

THE MINISTERING ANGEL.

Each week throughout the year she comes to my dwelling. How neat and beautiful her dress; how amiable her character; how quietly and kindly she comes, captivating every heart in the family. Not one wrong or vulgar word escapes her lips; not one false or low sentiment; and yet she has something to say to every one of us. She is highly intellectual and polished; has a warm heart; gives us briefly but accurately, all the passing news and draws some elegant and polished moral from almost each item. She is valiant for the truth, favors every good effort and every benevolent society, uniformly frowns on error and vice, and often speaks a good word for the poor, the afflicted and the oppressed. To one she speaks of the danger of sin, and the claims of a holy and just God. To another she whispers of the mercy of Christ, and the sweet peace and joy of heaven. Often while she warns and encourages, our tears fall, our hearts beat, and our souls are elevated above the world. She seconds all the good efforts of our teachers and pastors; and eternity alone can tell how great an influence she is exerting over us in the formation of our character and destiny. We welcome her coming and are entertained, instructed, and profited, by her intelligent conversation upon themes past, present and future.

Reader that ministering angel is the *Religious Newspaper*, whose unobtrusive influence upon your family and the community you may have poorly realized and miserably supported.

Whether for good or for bad, the rage of the people now is for the newspaper style of reading. Papers of some kind the people will have; and if those papers are bad, or merely frothy, fictitious, inflammatory, guided by no deep pervading religious principles, they will vitiate the taste for reading and thinking, and degrade the character, like bad companions; or instigate to recklessness and crime, like presiding demons.

It will be for good if this rage is supplied with the right kind of papers. There will be in every family a ministering angel. And O, if it be an evil one! Hence the unspeakable importance of sustaining religious papers of a high order—hence the mighty influence which they should exert. But it is always a laborious, often a discouraging task for editors and publishers. They have on their hands in a great measure, the formation of the character and the consequent destiny of the future: hence theirs is no ordinary work. It is a toil only commensurate with its responsibility. The worthy author of "An Earnest Ministry," admits, that though at one time, the preacher had the public mind almost to himself, now he has many competitors, and among the most powerful is the press.

The religious newspaper must resist on the one hand, the clamours for a light and fictitious style, which might bring a readier price, and would more easily fall in with the mere sentimentality and false taste of fallen nature; and on the other, to create a high intellectual and moral taste for reading, to give direction and tone to the impulses and capacities of the multitude by gathering before them the events of passing interest, and then to turn those events so as to find access to the judgment and conscience. To do all this, and much more, perseveringly and successfully, needs the sympathy and liberal co-operation of all who are on their side in the great struggle.

Then let the philanthropic see and patronize the influence which future history will award to the religious press in the contest for opinions and practices in this forming period of better ages.

Let ministers realize their great aid in supplanting fiction, in turning off the attention from undue political excitement to higher and nobler things—coming, like a good and quiet angel, into the families of their flocks to second all their sermons, illustrating and enforcing the truths which they preach by a thousand events drawn from passing life, pressing home both the danger and the encouragements of the times.

As a pastor, often have I laboured anxiously to introduce this ministering angel into every family of my congregation; and as often have I seen the cheering result.

Let parents welcome, not grudgingly, the religious news sheet to their fire-sides, and encourage their households and neighbors to peruse it as something more than the record of passing events; a ministering angel, to elicit and impress the moral of passing events; and to invite and urge the thoughts and feel-

ings to the great work of probation. Your children and neighbors will read some paper, and form their tastes and characters accordingly. Then encourage them to read the entertaining, intellectual and religious paper. How cheaply you may thus employ the weekly labors and talents of some of the most pious and gifted minds in training and moulding your families and friends for usefulness here and glory hereafter! Would you encourage editors and publishers in their important labors? Would you co-operate with your pastors in the work of salvation? Would you do much good in the world to immortal souls? Then here is an open door—for many a religious family is yet wholly destitute of a religious newspaper.

FILIAL OBEDIENCE.

If you would fit your children for heaven—govern them in the earthly, as they must hereafter be governed in the heavenly family—you must always require obedience to your commands.

This is of the first importance—of the first importance in early life. And when I see, on every side, the woful neglect in this very particular, which prevails in families where better things should be expected—Oh, that this printed page might speak!—that the earnestness of its tones might give emphasis to its words! But alas!—it is silent: and God, alone, can give it energy! Reader, may I ask you to think, and to ponder again and again, upon the unspeakable importance of the first rudiment of a right education?

