

ideas above the level of the social life in which the child moves.

To the moral influence of the *home* and *society* is to be added that of the State. If the laws are just to all alike, if they afford protection to the poor and the weak as well as to the rich and the powerful, if they require all to contribute according to their ability toward the expense of what is done for the common weal, and if they punish the offenders of high degree no less than the meanest, then the State exerts no small influence upon the moral character of the young; while to the extent that the laws are unjust, or badly administered, does the State exert a degrading moral influence. The State is an important agent in moral education.

The influence of the CHURCH is still greater. In the Church the child learns not only his higher duties to his fellow-beings, but also his duty to God, the Creator and Preserver. While children are not over-critical in regard to the morality of Church creeds, they are profoundly impressed by the doctrines relating to God and duty which the Church inculcates. So strong are these impressions that they are never fully obliterated, even when the child, grown to man's estate, rejects the grounds upon which these doctrines are made to rest. The sanction of religion is a strong and lasting force in human conduct, now restraining the wayward, and now inspiring the desponding.

But while Home, Society, the State and the Church do much to mould the character of the young, there still remains a profound responsibility resting upon the teacher. After he limits the scope of his work by making due allowance for pre-natal influences, and for what is necessarily done for the child by other agents, he still has an important function to perform, which grows out of the nature of his office and the continuity of the relation between him and his pupils. The moulding influence of a good teacher upon the character of his pupils is beyond computation. The fundamental virtues of civil society—regularity, punctuality, silence, obedience, industry, truthfulness and justice—are developed and impressed in a good school as nowhere else. Here the child learns to be regular in his attendance, punctual in the beginning and the ending of every duty, silent when others should speak, obedient to the rightfully constituted authority, industrious in the discharge of the duty lying next, truthful in the scope and the details of whatever he undertakes to tell, and scrupulously just in allowing others what of right belongs to them. From a man who habitually practises all these virtues, what more need be demanded? And these are pre-eminently school virtues. These it is the business of the teacher, more than of any other agent, to create. Their constant practice in school is essential to his own success and that of his pupils.—LARKIN DUNTON, in *Education*.

PRAYER.

"Prayer was appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give;
Long as they have live should Christian pray,
For only while they pray they live."

Man or woman can as well live physically without breathing, as spiritually without praying. Thus vital, it is everywhere possible. At home or in the congregation; in the wilderness or in the city; in our busiest moments or in our leisure, we can always pray. Prayer is the animation of Christian life, for we know Christ prayed for everything. Every crisis in His life was preceded by prayer. If we are struggling to live a higher life, and to know something of God, what we need is to be brought into contact with Him. Prayer is contiguous with God. Prayer brings over the soul to new and higher affections, by which our former notions and principles are so changed that, in the words of St.

Paul, we are "new creatures" in Jesus Christ. We cannot be too frequent in our petitions; God will not weary of His children's prayers. "Men ought always to pray." (Luke ii. 1.)

Sir Walter Raleigh asked a favor of Queen Elizabeth, to which she replied, "Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?" "When your Majesty leaves off giving," he answered.—So long must we continue praying. How (Matt. vi. 9. Luke xi. 2) or when (I. Thes. 9, iii. 10, II. Tim. i. 3, Acts xxvi. 7, Luke vi. 12) to pray needs no suggestion when the heart is right. Love needs no telling how or when to express itself. Prayer in words is only one form. "To let the mind dwell on God in silent worship," says Geikie, "is the sublime of prayer."

In the busiest hours the mind will wander. If it glances upward for an instant into the purer light it will come back stronger for its glimpse of heaven. A religious spirit is in some sense praying always, for its acts and emotions are alike consecrated by devotion. For those who wish to find time for loving thought of anything, there never yet wanted opportunity. The trouble is that religiously we are like green wood—hard to set aflame.

Charles Kingsley says, "If any one is ever troubled with doubt about prayer, those two simple words, 'our Father,' if he can really believe them in their richness and depth, will make the doubt vanish in a moment, and prayer seem the most natural and reasonable of all acts. It is because we are God's children, not merely His creatures, that He will have us pray. Because He is educating us to know Him; to know Him not merely to be an Almighty Power, but a living person; not merely an irresistible Fate, but a Father who delights in the love of His children, who wishes to shape them into His own likeness and make them fellow-workers with Him." Therefore, saith God, "I will that men pray everywhere." [I. Tim. ii. 8].

