

living as destitute of the fear of God, and as ignorant of salvation and of the means by which it may be attained, as if they were the children of heathens; when we see them anxious only to educate them for the present life; can we avoid coming to the conclusion, either, that they are ignorant of the nature of baptism, or that, when they got their children baptized they were not sincere—that they acted hypocritically with God. Religious education at a public Sabbath school, however much that may be a help to parents, comes very far short of relieving them of the obligations under which they individually lie, to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and for which they are individually responsible.

Nor is the church free from blame with respect to baptized infants. If children are publicly recognised as having a place in the family of God, the church ought certainly to see that they are receiving proper training while under the guardianship of their parents; and ought also, when the proper time comes, to superintend their religious education. This was the ancient practice, and it were well that it were revived. The care of the church ought not to be confined, as it too frequently is, to those of mature age. To provide meat for the full grown and to neglect to provide milk for the babes, is very unlike what the christian family ought to be.

This neglect arises in a great measure from not adverting to the position which a baptized child occupies in the church, and from ignorance of the true nature of church membership. Were these understood, men would either not become church members, or they would strive to be faithful to the duties which that relationship brings along with it. As long as men regard the membership of the church merely as something connected with respectability in the eyes of the world, or as entitling them to certain privileges not connected with corresponding duties; as long as they do not regard themselves as members of God's spiritual family, separated from the world and on progress to immortality, so long will they neglect their duty to their children and to themselves.

The church of God being an institution of Heaven, and in which more of his glory is manifested than in all his other works, contains within itself all the instrumentality which is needed for so training its members, that they may become meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. There is a depth of wisdom in its simple orderings which the carnal eye does not see. Instead then, of inventing a new constitution for the church of Christ, based on principles of expediency, the church ought to bring into full operation God's own ordinances; and were this done, an amount of success would attend her ministrations such as has not been since the days of the Apostles; modern improvements are but clumsy substitutes for God's own ordinances. The institutions of the christian church have not, for many centuries, had a fair trial. Every thing has been more or less corrupted or distorted. The church has become in a great measure powerless. The form remains but the genuine spirit is wanting. Are we then to throw away as inefficient the ordinances which