

the way. What they should do is to bring them to church themselves, and back up the teacher's efforts by a personal interest in the lesson.

In short, true religious education is not, and never can be, the sole work of any school, however good. Throughout the whole educational movement, especially of these latter days, many of us have lost sight of what true religious education is. We are a great deal too fond of dividing work into different departments; as if it were the schoolmaster's business to hammer the three R's, and as much else as it can be got to hold, into the child's head; the parent's business to feed, lodge and clothe the child, and pay its school fees, till it can begin to earn a few shillings a week itself; the Sunday-School teacher's and minister's business to provide its share of religion. But religion, the sense of obedience to high principles, the sense of respect we owe to God, can never be shut up in, and referred to, a mere department, as if it could be taught separately, like arithmetic. If it is anything, it is intended to pervade all work, all life. The spirit of it is needed just as much in the home as in the Church. The Church is not a sort of tank in which so much religion is stored, and out of which people may fill their own buckets if they are so inclined.

Religion is, rather, more like the rain without which no grass can grow, without which no fruit can swell. It is like the dew which needs to fall over the woods and fields and gardens alike, and without which all natural life would be dried up. When we talk of religious education, we think of the influence which should descend upon and pervade every so-called Christian society, having, it may be, different forms, but having this one thing in common; high motive, purpose, and effort to lead a righteous life, desire to know and to do the will of God; desire, that is to say, to know and do what really are the laws

by which we should be guided; desire to follow them, and not merely please ourselves. That which thus concerns our whole course and work is no mere educational department, confined to one section of instruction.

Religious education! This, or its opposite, inevitably goes on in every circle, every home, every part and branch of society. We are all called to be teachers and scholars in this matter. It ceases at no period of our growth and life. It is perpetually the subject of learning and examination.

The world is the great school in which it is required, and God is the Head Teacher and Chief Inspector therein. We distort its meaning, and cramp it down, when we talk of its being the business of this or that set of people only. It is not a special, but a universal subject, in which we, all of us, cannot help, for good or evil, having a hand by our character and example. But when we think of it in relation especially to children, the first responsibility for the imparting of religious education lies with the parents of the children themselves. It rests primarily with them to make or mar the whole matter. The Sunday-School, or such religious teaching in the Church as children can understand, is no substitute for the righteous teaching and influence of the Home. It should rather be a support to the example and instruction of the parent. It is the Home, and the continuous atmosphere and tone of the Home, which moulds the child. Home is the chief first source of the impressions which the child receives in its most impressible state. If those are unrighteous, the influence of the Church and School is miserably narrowed and weakened. If, on the other hand, those impressions are righteous, then the child is supported in its right course by a double power, and increased blessing may fairly be expected to descend upon the training of the Home, and the lessons of the Church and School.—*Quiver*.