No. 115

The union of knowledge & practice.
John XIII, 17. - "If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them."

The knowledge & practice of duty should never be separated. This is a principle of great importance; & to its own intrinsic consequence is owed that holy authority which derives from the lips of X... He had just taught his discipiles by an example of kindness & cedence that they should never refuse any offices of kindness, goodwill towards one another, but should always done to them. And after urging upon them the instructions of the occasion, he adds, "if ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them."
But notwithstanding the high importance of the principle, how few have ever attended to it, as numerous instances to see knowledge of practice separated... When you have found a man of large acquirements, of extensive information, it is fair from being certain that you have found one of a pure virtuous heart.

And this is true with regard to religious as well as other subjects. He who knows best is not always he who does best. As many a wise man's head is clearer than his conscience. The understanding receives the truths of religio; but it is at least sounder than his conscience. The understanding receives the truths of religious knowledge in their evidence, but they are there motionless and dead, awaiting no influence on conduct, of punishing perhaps none of the motives with prompting excitements.

And we can hardly wonder that this is so often the case, when we consider that the knowledge of religious duty is acquired generally in solitude, silence, and least when the mind is out of the reach of strong excitement or warm passion, whereas the practice of it, if it is ever accomplished, practice, must be amidst the agitations of various selfish, when we are surrounded by temptations and difficulties, have either urged us to hold back by a thousand motives, or have in them nothing of a religious character. In this busy scene, we have merely acquired as knowledge, and has not settled into firm, steady principles, become connected with the best affecting feelings of the heart, is easily swept away, or set aside, or forgotten, if those they who more know what is right are not strong enough to do it. You must try the strength of your heart on the waves of the sea; see whether it will bear the buffetings of the waves, before you can be sure that it will be of any use. He who welcomes the lesson of moral truth in the heat of retirement and meditation, who receives a store of information on religious subjects, as he would intelligence from some distant country, in which he has no interest, though he believes it, will often find, when he leaves the calm scene of the之势, en the middle school of the
world that what he knew about religion was nothing but cold, distant knowledge, or, perhaps, there is not a single passion or temptation sufficiently strong neither to banish his knowledge of moral truth, or to overcome its consent. Besides this, there is another disposition, which does much to separate knowledge from practice; I mean the disposition to look upon religion as a business by itself, having no connection with common life, consisting wholly in certain observances and services of a peculiar kind. This is done in a great many cases always being considered as connected with the actual duties and acts of every day, as having no other ultimate end than to exert a holy, purifying influence upon us in the rotation in which we are placed in the community, so that our temper and heart to mercy, kindness, as claiming, requiring to be our companion in the fire-side, and in the intercourse of the world, as well as at the altar of the house of God. We almost involuntarily from the habit of associating religion solely with attendance at church, or with prayer, or with services occurring at certain times of regular intervals, of supposing that by these it is nothing. But these, though important, are very important, means of religion, are not religion itself. By cherishing a false connexion of ideas, we have no little danger of losing the practice while we retain the knowledge, of knowing these things, but alas! not doing them.

Since then there are causes constantly at work to separate practice from the knowledge of religion, if only, it becomes so to exert an animating, active, persevering, unbroken connection between these two facts, it constitutes the whole of the divine character. Neither does well alone. The practice without the knowledge is, it is true, better than the knowledge without the practice. But both are essentially important; yet it is only a half, noble to human nature, that would not have another, without the other.
and must be bound to each other.

Let us set apart of the importance of knowing the

impediments our duty well and thoroughly.

It would need to little else, than an appeal to the

unavoided feelings of every one, to prove that as

assurance in general is a curse to man. It cripples

infects the better part of his nature, maiming

them always a child. It is to the mind of heart

what light is to the external world. Without it,

inhabitants could not be performed and prevented

tended to any better without the one, than with

the other. If then knowledge in general, you con

mon to feel be so important, how much more im-

portant must be the knowledge of adhering general

truths of obligations. So one can desist neglect

it, without putting to hazard interests, whose for

higher or more precious than any other interests he

can have. Must surely, if there is a God, it is im-

portant to us to know, as far as we can know, what

is the character with all be is invested. If universe

and location of universe, you are placed in any relation

to Him, it is of the last importance that we should

know what that relation is. If there is a future

life, who does not ask with trembling anxiety,

what is the nature of that unseen state of being

you are to prepare for it? If we have duties to

discharge - duties to our lives, to others, to God, is

there one who will not feel this obligation to under-

stand these duties? Is that one admit the truth

of religion & the reality of man's moral accountabil-

ity, is the necessity of knowledge on these subject to

laws of course. It is one of these first principles, and

it is difficult to make more plain. If the astros

seem so, as well be more important, to become

acquainted with the magnificent heavenly bodies, (to

find models of their celestial motions, where the untrained eye sees only, as it were, bright

