

Reading and its Influence

Last Disciple Ministry

Nurturing the faith of the saints

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Feed the Child's Mind with Proper Food

The susceptible, expanding mind of the child longs for knowledge. Parents should keep themselves well informed, that they may give the minds of their children proper food.

Like the body, the mind derives its strength from the food it receives. It is broadened and elevated by pure, strengthening thoughts; but it is narrowed and debased by thoughts that are of the earth earthy.

Parents, you are the ones to decide whether the minds of your children shall be filled with ennobling thoughts or with vicious sentiments. You cannot keep their active minds unoccupied; neither can you frown away evil.

Only by the inculcation of right principles can you exclude wrong thoughts.

***Unless parents plant
the seeds of truth in the
hearts of their children,
the enemy will sow
tares.***

***Good, sound instruction
is the only preventive of
the evil communications
that corrupt good
manners.***

***Truth will protect the
soul from the endless
temptations that must
be encountered.***

Parents to Control Reading Habits

Many youth are eager for books. They read anything that they can obtain. I appeal to the parents of such children to control their desire for reading.

Do not permit upon your tables the magazines and newspapers in which are found love stories. Supply their place with books that will help the youth to put into their character-building the very best material, the love and fear of God, the knowledge of Christ.

Encourage your children to store the mind with valuable knowledge, to let that which is good occupy the soul and control its powers, leaving no place for low, debasing thoughts.

Restrict the desire for reading matter that does not furnish good food for the mind.

Parents should endeavor to keep out of the home every influence that is not productive of good.

In this matter some parents have much to learn. To those who feel free to read story magazines and novels, You are sowing seed the harvest of which you will not care to garner.

From such reading there is no spiritual strength to be gained. Rather it destroys love for the pure truth of the word. Through the agency of novels and story magazines, Satan is working to fill with unreal and trivial thoughts minds that should be diligently studying the word of God.

Thus he is robbing thousands upon thousands of the time and energy and self-discipline demanded by the stern problems of life.

Children need proper reading which will afford amusement and recreation and not demoralize the mind or weary the body. If they are taught to love romance and newspaper tales, instructive books and papers will become distasteful to them.

Most children and young people will have reading matter; and if it is not selected for them, they will select it for themselves.

They can find a ruinous quality of reading anywhere, and they soon learn to love it; but if pure and good reading is furnished them, they will cultivate a taste for that.

Discipline and Educate Mental Tastes

The mental tastes must be disciplined and educated with the greatest care. Parents must begin early to unfold the Scriptures to the expanding minds of their children, that proper habits of thought may be formed.

No effort should be spared to establish right habits of study. If the mind wanders, bring it back.

If the intellectual and moral tastes have been perverted by over-wrought and exciting tales of fiction so that there is a disinclination to apply the mind, there is a battle to be fought to overcome this habit.

A love for fictitious reading should be overcome at once. Rigid rules should be enforced to hold the mind in the proper channel.

Avoid Cultivating Taste for Fiction

What shall our children read? This is a serious question and one that demands a serious answer.

It is troubling to see in Sabbath keeping families periodicals and newspapers containing continued stories which leave no impressions for good on the minds of children and youth.

They have had the privilege of listening to the truth, of becoming acquainted with the reasons of our faith; but they have grown to maturer years destitute of true piety and practical godliness.

The readers of fiction are indulging an evil that destroys spirituality, eclipsing the beauty of the sacred page.

Prevalence of Harmful Books

The world is deluged with books that might better be consumed than circulated. Books on sensational topics, published and circulated as a money-making scheme, might better never be read by the youth. There is a satanic fascination in such books.

The practice of story reading is one of the means employed by Satan to destroy souls. It produces a false, unhealthy excitement, fevers the imagination, unfits the mind for usefulness, and disqualifies it for any spiritual exercise. It weans the soul from prayer and from the love of spiritual things.

Works of romance, frivolous, exciting tales, are, in hardly less degree, a curse to the reader. The author may profess to teach a moral lesson; throughout his work he may interweave religious sentiments, but often these serve only to veil the folly and worthlessness beneath.

Infidel Authors

Another source of danger against which we should be constantly on guard is the reading of infidel authors.

Such works are inspired by the enemy of truth, and no one can read them without imperiling the soul. It is true that some who are affected by them may finally recover; but all who tamper with their evil influence place themselves on Satan's ground, and he makes the most of his advantage.

As they invite his temptations, they have not wisdom to discern or strength to resist them. With a fascinating, bewitching power unbelief and infidelity fasten themselves upon the mind.

Myths and Fairy Tales

In the education of children and youth fairy tales, myths, and fictitious stories are now given a large place. Books of this character are used in schools, and they are to be found in many homes.

How can Christian parents permit their children to use books so filled with falsehood? When the children ask the meaning of stories so contrary to the teaching of their parents, the answer is that the stories are not true; but this does not do away with the evil results of their use.

The ideas presented in these books mislead the children. They impart false views of life and beget and foster a desire for the unreal.

Never should books containing a perversion of truth be placed in the hands of children or youth. Let not our children, in the very process of obtaining an education, receive ideas that will prove to be seeds of sin.

How Mental Vigor Is Destroyed

There are few well-balanced minds because parents are wickedly negligent of their duty to stimulate weak traits and repress wrong ones.

