

## Chapter Three: Cultivating an Atmosphere for Learning

That, it is not for a man to choose, "I will learn this or that, the rest is not my concern"; still less is it for parent or schoolmaster to limit a child to less than he can get at of the whole field of knowledge; for, in the domain of mind at least as much as in that of morals or religion, man is under a Divine Master; he has to know as he has to eat.

That, there is not one period of life, our school days, in which we sit down to regular meals of intellectual diet, but that we must eat every day in order to live every day. That, knowledge and what is known as "learning" are not to be confounded; learning may still be an available store when it is not knowledge; but by knowledge one grows, becomes more of a person, and that is all that there is to show for it. We sometimes wonder at the simplicity and modesty of persons whose knowledge is matter of repute; but they are not hiding their light; they are not aware of any unusual possessions; they have nothing to show but themselves, but we feel the force of their personalities. Now, forceful personalities, persons of weight and integrity, of decision and sound judgment, are what the country is most in need of; and, if we propose to bring such persons up for the public service, the gradual inception of knowledge is one condition amongst others.

"With all thy getting, get understanding," is the message for our needs, and understanding is, in one sense, the conscious act of the mind in apprehending knowledge, which is in fact relative, and does not exist for any person until that person's mind acts upon the intellectual matter presented to it "Why will ye not understand?" is the repeated and poignant question of the Gospels.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Mason, *School Education*

## Questions and Thoughts to Consider

1. Reflect upon your community and your children's community. What affections are they forming?
2. Talk about the relationship of knowledge and the problem of the educator or the child choosing?
3. What does the intellectual diet look like every school day? Weekends? Summer break? Holiday breaks?
4. Why do persons take a fast from knowledge?
5. What does Charlotte Mason mean by this phrase, "by knowledge one grows, becomes more of a person, and that is all that there is to show for it" ?
6. What is understanding?
7. Reflect upon your intellectual diet? Your children's?