Answers to prayer cannot always be what we hope for. Not knowing what is best for ourselves and others, we sometimes ask what wisdom and love must refuse. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." [James iv. 3]. God understands our wants better than ourselves. We must know that God's will is the highest good, and that anything which is beneficial to us or our neighbors will be granted importunately. "With God all things are possible." [Matt. xix. 26]. He is that wondrous God who "so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whomsoever believed in Him might not perish, but might have everlasting life." Remember that, and make St. Paul's words your own, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—*Parish Guide*.

NO ALMS, NO WORSHIP.

It is said that Mr. Spurgeon was asked one day, when touring in an out-landish part of Scotland, to officiate in a little chapel among the hills. The popular preacher graciously consented, and at the close of the service was congratulated on an extraordinary increase in the Offertory. "How much did you take?" enquired the minister: "Three-and-sixpence" was the reply. "And what is your usual collection?" "Eighteenpence, Sir!" "But," added Mr. Spurgeon dryly "I gave the two shillings myself!" Scotty is a canny fellow who will not allow himself to be wheedled out of his baubles by a smooth tongued Southerner. Our readers will, perhaps, remember the laird Dean Ramsay tells of, who in a moment of unpardonably thoughtlessness dropped a half-crown into the plate instead of his usual contribution of a penny,

and went into the Vestry to demand his coin back. When this modest demand was resisted by the minister, his lairdship consoled himself with the reflection that at least Heaven would credit him with the half-crown. "No, no!" said the other, "you meant a penny, and a penny it is above." South of the Tweed some strange superstitions seem to exist about the Heavenly value of a threepenny bit. "Grave and reverend seniors," who have made snug fortunes in the City, plume themselves on the fact that they have never insulted the Church by offering less than silver. Even the dissenting communities that have always been accustomed to raise the salaries of their ministers and the expenses of public worship out of pew rents and collections, seem to suffer from the plague of threepenny bits. But the wonder is, when one reflects on the condition of religious life thirty or forty years ago, that the difficulty of raising means in the Church of England is not far greater. A quarterly collection for the Dorcas Society or the Missionaries satisfied the yearning of our grand parents. Truth to tell, when collection time came round, they were not niggardly. Yet how seldom was the duty of Christian liberality enforced in those days! The Church's exhortations in the Communion Service—then rarely heard—to lay up treasure in Heaven, and lend to the Lord fell strangely on unaccustomed ears. One fancy, in the Walpole Era, almsgiving as a part of public worship must practically have ceased.

To-day, we reap the sowing of many evil years. The great truth, "No alms, no worship" has to be proclaimed as a new gospel now, though taught by the Divine Founder of the Church so long ago. Many a sermon and many a word of exhortation will be needed to impress the lesson. Let the Bishops in their public utterances never fail to set it forth in language that cannot be misconstrued. Let the clergy take up the parable, not once in a year, on a week-night service, but Sunday by Sunday, till the lay mind grasps the great truth, that the Religion whose foundation stone was laid in self-sacrifice can be reared and consolidated on no other basis.

The gift of a threepenny bit is in many cases, perhaps in the majority, no offering at all, for it is not the outcome of self-sacrifice, but of meanness and cowardice; meanness that won't give more, and cowardice—that dare not give less.

Widows' mites are precious gifts from poverty stricken widows, who cast into the treasury all the living that they have, but not for well-fed merchants, tradesmen, or artisans. Yet this fact is practically unknown to vast numbers of church-going people to-day. Sorrowfully the truth is forced upon us, that making churches free-seated does not make church goers free-handed. The early advocates of the free and open principle were over sanguine sometimes. "When the churches are free," they said, "the people will give more than the seat-rents, through the offertory." In many cases they have, but in many cases unquestionably they have not. It is upon this class of uninformed, unthinking, not necessarily ungenerous, Churchmen the elementary duty of systematic almsgiving must be forced home. The clergy, not once and awhile, but constantly and persistently, must impress this lesson until the truth is recognised and acted upon by every true son of the Church.

Sometimes we hear of clergymen "who can't beg." If such good men would reflect that they