

THE CHILDREN IN THE PEWS.

Looking back over a score or more of years we dwellers in this part of the world cannot help observing a change in the feeling of parents about the duty of taking their children to the house of God. Is it a sign of the decadence of family religion that we so seldom—in our cities, at least—see the whole family, father, mother, brothers, sisters, seated reverently together in the family pew? Certainly, the younger generation of parents do not seem impressed with the obligation of training the children in regular, constant attendance on the sanctuary, an attendance which in our day was never intermitted except by severe illness.

We do not usually discover that people act in other departments of education in precisely the way they do with reference to church-going. Quite the contrary is the rule. The little girl hates the drudgery of piano-practice, would far rather be out with her hoop or her skipping rope; but not on that account does her relentless mother allow the expensive lessons to cease, nor permit any neglect of the tiresome five finger exercises. "Dear madam," says the pitying friend, "your little one will detest that piano if she is forced to practice. Why not wait until she is old enough to see for herself the advantage of a knowledge of music, and to long for facility in fingering?" The wise mother smiles, superior to such silly blandishments. "It will then be too late," she remarks. "This is the golden time for training in technique. My child will one day thank me for my present severity."

It is terribly hard work to teach some children to read and write, but the teacher does not therefore dismiss them from school. Left to his own freedom of choice many a lad would prefer play to study, but his father puts no premium upon truancy. He knows full well that if his son is to receive educational discipline he must go to school every day, whether he likes it or not.

I believe that the weak and trival behavior of parents in this matter is having an unfavorable effect on the characters of the children intrusted to them. Children ought, as a thing of course, to go to church, and to prayer-meeting too, with older people from the time that they are old enough to do so. They are old enough

as soon as they can talk and walk. Never mind their taking a nap, cuddled against the mother's arm. Never mind their occasional change of position. It is of the greatest importance that a habit of church-going shall be so formed that they shall never remember a time when the Sabbath bell did not summon them to God's house with an imperative emphasis in its sound.

We underrate the intelligence of our children when we fancy that they do not understand any thing of what they hear as they sit in the pew. There are often bits in the sermon which they do thoroughly comprehend and other bits which set them to thinking. A little talk at home, over the sermon, often brings out the children's interest. Then the sermon is not every thing; there are the prayers, the songs of choir and congregation, the reading of the Word. The whole service, at its longest, an hour and a half, is not so long that it need tax any child beyond his or her easy endurance.—*Interior.*

READING THE BIBLE FOR ONE-SELF.

Much is said nowadays, and very properly, about reading the Bible, becoming familiar with its history and doctrines, and being able to quote it correctly and pertinently. Ministers, theological students, Sabbath school teachers, parents, all Christians and everybody else, are urged to read and study the Word of God. The Scriptures cannot be perused and investigated too much. Because of the want of a thorough acquaintance with them a good deal of preaching that is orthodox is destitute of weight, force and flavor, and the personal piety of many is irresolute and feeble. But it is particularly in reading the Bible with a view to personal religious edification that we so often come short. We study its history, its blessed doctrines, its pure-precepts, the high duties to which it calls us, and the glorious glimpses it gives us of the future; but we fail to apply it to the states of our own hearts, our feelings, our desires and the ordering of our lives. Eminent saints have always fastened much upon the Word of God. To them it has been "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness." It has been with them a prominent characteristic to desire the sincere milk of the Word that they might grow thereby. A soul not fed by God's truth will not be rich in grace.—*Pres. Banner.*