Let the disposition of the immortal spirit be unruly—let its will rise and live supreme; and you educate it for collision with Jehovah! Every instance of insubordination, strengthens that habit which unfits the soul for subjection to the laws of God. With disobedience, or with the least approximation to it, the parent should never compromise. Such tendencies must be overruled; and the child be made to feel, in its earliest, what it must know, in all its future existence,—that there are wills superior to its own, to which it must bow in cheerful subjection. The parent, by securing in early infancy, this subjection to himself, is training the child in the way it should go, and is thus fulfilling the ordinance of Jehovah.

O, I have often wondered, yea, and sometimes shuddered, when I have seen the parent pass over the transgressions of his child—when I have heard the voice of parental authority answered only by a murmuring refusal. It matters not how trivial a requisition is, if it is but wise and reasonable—and such, it should always be; for, in this respect, you should govern as God governs, who never regards the least law as unimportant—when it is once reasonably made it should never yield before the reluctance of the child.

I truly look upon that parent—and how many such?—who passes unnoticed the disobedience of a child—as I would look upon a heathen mother, while instructing her offspring in the principles and practices of some soul-destroying religion; for every act of disobedience comprises the very essence of sin, and is a new step in the road to death. Woe to that parent who beholds his child disobedient, and neglects to intervene and enforce his authority. Such authority may be exercised mildly and kindly, while it is maintained firmly and constantly.

The child should never know the time when it is not to obey immediately and cheerfully. The beginnings of evil are small, and the first manifestations of disobedience can be controlled. Thus, if you will prevent the habit, it is well; but if you allow the child to disregard your laws, you are recreant to God, who has given it to you to train up for Him—you are recreant to your own offspring, whom you are allowing to advance, unrestrained, to eternal ruin. O that parents would ever have before them the legitimate awful end of filial disobedience, and they could not look upon the slightest symptoms of this hell-disease without alarm and pain.

It is impossible, either for language, or for human conceptions to magnify the evil of early disobedience. Imagination, even, cannot paint its danger in too high colors. And could a majority of professing Christian parents but witness their own neglects in this very particular, together with their true bearings, it would fill them, I doubt not with amazement, and cause them to cry out, *woe is me*. If your children do not obey the earthly parent whom they see, how can you expect them to obey that Heavenly Father whom they see not? If

they do not yield to you even an outward subjection, how can you expect them to obey that God whose law searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men. An habitually disobedient child presents awfully alarming symptoms of confirmed depravity and ripening ruin. If he disobeys you in a little thing, he will disobey in a greater; thus advancing till he despises all those laws of God that control the inner, if not those that control the outer man.

As to the season of requiring obedience, it is sufficient to say that it is none too early to apply God's rules, when the child is old enough to obey the devil's; or in other words, it is full time to make a child obey, when it evidently knows enough to disobey.

Parents, be adjured, then, in the name of your children and of God—both of whom your responsibilities concern—be adjured, as you would avoid unfaithfulness to the latter, and cruelty to the former, to establish and maintain parental authority. Let it be even and mild—let it be constant and uncompromising, and then you will have fulfilled, in your sphere, this department of your duty, and you can leave the rest to God; the child will pass from under your tutelage, into the more extended spheres of its existence, with that pliant will, and with those habits of subordination which afford the best promise of ingrafted piety.—*The Family Religious Institution.*

TRUE RELIGION.

Too many mistake religion. They either hold the reins too tight, or not at all. In other words, they either consider that religion demands a life of mortification on account of sin; or they think of it only as a manifestation of Divine love and favor which requires nothing further from them than acceptance and abstinence from gross violations of the moral law of God. The latter view is very common among the young, but it is utterly irreconcilable with the oracles of Divine truth.

Religion does, beyond dispute, require much thoughtfulness, much watchfulness, much sorrow. There can be no forgiveness of sin to the man who has not repented of it; and no man has repented of sin, who has not repeatedly mourned over it with godly sorrow in secret before God.

The evil of sin is very great, else so tremendous a sacrifice would not have been necessary to atone for it. It is because men's eyes are blinded to the fact, because they do not believe that their danger is so imminent as it really is, that so much carelessness is manifested by them. They must feel the leprosy, or they will not seek the Physician, and apply the balm of Gilead. They must realize their condition in the sight of God, "wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," or the invitation, "Buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see," will find no response, will excite no interest, will bring no "good tidings of great joy."