They do not remember that they are under the most solemn obligation to watch the tendencies of each child, that it is their duty to train their children to right habits and right ways of thinking.

Cultivate the moral and intellectual powers. Let not these noble powers become enfeebled and perverted by much reading of even storybooks.

There are minds that have been unbalanced and partially benumbed, or paralyzed, by intemperance in reading.

Exciting Reading Makes Restless, Dreamy Child

Readers of frivolous, exciting tales become unfitted for the duties of practical life. They live in an unreal world. We have watched children who have been allowed to make a practice of reading such stories.

Whether at home or abroad, they were restless, dreamy, unable to converse except upon the most commonplace subjects. Religious thought and conversation was entirely foreign to their minds.

With the cultivation of an appetite for sensational stories the mental taste is perverted, and the mind is not satisfied unless fed upon this unwholesome food.

Intemperate habits of reading have an effect upon the brain similar to that which intemperate habits of eating and drinking have upon the body.

Before accepting the present truth, some had formed the habit of novel reading. Upon uniting with the church, they made an effort to overcome this habit. To place before this class reading similar to that which they have discarded is like offering intoxicants to the inebriate.

Yielding to the temptation continually before them, they soon lose their relish for solid reading. They have no interest in Bible study. Their moral power becomes enfeebled.

Sin appears less and less repulsive. There is manifest an increasing unfaithfulness, a growing distaste for life's practical duties.

As the mind becomes perverted, it is ready to grasp any reading of a stimulating character.

Thus the way is open for Satan to bring the soul fully under his domination.

Hasty, Superficial Reading Weakens Power of Concentration

With the immense tide of printed matter constantly pouring from the press, old and young form the habit of reading hastily and superficially, and the mind loses its power of connected and vigorous thought.

Furthermore, a large share of the periodicals and books that, like the frogs of Egypt, are overspreading the land are not merely commonplace, and idle, but unclean and degrading. Their effect is not merely to intoxicate and ruin the mind, but to corrupt and destroy the soul.

“I Cannot Afford Our Church Papers.”

There are those who profess to be brethren who do not take ***Signs, Instructor, or Good Health***, but take one or more secular papers.

Their children are deeply interested in reading the fictitious tales and love stories which are found in these papers, and which their father can afford to pay for, although claiming that he cannot afford to pay for our periodicals and publications on present truth....

Parents should guard their children and teach them to cultivate a pure imagination and to shun, as they would a leper, the lovesick pen pictures presented in newspapers.

**Let publications upon
moral and religious
subjects be found on
your tables and in
your libraries, that
your children may
cultivate a taste for
elevated reading.**

Messages to Youth on Objectives in Reading

As we see the danger that threatens the youth from improper reading, we cannot forbear to present still further the warnings we have received in regard to this great evil.

The harm that results to the workers from handling matter of an objectionable character is too little realized. Their attention is arrested and their interest aroused by the subject matter with which they are dealing.

Sentences are imprinted in the memory. Thoughts are suggested. Almost unconsciously the reader is influenced by the spirit of the writer, and mind and character receive an impress for evil.

There are some who have little faith and little power of self-control, and it is difficult for them

to banish the thoughts suggested by such literature.

Oh, that the young would reflect upon the influence which exciting stories have upon the mind! Can you, after such reading, open the word of God and read the words of life with interest?

Do you not find the book of God uninteresting? The charm of that love story is upon the mind, destroying its healthy tone and making it impossible for you to fix your mind upon the important, solemn truths which concern your eternal interest.

You sin against your parents in devoting to such a poor purpose the time which belongs to them, and you sin against God in thus using the time which should be spent in devotion to Him.

Children, I have a message for you. You are now deciding your future destiny, and your character building is of that kind which will exclude you from the Paradise of God.

How sad it is for Jesus, the world's Redeemer, to look upon a family where the children have no love for God, no respect for the word of God, but are all absorbed in reading storybooks.

The time occupied in this way robs you of a desire to become effective in household duties; it disqualifies you to stand at the head of a family, and if continued it will entangle you more and more closely in Satan's snare.

Some of the books you read contain excellent principles, but you read only to get the story. If you would gather from the books you read that which would help you in the formation of your character, your reading would do you some good.

But as you take up your books and peruse page after page of them, do you ask yourself, What is my objective in reading? Am I seeking to gain substantial knowledge? You cannot build a right character by bringing to the foundation wood, hay, and stubble.

Sow in the Mind Seeds of Bible Truth

Between an uncultivated field and an untrained mind there is a striking similarity. In the minds of children and youth the enemy sows tares, and unless parents keep watchful guard, these will spring up to bear their evil fruit.

Unceasing care is needed in cultivating the soil of the mind and sowing it with the precious seed of Bible truth. Children should be taught to reject trashy, exciting tales and to turn to sensible reading, which will lead the mind to take an interest in Bible story, history, and argument.

Reading that will throw light upon the Sacred Volume and quicken the desire to study it is not dangerous, but beneficial.

It is impossible for the youth to possess a healthy tone of mind and correct religious principles unless they enjoy the perusal of the word of God.

This book contains the most interesting history, points out the way of salvation through Christ, and is their guide to a higher and better life.

God has planned for our wellbeing.

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