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THE WORK OF THE TEACHER

By The Rev. Canon S. M. Taylor, M.A.

Psalm xxxiv. 12, "Come, ye children, and hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

A preacher who at all realizes his position must feel a deep sense of responsibility as he mounts the pulpit steps and looks down on the lines of faces that stretch before him. He stands there, whatever his shortcomings and limitations in mind or character, to teach on the highest of all subjects, that which strikes deepest into our nature and touches the very springs of life. He has to speak for God.

But sometimes, besides this, it is the nature of his audience that especially moves him. It is so with me this evening.

It is difficult to measure the influence of anyone over his fellows. We always, I think, underestimate it. But even the dullest mind can grasp the thought that among the most influential of all are those who have to do with the daily teaching of the children. It is the most im-

pressionable time of life that they deal with. It is also the most trustful. And no one, outside the home circle, has more opportunity and more power in the forming of the man and woman that is to be than the teacher. The forming of their character, I mean; for that is the real self. Do teachers always realize this? Perhaps not. From my own personal experience as parish priest, I am sure of it.

And you, who are pupil-teachers, are teachers in the making. Already you have begun your great and serious work, each with your own widening circle. What, then, is the immense power of influence that is contained in this gathering now?

Try to grasp the full meaning of your calling. You stand by the cradle of the future. Into your hands will be placed the young life of the many thousands whose knowledge and principles and convictions will virtually govern the land.

Even from the lowest and most worldly point of view, then, we do well to recall ourselves from the folly of despising one of these little ones. There they sit in rows. Small heads bent over the slate; with just

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