If any truths are plainly taught in the Bible they are these:—That man is naturally in a ruined state, alienated from holiness, and consequently from happiness; that there is no revealed way of escape for him, but a reliance upon the sacrifice of God's co-eternal and co-equal Son; that the effects of such a reliance upon the mind of the converted man, are the warmest gratitude towards his Redeemer, the deepest hatred of sin, because it is the abominable thing which God hates, and the most earnest desire to imitate his Lord by following the example of his holy life. That, in a word, man ruined, is justified by faith in Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. These, we say, are truths most plainly revealed in the Bible. They are the essential vital doctrines of Christianity, and by them, therefore, we may safely test our own experience, examining ourselves whether we be in the faith.

Do we love Christ above everything? Do we view him in the light of a Redeemer who has purchased us? Is sin, whether in thought, word, or deed, hateful to us? Would we rather die than wilfully transgress any known undeniable precept of the law of God? Do we delight in communing with Him, and reading and meditating upon his Holy Word? Would we willingly exchange any worldly pleasure or gratification for an hour spent in true prayer? When we fall into temptation

(and, alas! the Christian too often falls), do we afterwards in secret mourn over our waywardness, and earnestly pray that our inconsistencies may not be stumbling-blocks to those around us? Is our "conversation in heaven;" that is, are heavenly, spiritual things the topics to which we revert with the most interest? What self-denial, real practical self-denial, are we exercising, in order to aid the cause of missions? In what luxuries are we indulging, which, if given up, would enable us to enlarge our benevolence? Are we waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, living for eternity, looking for the crown of life?

If, to questions of this heart-searching character, we are able to answer, with trembling, in the words of St. Peter, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that we love Thee," then, on the authority of God's own Word, we may conclude that we are new creatures, fellow-workers with God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. We shall have the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God, that we possess true religion, and may, therefore, with confidence, "look up, for our redemption draweth nigh."

THE SANCTITY OF DUTY.

It is to be feared that thousands even of intelligent persons, and persons who are supposed to be religious beings, have no conception of the greatness of the idea of duty, of moral accountability, of the meaning of the word *ought*; but it is certain that nothing is done well until it is done from the sense of a controlling principle of inherent and essential righteousness. Duty is the child of love, and therefore there is power in all its teachings and commands. What can go on well without this? Will our intellectual progress be considerable? Shall we feel fresh incentives in every page and every study? The obtaining knowledge is not always enchantment,—does not always seem the reading of a fairy tale; and when the road is rugged, and the way long and weary, when the head aches, and the pulse is languid, what will then sustain the spirit? What then will animate in the pursuit?—Duty and love—love to knowledge, and the sense of high principle; of the imperative importance of seizing upon every method and agency by which the faculties of the spirit may so expand as to make it more worthy of its origin and destiny; and actions and books, and all the routine of daily life, should be examined beneath the light of a conception of duty. It is a beautiful arrangement in the mental and moral economy of our nature, that what is performed as a duty, may, by frequent repetition, become a habit. All the actions of our lives become easy by repetition.

THE LOST BANK NOTE.

Mr. A—was an irreligious man, nearly sixty years of age. He had long neglected the house of God, and indulged in the use of profane language. One day last winter, he lost a bank-note in his barn. He sought for it several times, but did not find it. At length he said to himself, "That note is in the barn and I will search for it till I find it." Accordingly he went to the barn, and carefully moved straw and hay, hour after hour, till he found the note.

He had told me two months before, that he knew his soul was not right with God, and he intended to live a better life, and seek salvation. His anxiety increased. A few weeks after he lost the note, he sat by the fire musing on the state of his soul, when he turned to his wife and asked, "What must one do to become a Christian?" "You must seek for it," she replied, "as you sought for the bank-note." She said no more. It was "a word fitly spoken." He tried to follow the direction, and thinks that, through the grace and mercy of Christ, he found the "pearl of great price," and rejoices in hope of the glory of God.

There is a treasure for you, reader, precious beyond the power of words or figures to express. There is salvation and heaven for you, and eternal glory, if you will seek it with all your heart, believing that it can be found, and resolved to find it. If you have not sought it thus, you have disparaged it, treating it as if it were not worth such earnest regard.—*American Messenger.*

GOING EARLY TO CHURCH.—Mrs. Chapone was asked why she always came so early to church? "Because," said she, "it is part of my religion never to disturb the religion of others."