

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell.¹

This simple principle if understood and wisely appreciated is one of the keys to a changed life. What a person allows his or her mind to dwell upon will influence and guide their thoughts and feelings. Thoughts and feelings often become words and actions. These things are the building blocks of character. It is character which decides one's eternal destiny. The ability to enjoy heaven and whether or not a person can be trusted in

heaven will depend upon the settled, established state of his or her thoughts and feelings at the end of that person's life. Give careful thought to what you are putting or allowing into your mind. It is shaping your character and determining your destiny.

PRINCIPLE

THE MIND ASSIMILATES TO THAT WHICH IT FEEDS UPON²

AS THE MIND BECOMES PERVERTED, IT IS READY TO GRASP ANY READING OF A STIMULATING CHARACTER.³

AS THE MIND BECOMES HABITUATED TO CONTEMPLATE SUBJECTS WHICH DO NOT DRAW UPON ITS POWERS, THE SENSIBILITIES OF THE MIND BECOME DWARFED, AND GROW COLD AND UN-IMPRESSIBLE.⁴

A WRONG ACTION, BY FREQUENT REPETITION, LEAVES A PERMANENT IMPRESSION UPON THE MIND OF THE ACTOR AND ALSO ON THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO ARE CONNECTED WITH HIM IN ANY RELATION, EITHER SPIRITUAL OR TEMPORAL.⁵ BY FREQUENT REPETITION OF WRONG ACTS, HABITS ARE FORMED UNCONSCIOUSLY AND BECOME SO FIRMLY ESTABLISHED THAT THE MOST PERSISTENT EFFORT IS REQUIRED TO EFFECT A CHANGE.⁶

AS WAX RETAINS THE FIGURE OF THE SEAL, SO THE MIND RETAINS THE IMPRESSION PRODUCED BY INTERCOURSE AND ASSOCIATION.⁷

IMPORTANCE

Tells what happens to the mind as it feeds upon something.

Tells what happens to a mind as it becomes perverted.

Tells what can happen to the sensibilities of the mind and how it happens.

Explains the effects of wrong acts or actions upon the mind.

Tells what happens to the mind as a result of verbal intercourse and association.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE LAW OF BEHOLDING

AS THE MIND DWELLS UPON CHRIST, THE CHARACTER IS MOLDED AFTER
THE DIVINE SIMILITUDE.⁸

MORAL POWER INCREASES BY DWELLING UPON THE GOODNESS, BEAUTY, MERCY, AND
LOVE OF CHRIST.⁹

THE MIND WHICH IS OCCUPIED WITH EXALTED THEMES, BECOMES ITSELF ENNOBLED¹⁰

SUMMARY THOUGHT: BEHOLDING LEADS TO CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

UN-CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER - Developed by intentionally viewing, hearing or thinking about killing, adultery, stealing, covetousness, lying, swearing, dishonor of parents, self-worship, idol worship or dishonor to God

CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER - Developed by intentionally viewing hearing or thinking about whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; any virtue, and anything worth genuine praise.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES:

The apostle Paul explained the law of beholding in a letter to the church at Corinth showing how Christians become like Jesus in character. “But we all, with open face *beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image* from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

In another letter, Paul identified the mind as the focal point of effective change. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye *transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2

The Psalmist understood the effect of fixing the mind upon spiritually worthless things and asked God to help him turn away from such. “Turn away mine eyes *from beholding vanity*; [and] quicken thou me in thy way.” (Psalms 119:37)

SOP REFERENCES:

1. {GC 555.1}
2. {RH, December 26, 1882 par. 21}
3. {7T 203.3}
4. {YI, August 31, 1887 par. 6}
5. {4T 654.3}

- 6.--RH, May 17, 1898.
- 7.--4T 587 (1881)
8. {ST, September 3, 1896 par. 5}
9. {ST, September 4, 1893 par. 5}
10. {ST, December 1, 1881 par. 4}