lamps suspended in the dome blue vault above)

to discover the laws according to which those worlds

on their courses of the relations they bear to each other,

of the philosophers' explored nature of the universe, not to say.
last resort, constantly discovering new truths, new
ultimate facts, enriching the world with the in-
 improvements that flow from these discoveries, if the
mechanics of the art to investigate principles, especi-
tially make new combinations, to increase the pur-
of comfort. Man, if the scholar gives his days
of study to the pursuits of learning, if all these de-
partments of knowledge be, as they undoubtedly are,
important, what shall we say of that knowledge
which carries the mind far beyond these bright lights
in the heavens, to heaven itself, or by deep research
in the secrets of such ways of advancement, as the
study of nature never loses. The philosophy,
which supplies man with an exhaustless fountain of
internal comfort, of strength of the heart, instead of
the perishing means of outward display of glory, of
affairs which, if of interest, fire the heart with more intense
than any such learning can yield to her votaries? What
shall we say of such knowledge, but that, as it
immeasurably transcends all other, so it is beyond
all comparison more necessary than any other.

It has not been said if so beautifully his treasure
of moral and spiritual light, with the design, that
we should direct our eyes upon it. Nor yet, only
his knowledge is of all knowledge most precious.
If the study of goodness is so enviable a study. But
perhaps, it may be asked, what degree of this know-
ledge is necessary, if but does the obligation of each one
to acquire it extend? To this it may be answered, that
these elements of religious knowledge, which univer-
sal, are not easily acquired. We then see, that the
great and main principles of philosophy, are, after all, the
way of capacity of an elevated with every description,
the
in order to discover what we owe to God. Moreover,
are not obliged to spend one time in laborious
investigations, nor yet one in a thousand could live
off to any extent, nor to those who did pursue
would become objects of curiosity rather than ex-
travagant to duty. The light of nature comes from heaven,
drives into the humblest dwelling in the land, and
as into the residence of the wise of the world they do not bring the most holy and the most sainted men, as the wise and good Presbyter. This gospel to the poor, and not many of the mighty men they receive it. Still, though all the fundamental and essential truths of religion are dear to one, they require, but it is the study; yet the nature of the subject is such as to give free scope to the choicest investigations of the highest researches; and every man is under obligation to attend to it in proportion to his means and opportunities. No degree of knowledge can be considered enough, while it is an aid to the grace of it, as is true with respect to religion, as to everything else. A man may know enough to enable him to perform the common duties of a Christianly faithfully, but this is no reason that he should not strive to know more. He may have light sufficient to guide him through this world in the path to heaven, but this is no reason that he should not seek for a stranger and more powerful light. He may say, that it is the duty of every one, to enter into these matters, to study religious discussions, and have an enlightened confidence so many minds. It is not necessary that every one, who can, should engage into the study of longeronizing controversies. Still, it seems to me, that knowing enough of the most striking differences, among the arguments by which they are supposed to be established, to judge fairly of their respective weights. Of great point, after all, is taking on the spirit of investigation of the desire of learning every day more and more of God, that by this, to be able to read to such subjects, as pleasant and interesting subjects, the more the mind constantly by constant what nature light may come from any source. To be convinced of the dreadful effects of ignorance of the great importance of awakening any individual who is a Christian, or who has been a Christian, to cast a fearful and menacing shade over all Christians, or in consequence the rank pollution of every
out of time was spread through society, and God's
moral commands, and with a morality more
moral than man was expected, a new form of a moral
system was formed and a new term used. The
method of the religious church, as she called herself, that
"ignorance was the mother of devotion," his principle,
that they who were true to the cause might be
learnt from moral obligations. Does not every virtue
humanity, as he spoke of it to the face that
holds those essences of things you the world may never
be devoted to them again, tell how important it
is to preserve extensively of society by being as possible,
the means of moral religion knowledge.

