

many opinions at hand in support of the belief that religious instruction is a necessary part of education. Professor John A. Hires says: "Familiarity with the Bible is worth more to the student of our best literature than familiarity with any dozen other books that could be named.

"The pupil needs chiefly:

"1. A minute knowledge of the historical facts recited in the Bible.

"2. A clear conception of the meaning of the parables and other teachings of Jesus.

"3. A memory of much of the sublime language of the poets and prophets of the two Testaments."

If, then, religious instruction is necessary to complete education, I think there is no escaping the conclusion that the State must assume some part of it in the common schools. It cannot assume the whole of it, for creeds can never be taught by the State in a country where Church and State are separated and where there are so many sects. There must never be admitted into the public school any influence that gives the least color of sectarianism. It is not to be thought of, is not desired, nor is it necessary in order to produce the end which must be sought. We have seen that not one-half of the children are taught those things so essential to good citizenship and a happy and useful life. The institutions that are now attempting this work are not succeeding, and never can fully succeed. There is only one institution that reaches all the children, and that is the public school.

Why should not the State teach the history and literature of the Bible as well as its moral lessons? Why exclude sacred history and literature and admit every other history and literature? We teach the sublime thoughts of Cicero, Shakespeare or

Emerson, and may not introduce those of David, Isaiah, or Paul. We familiarize the children with the deeds of Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon, but must be silent concerning Moses, Joshua or Jesus. There need be no sectarianism in this teaching. Read John W. Hall's article on Bible Study in the November (1897) *Educational Review*, and see if it is not possible to teach the Bible without offence to anyone. Put all the safeguards you please to prevent sectarian teaching, but give to the child that which is his inherent right—namely, the best education possible.

It cannot be, in this age of tolerance and intelligence, that there is not a common platform of literary, historic and moral teaching founded directly upon the Bible upon which Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Christian, Orthodox and Liberal can stand in our public schools. They, and they alone, can supply this vital deficiency in our educational practice; and I believe that parents would welcome such instruction, could they be assured of its non-sectarian character.

Some may object to the term "religious" as applied to the instruction thus outlined, claiming that it is simply ethical. I am not a stickler for terms, but prefer the term used, even with instruction so limited, as it will inspire respect, awaken reverence, and prepare the way for the deeper spiritual truths that the home and the church must add. With the literature, history and moral lessons of the Bible well taught in the public school, these other agencies could devote themselves to the more specific doctrinal and spiritual lessons which must be excluded from the State schools. And would not such religious instruction in the day school be an excellent preparation for the further necessary instruction on the part of the church and the home?

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