ocean. In the Christian tradition people worship sacred pictures, the bones of martyrs. or they may blindly worship the Sabbath, the Bible, and the sacraments as if they were holy in themselves. The belief that an unbaptized child may be damned makes the rite a "charm to save the child from God, instead of a sacrament to bring it to God." (Self Culture, 251).

The highest experience of reverence is to feel the presence of God in all things—"in nature, history, providence, our own lives, and in all the good and great souls who have lived. It is to be filled with awe, wonder, and love, in view of the greatness and goodness everywhere. It is to cherish a habit of looking upward, and seeing what is noble and good in all things." (253)

"In Jesus Christ we see this spirit {reverence} in its highest form. He was a reformer; he denounced the superstitions of his day. He was called a Sabbath-breaker, because he healed the sick on the Sabbath, and walked with his disciples in the fields; he denounced the men thought most holy, the Scribes and the Pharisees; but he was full of deep reverence for God, as his Father, and the Father of all. He saw a divine goodness in all men and in all things. So he had respect, not only for the great men and the prophets, but for the poor, the low, the despised." (254, Self Culture)

#### The Intuitional Nature

Outward facts, contends Clarke are perceived through the senses and inward facts through insight, or higher intellect. Causation, substance, infinite time and infinite space are intellectual intuitions built in to the mind. We cannot operate in this world without them. For instance, we cannot conceive of space coming to an end at any point. Likewise we cannot conceive of time beginning or ending for thus there would be a time when there was not time. Senses, he contends can only perceive that which is finite. It is the mind itself which intuits infinity.

He claims there are also moral intuitions by which we perceive the distinction between right and wrong, just as by using the physical sense of vision we are able to perceive the distinction between black and white. All over the world, people speak of right, wrong, ought, duty, and justice. Everywhere people feel conscience rewarding good behavior and punishing bad behavior. In all souls, he contended there is an instinctive sense of right and wrong.

Clarke posits another area of intuitive knowledge as well—that of the religious intuitions assuring the existence of God and immortality. He says, "We do not know God by argument, by reading books of evidences or books of theology; we know him just as we know the external world—by

experience. We know God by intercourse with him, by looking up instead of down, by looking through the wonders and beauties of nature to the infinite spirit beyond.: (162-163).

Some people have a greater measure of this intuitional spiritual power, but everyone possesses it in some measure. Clarke believed that Channing in the U.S. and Schliermacher in Germany were men of uncommon spiritual intuition who came amidst a generation of men who had been preaching from hearsay and not from first hand spiritual knowledge -166 Of them , he says : They do not argue nor reason, but they simply say what they see. We may not agree with all their conclusions. We may differ greatly from their doctrines. But we are willing for a season to rejoice in that light of which God has made them mediums, a light which reveals to us the vast inward realities of the world of conscience and faith.” (167)

Clarke believed that there are prophets, and inspired seers in all nations and religions who see God, truth, justice, and beauty as realities and not simply as probabilities. We grow in our own intuitional spiritual nature when we commune with those who have these spiritual insights. But also, claims Clarke, every person, not only these intuitional luminaries, develops their intuitional power by obeying one’s own insights. “The man who listens to the voice of conscience in the human soul hears it afterward more distinctly. If he refuses to listen to it, his ear becomes dull to that divine melody. He who never looks up to a living God, to a heavenly presence, loses the power of perceiving that presence, and the universe slowly turns into a dead machine, clashing, and grinding on, without purpose or end.>” (p. 170).

He closes his section on the intuitional nature with the words: “All in this life is not logic; all is not sensation. There is a place in it for faith, hope, and love.” (171)

## Hope

Phrenologists, claimed Clarke, believe that there is a natural organ of hopefulness in the human brain to give an expectation of good things to come. There, however, is a false hope and a true one. The false hope is that which trusts to luck, rather than to thought and to work. A bright future is believed to be assured without our cooperation. Such people dream of winning the lottery or are tempted to gamble at cards or in the stock market. They wish to strike it rich all at once. They enjoy reading fairy tales in which they feature as the hero or heroine. Their life is likely to be one long failure.

True hope, on the other hand is in no hurry to achieve success This is what the Scripture refers to as the “patience of hope.” “It relies on the working of immutable laws, which are sure to bring success at last.” (401) The person operating in terms of this principle reads the biographies of those who have done great things in order to understand the disappointments and failures they experienced

before finally becoming successful—how they learned by failure and how they conquered by honest, thoughtful perseverance.

Clarke tells the stories of Columbus, Socrates, Dante, Washington, Luther, Milton, and the Apostle Paul to show how they surmounted opposition, slander, hatred, and failure to make wonderful positive contributions to humankind.

Hope is the power which moves the world forward. Every person must have something to which to look forward. “The condition of human happiness is to hope for something better hereafter than we have now. Give to Solomon all riches, all knowledge, all power, leave him nothing to hope for, and he cries out, “All is vanity.” But let Paul be obliged to earn his bread by making tents; let him be beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned two years at Caesarea, one year at Rome, opposed by Jews, opposed by Jewish Christians, and let him retain his hope of the triumph of Christianity as a universal religion, to which every knee shall bow; let him keep his hope in Jesus as the Christ, who shall reign till all enemies are subdued under him,—and he is so happy that he considers himself to be sitting in heaven with Christ even now.” (p.406)

We cultivate hope, then by increasing our faith in God which grows as we live in it and from it. Clarke was certainly one of the most hopeful persons I have ever come across and most of the time he seems to keep in mind the difference between luck and hope.

