

School teachers, irreligious though they may be, shall do properly that which is improperly done or left undone by the so-called religious people themselves. Before further demands are made for religious teaching in the Public Schools every denomination favoring such a change should prove that it means something besides shirking its own proper task.

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This can be proven by having Sunday Schools which mean something more than congregating the children together to hear a couple of prayers, sing two or three hymns, read or recite a few verses of Scripture, and after a noisy session scamper home. The accommodation provided is very often entirely unsuitable; the maps and materials to be used in teaching are either absent or utterly inadequate, the discipline lax, and indeed the power to punish an unruly child without expulsion almost entirely withheld. Many of the teachers take a class for the "fun of the thing"; it is not unusual for superintendents to be lacking in both piety and ability to teach or procure or direct good teaching. But all these deficiencies have been recognized and permitted to exist year after year, while many of the ministers, instead of devoting their energies in reforming the Sunday Schools, have satisfied their consciences and their congregations by occasionally clamoring for religion to be taught in the Public Schools.

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There would be no complaint from the taxpayers if the buildings used for the day schools were used on Sundays

by the religious denominations, singly or in unison, for the purpose of teaching religion and helping the ignorant, whether old or young, to learn to read the Sacred Book for themselves. If the denominations united they could employ first-class teachers for a trifle—indeed, many professional and business men who have been teachers would volunteer two or three hours service for the work if Sunday Schools were to be taken seriously—and in this way intelligent and approved methods would be employed in instilling into the youthful mind the necessary knowledge of the Bible, sacred history and the moral law. Instead of dragging children to church to hear sermons that they do not understand, they might be sent to such schools with the very best results. Now that the Synod has taken the matter up, other churches in their great gatherings should consider it also and see if they can excuse themselves for their inexcusable neglect in providing proper Sunday School facilities. It is useless to cry out that such Sunday Schools as I have outlined would be too much trouble; to Christians there cannot be too much trouble when souls are concerned and youthful education in sacred matters is to be imparted. Perhaps, if more money were spent on starting the children right, less would have to be expended on inducing people to act properly later in their lives; and, if children were gathered together on Sundays to hear simple lectures from the professors in the colleges and learned men of the Church, they would sooner recognize their responsibility to their Maker and to one another.—
Don, in Saturday Night.