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**Title:** "The Power of Thought," by George Baylor

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THE POWER  
OF  
THOUGHT

Geo. Bayler



In each of the works of nature; we perceive some feature; some striking characteristic, which seems to constitute the beauty of the class to which it belongs. But in none of these sects is it so plainly indicated as in the human race.

We discern in man that ennobling quality, which ranks him above the rest of creation; that which has placed him in that high state of intellectual refinement, in which we find him at the present time.

To this Faculty Philosophers have assigned the name of Thought.

In the first stages of society, matter was predominant over mind, but this internal attribute has drawn aside the mystic veil that concealed its own Power and Beauty, and made an onward movement to an enlightened position.



It has opened a new and accessible path to investigation - it has driven away the clouds that obscured the sky of invention - it has penetrated the mysteries of nature and brought forth the great achievements of science.

As the rose which the heat of the day has withered, refreshed by the cooling dews of eve, returns to its former gayety, so the uncultivated mind, illumined by a bright spark of celestial thought, suddenly arises from the sleep in which ignorance was wont to bind it.

It adds a charm to the youthful ~~intellect~~, which in manhood bursts in silvery fruit; which Autumn tinges with a golden hue, and Winter clothes in her snow-crested mantle.

The Power of Thought, combined with physical agency, becomes infinite - it induced the Prometheus of our age to grasp from the trackless ether, the second spark of heavenly fire, which added a new link to the chain of science.



"Made distance lend enchantment to the view,"  
 and which soon with England shall join hand  
 in hand and unite in a lovers embrace the Proud  
 Land of America.

It gave a new impulse to the genius of Peter  
 the Hermit; whose eloquence aroused the Chris-  
 tian world to take up arms, to rescue the Holy  
 Sepulchre from the hands of infidelity.

Associated with the muse of imagination - it  
 becomes the true gift of the poet - his guide  
 through the unending regions of inspiration; yea,  
 it will lead him into the vale of unmarried love-  
 lines; amid the rosy bowers;

"When heavens fair harbinger delights to pour,  
 Its blissful visions on his pensive hour,  
 and then it will gather for him ~~a~~ bouquet of  
 the choicest flowers, which in after years shall  
 shed a continual fragrance.

Trusting in the firm basis of true thought,  
 the astronomer sought from the skies the exis-  
 tence of other worlds; confident of its strength,



Intellectual Philosophy unfolded her gates, and gave man a free entrance into the innerworld; while the obscurities that over clouded the brow of nature were dispelled by this conqueror; yea, all the arts and sciences receiving new light from this luminary are progressing faster and faster, easier and easier the road before dimmed by mists of barbarism.

Thought seeks the genuine truth from the unknown and presents it undecorated to the fancy, whose flowery touch embellishes it with all the ornaments of language, producing in the mind an image as visible and striking, as that represented by the artist. It stands forth like the great Egyptian pyramids, a prominent landmark of national genius and an emblem of her civilization.

It made England the hallowed seat of literature, it wreathed the laurels of sublimity around the brow of Shakespeare, and vested the works of Byron in eternal Beauty - it shot a beam of light into



dark enslaved Erin, and resounded in triumph  
 over the Bonny Highlands, but wars and civil  
 contention plumed its flight into a far distant  
 country, basking in the sunshine of peace and  
 concord, and folded its pinions on the lofty sum-  
 mits of American Liberty.

In all ages it has exerted a powerful influence  
 it has crushed the rebellious spirit and aroused  
 the slumbering patriotism of many a warlike  
 hero.

There is in matter a transient beauty; we see  
 it floating in the crimson robes of the sun,  
 as she takes a lingering glance on a land soon  
 to be darkened by her departure - it is visible in  
 the many colored dahlia nodding its radiant  
 head in humble submission to the soft brea-  
 thing zephyrs, and in the hyacinth, rolling  
 its flowing tresses in the luxury of its own  
 amber bed; there is also transient beauty care-  
 -sing the smiling cheeks of the fair maid of  
 earth, whose soft tread scarce echoes on the



verdant soil of her own secluded haunts, and in the tones of her sweet voice as she sings of the home pleasures of the Forest Child; but there is in Thought an intransigent beauty, on which the spiritual part of man alone can feast; in her we recognise no sea-goddess; no mermaid inhabiting the crystal waters of some retired stream.

"Whose rills o'er ruby beds and Topaz flow,  
 catching the gems bright-color as they go,  
 but pure, bare-threaded reality ~~reality~~; the mag-  
 -nolia of the innerworld, which the Autumn frost  
 fades not away and corroding time cannot oblit-  
 -erate,

Thought so noble and divine! Thy Power is  
 fast germinating, and soon Thy hallowed notes  
 shall ring louder and louder, until man shall  
 bow in humble <sup>obedience</sup> submission at Thy throne and  
 worship at Thy shrine, and nations tremble at  
 Thy command, until Truth and Justice, blend-  
 -ing their voices in harmony with thine, shall  
 rule, unconfined in sway, a territory now bend-



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-ing over the abyss of error.

O sublime heritage of a god-like mind! Who shall limit thy domain? Who can tell thy power or estimate thy value? What would man have done destitute of thy aid? He would have groped life's dark maze, without any beacon-light to warn him of approaching danger, or any lone star to point him onward and upward to fame and glory.

What would the Blind old Bard of Greece have done, if thy cheering ray had not brightened his disconsolate spirit and taught him to pen those sweet lays, which were the lone solace of his midnight-life; who seemed like that noble bird:

"Who sings at last his own deathlay,  
And in music and perfume dies away,  
Without thee Virgil's Tongue would have been  
unable to celebrate the glories of a Trojan war;  
Spenser could not have entered the enchanted  
valley and caught even one glimpse at his  
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green waters, and painted the coral tomb of  
 Arabys daughter, or decorated on yon mountain  
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 in a holy cause; but each one of these would  
 have passed away, unheeded, unlamented, in-  
 capable of achieving that great end for which  
 he was destined:

"And when he dies, to leave his lofty name,  
 A light, a landmark on the cliffs of fame,  
 When empires and kingdoms have tottered  
 to decay, and mighty nations are weighed down  
 by the avalanche of years; when all things are  
 sleeping in oblivion and forgetfulness:  
 "When Time, like him of Gaza in his wrath,  
 Plucking the pillars that support the world,  
 In nature's ample ruins lies entwined,  
 And midnight, universal midnight, reigns,  
 Raising to Heaven and seating thyself at  
 the throne of the Eternal; thou wilt smile over  
 the wrecks of mortality,



Junior Prize Contest Oration of George Baylor, Class of 1860  
Transcribed by Michael M. Geduldig, June 6, 2006  
Edited by Don Sailer, November 2009

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