

always wishes he was "*ready*" to go, but he has not yet *been* ready. If this article should meet his eye, will he ponder this question—When will you be ready?

Yonder is a man who says he has never felt any special anxiety upon religious subjects. He believes in the reality and necessity of religion, knows he must possess it or perish, and means to seek it before he dies, but he is not "*ready*" now.

That he is not ready now is, alas, too evident; but if I had his private ear, I would like to propose for his consideration that important question, as yet unanswered—When will you be ready?

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CHARLIE AND JACK, AND WHAT THEY BOTH LEARNED.

"Jack! Jack! here, sir! hie on!" cried Charlie, flinging his stick far into the pond. Jack didn't want to go; it wasn't pleasant swimming in among the great lily leaves, that would flap against his nose and eyes, and get in the way of his feet. So he looked at the stick and then at his master, and sat down, as much as to say, "You're a very nice little boy, but there was no need of your throwing the stick into the water, and I don't think I'll oblige you by going after it."

But Charlie was determined. He found another switch, and, by scolding and whipping, forced Jack into the water, and made him fetch the stick. He dropped it on the bank, however, instead of bringing it to his master; so he had to go over the performance again and again, until he had learned that when Charlie told him to go for the stick he was to obey at once. Charlie was satisfied at length, and, with Jack at his heels, went home to tell his mother about the afternoon's work. He seemed quite proud of it. "It was pretty hard work, mother," he said. "Jack wouldn't mind at all until I made him; but now he knows that he has to do it, and there will be no more trouble with him, you'll see."

"What right have you to expect him to mind you?" asked his mother quietly.

"Right, mother? Why, he is *my* dog! Uncle John gave him to me, and I do everything for him. Didn't I make his kennel my own self, and put nice hay in it? And don't I feed him three times every day? And I'm always kind to him. I call him 'nice old Jack,' and pat him, and let him lay his head on my knee. Indeed, I think I've the *best* right in the *world* to have him mind me!"

His mother was cutting out a jacket. She did not look up when Charlie had finished: but going on steadily with her work, she said slowly, "I have a little boy. He is my own. He was given to me by my Heavenly Father. I do everything for him. I make his clothes, and prepare the food he eats. I teach him his lessons, and nurse him tenderly when he is sick. Many a night have I sat up to watch by his side when fever was burning him, and daily I pray to God for every blessing upon him. I love him. I call him my dear little son. He sits on my lap, and goes to sleep with his head on my arm. I think I have the 'best right in the world' to expect this little boy to obey me; and yet he does not, unless I *make* him, as I would make a dog."

"Oh, mother!" cried Charlie, tears starting to his eyes, "I knew it was *wrong* to disobey you; but I never thought before how *mean* it was. Indeed I do love you, and I'll try—I really *will* try—to mind you as well as Jack minds me."

"Dear Charlie," said his mother, "there is a great difference between you and Jack. You have a soul. You know what is right, because you have been taught from the Word of God; and you know, too, that the devil and your wicked heart will always be persuading you to do wrong. That is a trouble which Jack cannot have; but neither has he the comfort you have; for you can pray to our dear Savior for help, and he will teach you to turn away from Satan, and to love and obey Him alone. When you learn to do this, you will not find it difficult to be obedient to me; for it will be just the same as obeying God, who has said: 'Honor thy father and thy mother;' and where we truly *love*, it is easy to *obey*."—S. S. Banner.