

RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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The intimate relation which the education of children sustains to their future character as citizens invests the instruction they receive during their school life with more than ordinary interest and importance. School life is a miniature forecast of the larger life of manhood and womanhood. Its difficulties, tests of character, and elements of success, are substantially the same as those of mature years. As the drill of a soldier, that does not fit him for actual warfare, would be pronounced a wrong method, so if the education which children receive at school is not adapted to make them good citizens, it fails in its main purpose.

In formulating an educational scheme, we must have due regard to the actual condition of things in the country for which it is intended. A system that might answer for a mission school, or for a country where all the people were of one religious faith, would not be practicable in a country like ours, where there are different Christian Churches possessing equal rights. There are only three possible systems. One that provides for denominational schools, or one that provides for united moral and secular teaching, or purely secular schools. I regard the united education of the children of the people as a most desirable thing, that cannot be lightly given up. There are two strong objections to any educational system which divides the people on Church lines. Such a division of the children of the people into denominational sections, by dividing up the resources available for school purposes in the different districts, would greatly weaken the schools and lessen their

efficiency. An equally serious objection is, that such a system tends directly to create sectarian lines of separation, inimical to patriotic unity in political and municipal affairs. Those who are unitedly to carry on the affairs of the country in the future should be educated together. But theological teaching in the schools, no matter under whatever pretext it is introduced, tends directly to prevent this desirable unity of all denominations in the public schools of the country.

It will be generally admitted that any education which does not embrace moral and religious culture is radically defective. We may differ as to the agency by which such culture is to be given, but there can be no difference as to its vital importance. Intellectual acuteness and intelligence alone are not a sufficient equipment for the duties of life. Dr. Lyman Abbott, in an article in *The Century Magazine*, remarks that, "if it is the primary right and duty of the State to give whatever education is necessary for good citizenship, it is self-evident that it is its primary right and duty to give education in moral principles, and training to the moral impulses and the will." He further says: "The men who are to determine what are the rights and duties of the State in dealing with other States, what are the rights and duties of the individual citizens in dealing with one another, what is the nature, penalty and cure of crime, and what is the moral quality of the corporate and co-operative acts of the community, are to determine moral questions, and must be educated to perceive moral distinctions, and to see that moral considerations always