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# Religious Education

*The Journal of The Religious Education Association*

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June, 1916

**The Instruction of School Children**

**The Jewish Point of View**

**The Catholic Point of View**

**The Protestant Point of View**

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**Our Religious Liberties**

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**Children's Reading**

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# Religious Education

*The Journal of The Religious Education Association*

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## CONTENTS

	Page
CHILDREN'S READING . . . . .	207
<i>Ella Lyman Cabot</i>	
THE GARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE CHURCHES . . . . .	221
<i>William M. Wirt</i>	
ATTITUDE OF THE JEWS TOWARD WEEK-DAY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION. . . . .	226
<i>J. L. Magnes</i>	
FROM THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT . . . . .	231
<i>Rt. Rev. Philip R. McDevitt</i>	
FROM THE PROTESTANT VIEWPOINT . . . . .	239
<i>Henry H. Meyer</i>	
TEACHERS FOR WEEK-DAY RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS . . . . .	245
<i>Walter S. Athearn</i>	
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS OF RELIGION . . . . .	252
<i>Myron C. Settle</i>	
DO PRESENT PLANS ENDANGER OUR RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES? . . . . .	259
<i>Edwin S. Lewis, Percy R. Stockman, Vernon P. Squires, Wm. J. Thompson, F. P. Ramsay, Robert L. Kelly</i>	
BIRTHRIGHTS AND SOCIETY . . . . .	277
<i>Winfield S. Hall</i>	
THE OKLAHOMA PLAN OF BIBLE STUDY CREDITS; THE INDIANA EX- AMINATION; EDUCATION AND RELIGION IN JAPAN . . . . .	285
NEWS AND NOTES—BOOK REVIEWS . . . . .	291, 296
OFFICERS FOR 1916 . . . . .	300

month, as in the Australian Plan, nothing need be lost that is counted precious or important and much would be gained. Such a plan, while perhaps not immediately practicable, would seem to be possible of realization in the not very distant future.

Is it not high time we quit talking about our religious liberties and begin to assert them? Or, can we longer prattle about safeguarding our religious liberties, when, with the way standing apparently wide open, our childhood and youth are not adequately safeguarded?

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## **DO PRESENT PLANS ENDANGER OUR RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES?**

EDWIN S. LEWIS, PH.D.

*Methodist Board of Sunday Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio*

This is a question somewhat belated.

We are told by the advocates of coöperation between the church and the state that some headway has been made for public school credit for Bible study in twenty-one states and provinces. One of the great churches has declared through its general official body that "the church is responsible for promoting religious education in our public schools," and what is known as the Gary Plan has been widely advocated and endorsed by sundry representative bodies.

Now, on the face of it, it would seem that such combinations and divisions of labor are directly contrary to all standard Protestant contentions in this country from the beginning, and antagonistic to the very spirit of Protestantism itself. There are many men of many minds, of course, and doubtless this view of the case would not be universal. But it would certainly seem to be worthy of consideration, especially in view of the supreme importance of religious liberty, to say nothing of religion itself, and of education, in this country. There are certainly multitudes of people who consider that our dearest patriotic and Protestant traditions are broken over by these novel plans, and it is to them that those who are promoting these should furnish some account of their extraordinary action. All who propose plans involving supreme interests like these, both as to religion and to patriotism, ought to declare their principles. They should make a clear announcement as to whether they are abandoning the Protestant principle of separation of church and state, or show us how the Christian denominations in this country can adopt such plans without violating this principle.

Our public schools and our Sunday schools have been very successful in this country. It has been the testimony, practically uniform until recently, that both these institutions owe their prosperity to their independence of each other. The bane of education in all the past has been the hostility of ecclesiastics and politicians who have access to it.

But this is not a universal opinion by any means. The Roman Catholic Church is commonly understood to be hostile to our public school system as it is. It calls our schools godless and denies the fundamental right of the state to educate the children. It has established parochial schools all over the country and demands a share of the public school funds on the ground that it is doing a share of the work of education.

A prominent Methodist layman in the city of Brooklyn has written a book in which he makes the same plea, declaring that such a division of the public school funds is essential justice and sure to be allowed in this country before very long.

