

They must not suffer their thoughts to be roaming over the earth; they must not permit their minds to be scanning and traversing their everyday duties and avocations. If they do, they are not blessed with that store of knowledge they otherwise might obtain through paying that attention necessary to enable them to clearly understand. I acknowledge that it is a masterwork to school our minds so as at all times to exercise complete power over them. If the people would so educate themselves as to control their thinking powers, they would derive a great advantage from it. They could improve much faster than they now do.

Many years ago, the Prophet Joseph observed that if the people would have received the revelations he had in his possession, and wisely acted upon them, as the Lord would dictate, they might, in their power to do and understand, have been many years ahead of what they then were. Experience has taught us that it requires time to acquire certain branches of mechanism, also all principles and ideas that we wish to become masters of. The closer people apply their minds to any correct purpose the faster they can grow and increase in the knowledge of the truth. When they learn to master their feelings, they can soon learn to master their reflections and thoughts in the degree requisite for attaining the objects they are seeking. But while they yield to a feeling or spirit that distracts their minds from a subject they wish to study and learn, so long they will never gain the mastery of their minds. So it is with persons who yield to temptation and wickedness.

There are individuals who yield to that unruly member, the tongue; and after yielding once, they have not the same strength to resist as at first. They become more and more weakened every time they yield to temptation,

until they are unable to control themselves, when they are tempted either to speak unadvisedly or to run into any species of wickedness. So every faculty bestowed upon man is subject to contamination—subject to be diverted from the purpose the Creator designed it to fill. If a man permits himself to make use of language calculated to wound his spirit and infringe upon his better judgment, and does not try to resist that practice, when he is again tempted upon the point he is more likely to give way and to have less compunction of conscience than before. If he continues day after day to yield himself a servant to the uncontrolled whims of his own nature and the evil influences that may be exercised upon him from without, in a few years he will be so steeped in sin as to be entirely given over to the error of his ways. The sooner an individual resists temptation to do, say, or think wrong, while he has light to correct his judgment, the quicker he will gain strength and power to overcome every temptation to evil.

Let the people study to bring their thinking or reflecting faculties into subjection. We are preaching principles that belong to this subject every day of our lives. Last Sabbath I spoke upon the concentration of faith, of action, of feeling, of reflection. That is a matter I often reflect upon, because I am called into circumstances that bring it before me every time I hear a man pray. Am I as yet so master of my thoughts and reflections that no thought or desire of my heart is trying to forestall the speaker in uttering his sentiments and wishes? Have I the power to hold my mind directly upon his words and desires, asking continually that he may be directed by the Holy Ghost? I acknowledge that I am not yet perfect in this point. I have not yet that power over myself; but, to the praise