

teach religious topics would remove many obstacles needlessly placed in the way all through the school-work, and the wise teacher, whatever his confession or that of his pupils, would give offence to none, and parents of all shades of religious belief would be satisfied because their children were taught the whole truth.

2. ARE THE AMERICAN YOUTH PROPERLY RECEIVING SUCH INSTRUCTION ?

The state relegates the religious instruction to the family, the family largely to the church, and the church to the Sunday-school. It does not require a close observer to see that there is a decided disposition on the part of parents to leave the religious training of their children with the Sunday-school, just as they leave the secular training with the day-school. The Germans require five hours a week of religious instruction for eight years, by trained teachers, attendance being regular. With us there is one hour of Sunday-school per week, with less than a half-hour's instruction, often by poor teachers, attendance being voluntary and generally irregular. As an actual fact our youth obtain a very meagre knowledge of the Bible, no knowledge of Christian literature, and, unless they go to college, but little instruction in ethics. Thus an important part of the education of every man is clearly, sadly neglected. No man can be called well-educated who has not a knowledge of sacred history and literature, to say nothing of the doctrines of the Christian church.

But this is not the whole statement of the case by any means. The statistics of the American Sunday-school Union show that the total number of Sunday-school scholars is only about fifty per cent. of the total number of children of school age, 5-21 years of age. Now it is well-known that those counted as Sunday-school

scholars include adults belonging to the Bible classes and children under five years of age belonging to the infant class. Hence more than half of the children of school age do not have even the meagre, irregular, unsatisfactory instruction of the Sunday-school; and as the parents who do not send their children to the Sunday-school are least of all apt to teach them the Bible at home, we are driven to the painful conclusion that a large portion of the growing youth of America receive scarcely any religious instruction.

Having established the position that religious instruction is a necessary part of education, and that the American youth are not getting such education, we turn to the third question :

3. OUGHT THE STATE TO UNDERTAKE IT ?

That the state shall undertake the religious training of the youth in America, where state and church are separate, in the same sense as in Germany, where they are united, cannot be expected. But as such instruction is necessary as preparation for good citizenship, and as there is no other sufficient means of securing it, it seems clear that the state must do it. But how far shall the state go in the matter of religious instruction ?

Clearly the state cannot enter the field of dogmatic theology, nor teach any particular confession. These must ever in America be left to the family and the church in her various branches and shades of belief. But the history and literature of the Bible so essential to the education of every individual certainly can be taught in the public schools without offense to any one. Then, too, the moral lessons taught by the Bible as nowhere else should form a basis of systematic moral instruction. Take, for example, the story of Joseph revealing himself