### Courage

Clarke believed that courage is fundamental to human progress. “To defy danger, encounter difficulties, despise hardships, risk evil in the pursuit of what is good, true, and noble,—this is a motor which carries the world onward. (3270 Jesus and the Apostle Paul were worthy exemplars of courage in preaching the gospel despite dangerous opposition.

He does not counsel rashness or insensibility to danger and he suggests that being courageous does not mean that one does not experience fear. It means that one is not immobilized by fear. One acts despite fear. The education of courage involves being faithful to our convictions in seemingly small things of everyday life.

Clarke evidenced courage in his going to the frontier to begin his ministry and in coming back to Boston to start his own congregation in a city in which 12 Unitarian congregations already existed. He stayed true to his convictions in not backing down on his pulpit exchange with Theodore Parker when prominent leaders in the congregation pled with him to call off the exchange. When he felt that Blaine, the Republican candidate for president in 1884 was morally unfit for office and publicly supported Cleveland, the democrat, he was severely criticized within his congregation. He had the courage of his convictions throughout his career.

He also evidenced courage in an interesting way while at student at Harvard Divinity School. His cousin, Louisa Hickman, had married and gone to live in Louisville. In the winter of 1832 she

suddenly became ill and died. Her distraught husband had her body embalmed and kept in a room with him, not willing to be parted from it. Friends prevailed upon to have the body buried in the family tomb in Newton, MA. Some months later the husband wrote a letter to James, enclosing a key to her coffin and asking him to check on the condition of her body.

He waited until the middle of the night and then went, lantern in hand to the cemetery, entered the tomb and closed the door behind him. With a great deal of difficulty he unscrewed the outer box of wood in which the coffin was placed, took the key and opened with coffin. He found the body relatively undecayed and then sat down for a long time "brooding on the brevity of life, and the mystery of death." From Bolster, dissertation, p.115 from James Freeman Clerked, "Ms. Pages deleted from the Autobiography.

### Affections and Social Powers

Clarke believed that human affection was among the greatest of human gifts: "Let us not be ashamed of our affections for these are the best gifts of heaven. Without them our life, as Cicero has said, is not really living. But what moments will compare with those in which persons become really intimate with each other; when the barriers of reserve are removed; when the deepest thoughts are kindled by the magnetic touch of a common thought; when all that is highest within the soul is made to flow freely like brooks in June, leaping down the side of the mountain! Only in such hours does man become really himself, seeing and feeling what really is. Such communion lifts him above his average days of mere routine into a better sphere. ]" (237)

Clarke thoroughly enjoyed social gatherings. One of the core principles of his Church of the Disciples was the social principle which called for many different sorts of social interactions. He enjoyed visiting the the Howe's Charles Sumner, John Andrew, Wendell Holmes and Lord Houghton discussing George and John Keats. There were also the meetings of many societies and clubs to which he belonged—the ministers' association, the Radical Club, the Shakespeare Club, the Thursday Club, the Saturday Club, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New England Historical and Genealogical Society. Additionally there were the Harvard Class of 1829 reunions and the get-togethers of old Free Soilers in Hingham." Bolster Thesis,

So there you have it. The physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual demensions of self culture according to James Freeman Clarke. As I have pointed out along the way, he lived the principles of which he spoke to a remarkable degree. When he was in his early twenties self culture seemed to be a bit of a white-knuckle issue with him. He was doubtful and anxious about the degree of progress he was making. Would he ever really make his mark in the world? Would he be able to match Margaret Fuller's self culture? As he matured he gained self confidence and his efforts at self development

became a less intense and more enjoyable process. Sometimes I am overwhelmed when I consider the catholicity of his tastes and interests. As Derek Colville points out and as I discovered myself “his notebooks and journals contain notes on classical myths, on prominent Elizabethans, on contemporary wars, on geology, government, law, and science: on it seems, almost everything from the authority of the Bible to the habits of American snakes.” (118) He is considered by many to be the Transcendentalists’ Franklin. Among these interests was writing poetry. He had notebooks full, very little of it published because he realized poetry was not his forte. But I want to share one poem with you that I have found particularly moving. He wrote it after his son Herman died at age 9.

Where is my boy?

It seems but an hour ago,

He was digging in the snow,

Joy and love in his face, In his hands a nameless grace

As he lifted the heavy spade.

--[The little path he made,

Has not yet melted away.

You may see it in the snow,

Lingering as loth to go.

But he has melted and gone, Gone into earth or air

Leaving us so alone!

Where is my boy, O Where?

From these notebooks and journals came ideas for sermons, articles, books, social service projects, political action, and ways in which he could become a better husband and father. Each of us has such a notebook if not on paper or in our computer, then in our mind. Clarke’s legacy encourages us to take one of those ideas which represents, perhaps, as he phrased it, our nearest duty, and begin to flesh it out. As it put it: “+ Begin, and do, what you can, not thinking of the past or of the future, but of that now, which is always the day of salvation.”

