**Quotes regarding masterly inactivity from Charlotte Mason’s *School Education*:**

“They are free under authority, which is liberty;

to be free without authority is license.”

             -Charlotte Mason, Vol 3, School Education, pg. 27

“Authority is neither harsh nor indulgent.  She is gentle and easy to be entreated in all matters immaterial, just because she is immovable in matters of real importance; for these, there is always a fixed principle.”

                      ~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 17

“We ought to do so much for our children and are able to do so much for them, that we begin to think everything rests with us and that we should never intermit for a moment our conscious action on the young minds and hearts about us.  Our endeavors become fussy and restless.  We are too much with our children, ‘late and soon’.  We try to dominate them too much, even when we fail to govern, and we are unable to perceive that wise and purposeful letting alone is the best part of education.”

     ~Charlotte Mason: Vol 3, School Education, pg. 27

“We should allow no separation to grow up between the ‘intellectual’ and ‘spiritual’ life of children; but should teach them that the divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their continual helper in all the interests, duties, and joys of life.”

~Charlotte Mason, principle 20

“The next element in the attitude of masterly inactivity is good humor-- frank, cordial, natural, good humor.  This is quite a different thing from overmuch complacency, and a general giving-in to all the children’s whims.  The one is the outcome of strength, the other of weakness, and children are very quick to see the difference.  “Oh, Mother, may we go blackberrying this afternoon instead of lessons?”  The masterly ‘yes’ and the abject ‘yes’ are quite different notes.  The first makes the holiday doubly a delight; the second produces a restless desire to gain some other easy victory.”

                                                       ~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 29

“Everything is not done by restless endeavor.  The mere blessed fact of the parental relationship and of that authority that belongs to it, by right and by nature, acts upon the children as do sunshine and shower on a seed in good soil.

But the fussy parent, the anxious parent, the parent who explains overmuch, who commands overmuch, who excuses overmuch, who restrains overmuch, or interferes overmuch, even the parent who is with the children overmuch, does away with the dignity and simplicity of that relationship which, like all the best and most delicate things in life, suffer by being asserted or defended.”

          ~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 29

“Believe in the relation of parent and child, and trust the children to believe in it and fulfil it on their part.  They will do so if they are not worried.”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 30

“She must see without watching, know without telling, be on the alert always, yet never obviously, fussily, so.  This open-eyed attitude,must be sphinx-like in its repose.  The children must know themselves to be let alone, whether to do their own duty or to seek their own pleasure.  The constraining power should be present, but passive, so that the child may not feel himself hemmed in without choice.  . . . Every time a child feels that he chooses to obey of his own accord, his power of initiative is strengthened. . . . This is the freedom which a child enjoys who has the confidence of his parents as to his comings and goings and childish doings, and who is all the time aware of their authority. . . . He has liberty, that is, with a sense of *must* behind it to relieve him of that unrest which comes with the constant effort of decision.  He is free to do as he ought, but knows quite well in his secret heart that he is not free to do that which he ought not.”

    ~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 31-32

“She may be the best mother in the world, but the thing that her children will get from her in these vexed moods is a touch of her nervousness -- most catching of complaints.”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 33

“If mothers could learn to do for themselves what they do for their children when these are overdone, we should have happier households.  Let the mother go out to play!  If she would only have courage to let everything go when life becomes too tense, and just take a day, or half a day, out in the fields, or with a favorite book, or in a picture gallery looking long and well at just two or three pictures, or in bed, *without the children*, life would go on far more happily for both children and parents.  The mother would be able to hold herself in ‘wise-passiveness’ and would not fret her children by continual interference, even of hand or eye-- she would let them be.”

          ~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 33-34

“When we recognize that God does not make over the bringing up of children absolutely, even to their parents, but that He works Himself, in ways which it must be our care not to hinder, in the training of every child, then we shall learn passiveness, humble and wise.  We shall give children space to develop on the lines of their own characters in all right ways, and shall know how to intervene effectually to prevent those errors which, also, are proper to their individual characters.”

            ~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 35

“We do not let children alone enough in their work.  We prod them continually and do not let them stand or fall by their own efforts.  One of the features, and one of the disastrous features, of modern society, is that, in our laziness, we depend upon prodders, and encourage a vast system of prodding.”

         ~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 38-39

“Now an occasional prick is stimulating and wholesome, . . . What we must guard against in the training of children is the danger of their getting into the habit of being prodded to every duty and every effort.  Our whole system of school policy is largely a system of prods.  Marks, prizes, exhibitions, are all prods; and a system of prodding is apt to obscure the meaning of *must* and *ought* for the boy or girl who gets into the habit of mental and moral lolling up against his prods.

 It would be better for boys and girls to suffer the consequences of not doing their work, now and then, than to do it because they are so urged and prodded on all hands that they have no volition in the matter.”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 39

“Where many of us err is in leaning too much to our own understanding and our own efforts, and not trusting sufficiently to the dutiful impulse which will carry children through the work they are expected to do.”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 40

“In the spending of pocket-money is another opportunity for initiative on the children’s part and for self-restraint on that of the parents.  No doubt the father who doles out the weekly pocket-money and has never given his children any large thoughts about money-- (here she gives examples of conversations the father might have had with his children about giving, saving, and spending) . . . Such a father cannot expect his children to think of money in any light but as a means of self-indulgence.  But talks like these should have no obvious and immediate bearing on the weekly pocket money; that should be spent as the children like, they having been instructed as to how they should like to spend it.”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 41

“We all know that nothing is easier than to make vehement partisans of young people, in any cause heartily adopted by their elders.  But a reaction comes and the swinging of the pendulum is apt to carry them to a point of thought painfully remote from our own.”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 42

“In politics, again, let the children be fired with patriotism and instructed in the duties of citizenship, but if they can be kept out of the party strife of an election, well for them.”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 43

“Perhaps this pious mother would have been saved some anguish if she had given her children the living principles of the Christian faith, which are not matters of opinion, and allowed them to accept her particular practice in their youth without requiring them to take their stand on Evangelical opinions as offering practically the one way of salvation.”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 43

“. . . authority is not only a gift, but a grace; and,

“As every rainbow hue is light,

So every grace is love,”

Authority is that aspect of love which parents present to their children; parents know it is love, because to them it means continual self-denial, self-repression, self-sacrifice:  children recognize it as love, because to them it means quiet rest and gaiety of heart.  Perhaps the best aid to the maintenance of authority in the home is for those in authority to ask themselves daily that question which was presumptuously put to our Lord—

“Who gave Thee this authority?”

~Charlotte Mason, School Education, pg. 24