2. But in this line we must never forget that
the knowledge of religion without the practice is
the shadow without the substance. All our acquisi-
tions in the speculative part of religious morals
will be of no avail if they do not lead to moral
improvements. If they do not make the heart better
at the same time that they fill the mind. And
edge of any kind is valuable only as the means to an
important end. What is the doctrine of the artist is
the scholar worth, if he do not employ it in use-
full applications, or in the improvement of this art
of profession? Of what real is it, that you are ac-
quainted with the principles of a man of
if you never apply them to practice? And in the
same may we may ask, of what use is the know-
ledge of religion, if it do not make us more holy?
and what use is the knowledge of morality if
it do not make us more moral? Our Lord has told
this obligation very explicitly of strikingly in one of
his discourses—"that servant, says he, who knows
his lord's will, prepared unto himself, neither did ac-
cording to his will, shall be beaten with many
strokes. His ten or his ten, more or much is given, if
shall much be required. The other who have con-
meth much, of him they will ask more." So
prior knowledge imposes the obligation of superior
quietness, though unhappily they not infrequently
stand far remote from each other. One may be away
on the dissolvent of an able controversialist which
being a good man! He may even be able to go far.
into the image of technical divinity, may manage very accurately and skillfully questions; he may pronounce with dogmatical certainty on all
strange and mysterious subjects—of which he has been to be said
to be the best and as much confidence as the
world have you believe that he has been of the
cabinet council of the Almighty—may discuss very
 wisely, at least very observantly, about the doc-
torship of the divinity of predestination, of preemi-
nece of God, of God's grace, of God's judgments;
not to mention the doctrine of the trinity, of the
sacraments, of the Church, in short, the
whole system of his religion, to be given in the faithful hand
charge of the duties of a good society,
full very far below him, whose knowledge is much more
beautiful, whose attainments much more than
the limited, who only knows that there is a God
that he is by His Mercies. Suffer now, he his father
judge, that the bases came to redeem the world from
the pollution of sin, to live and to die in the cause of

giving to man the truth of God—that he is able
to hear the instructions of that law, to walk in its
steps, to be continually preparing for the great day
of account, knowing that the mighty要用恩典
such a man is a practical man, yet while he uses the
the treasures of the day, he is far more acceptable to
God than he who has larger treasures, but is
often to lay in his hands unimproved. Knowledge
without practice, joy, is very much like faith
without works. 1 cor. 15:19. Frequent, if it was once
than vain and unprofitable, for by being perfected
and multiplied, it may enact a most unprofitable
influence. Listen to the admirable decision of
the apostle James on this subject. He says:
"is a wise man yoked with knowledge among
you? Let him show us of good life. But there
is more knowledge than there is virtue, the
those who think of religion are more numerous than
There is a practice of increasing virtue, knowledge, and perhaps we value ourselves in the decrease of our practice. If a man will do the will of God, he shall know the doctrine. It has been well observed that the best way to know is to be like them ourselves. To have the life, image of his perfection impressed on our souls, is the best way to understand the best religion is usually to act about the practice of it; this will give a man a better notion of it, than any speculation can. In short, he who knows these things, i.e., the duties and obligations of religion, is happy if he does them; if not, it be reformation, he will be happy only in doing them. The practice of virtue is the only thing that will endure. He who has the witness of us; time may take away all things, but a good life is not of beyond his reach; even if darkness reigns around us, it will mark us as a bright, shining spot of peace, comfort.

And there are occasions, viz., when we shall feel that our heart is embroiled with a deep feeling of the value of the hopes and consolations of the Gospel, more than any thing else. When the hand of sorrow comes, it makes us pause in the midst of our cares of middle, practice, when the hand of death has been among the number of those we have, it takes the hand of death for an object, and the object is, that the habit of religious feeling will arise from the practice of religion is a subject as much better than once, cold, hard, life, as the staff of the Nile is stronger than a broken reed. The most sublime, noble announcements with religious speculation will leave you an inch of cheerfulness; it has no need of peace to break in upon us, no breathing consolations to come the heart of heaven, on the heart. But an such an hour, he who has habitually practiced religion has a friend in need—his eye has so often been trained from the darkness of the dying terrors of the world to the bright glories of heaven. That when the hand of affliction religion above with firmness.
from of me another hind object of affection, it does, but again, remember, that here we have no home, the
other eternal, ever failing source of good, we look to
the Jew, and the "light" and 

If we endeavor, singly, to point out to a great
the knowledge of the practice of religion after seeing
that if the sun were, with sound on a
and to us, as he did to his disciples, if
me know these things, happy are you, if ye do them.
With respect to me first points there can be no doubt
we are born, or may be born, our duty to light for us
so has been given to us, if we shut our eyes on that
that our spirit doth not - but as then may we that
be as well furnished as the other part, that
me practice as well as we know. We may enquire,
we ought to enquire about points of speculative believ-
not it is important to have correct opinions;
but after all our enquiries, let their results be what
it may, let us never forget, that as a good judge is the
most valuable in the day, so nice is the most.
At home, July 22d, 1821—forenoon.
At Waltham, Sept. 12, 1822—afternoon.
At home, Jan. 23d, 1823—forenoon.