This proposition is a very simple one. "The laborer is worthy of his hire." If any church is doing the work of education for the state, it is entitled to pay therefor from the state.

Opposed to this are those who claim that the church and state are, and of right ought to be, and of necessity must be, wholly separate and independent in this country. The state has the right to educate children and youth in all things necessary for the safeguarding and the appropriate qualification of its citizenship. The churches, representing the parents, have the right to educate the children in religion; each party without interference from, or dictation by, the other. The state cannot, under the circumstances, take orders from any church or be controlled by it. The churches can allow no interference from the state in religious education, either in respect to its matter or method. The churches must not be patronized by the state in the teaching of religion. They need no permission from, nor endorsement by, the state in this. Their rights are primarily the rights of parenthood. The church is a voluntary organization through which parents may train their children in religion as they may choose, or, dispensing with church agencies, they may train their children directly, as they choose. Or, they may leave their children untrained in religion.

This inheres in civil and religious freedom, as we understand it, and it is distinctly the highest and the dearest privilege enjoyed in this proud republic. It is not through chance or social drifting that we have attained to it. With a great price have we bought it.

Rivers of blood and of treasure have been poured out through the dark centuries of old in the long and terrible struggles for liberty. The freedom that we enjoy in this country is the highest product of social evolution. No other nation has anything like it. Even in Great Britain, religious education is furnished by state schools, and the content of it is so obnoxious to the non-conformists that many of their leading men and women, representing the finest citizenship of the kingdom, have resisted payment of taxes to support it and have suffered for this by the seizure of their household goods and by imprisonment. In Germany, religion is taught by the state schools. It is only in our own country that we enjoy the priceless privilege of free public education by the state and of free religious education by the churches.

I can easily see how those who are anxious for the utmost possible measure of religious education and who deplore the spiritual poverty of neglected children and youth, can welcome religious education from any source if they lose sight of freedom and count all the religious education that can be secured from state schools as so much clear gain in the great work. But this point of view is impossible to freedom. In the very nature of the case, the privilege of religious teaching must be exclusive or it is but the ghost of a privilege. If I teach my children religious truth as I hold it at home and through the church of my choice, I am exercising my parental rights freely. But if my children go to the public schools to be taught a different set of religious truths, or to have what they have learned at home or in their Sunday school flouted or denied, this privilege is invaded and destroyed. What the state teaches it controls and must control. We are fairly well agreed in this country concerning arithmetic and geography and grammar and such things, but we are not at all in agreement concerning religion or religious education. The great churches in this country, numbering their adherents by millions, are standing evidences or varying religious opinions, and it is superfluous to say that these are held more tenaciously than any others, as by a certain divine sanction. We shall do well if we agree as members of different churches in this country in our social and business life. We are slowly coming to an agreement upon some of the fundamentals of theology, but it will be a long day before there will be any such widespread agreement as to the main body of theological truth as would permit its common and indiscriminate teaching. We shall do well, if we would promote Christian comity in this country and fraternal coöperation in the various movements for social amelioration, to adhere strictly to the

few religious fundamentals in which we can agree. For one group to try to coerce the whole in the interest of its own peculiar opinions or practices would be reactionary and destructive.

When we approach this whole question with thoughtful attention to the fundamentals, we are surprised at the lack of consideration which has been given them. Where has there been any settlement of the question of what religion is, or religious education, or the rights and the privileges of the church, or even any discussion of these? Take even the Bible itself. He would be an enthusiastic advocate who could believe that our people are far enough along in this country now to agree upon some of the simplest elements that would necessarily enter into a statement of what the Bible is, which statement should be used in formulating a plan for teaching it as proposed. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the Bible is one and that its truth is one, and that we men of the different denominations get different doctrines out of the Bible because of our limitations and our errors. When we understand the Bible correctly we shall understand it alike, and no denomination will find any comfort in talking about "our doctrines," or in preaching to its people that it alone is interpreting the Bible aright. Until this time comes, what prospect is there that we could agree, even among ourselves, as to what should be taught concerning the Bible and from the Bible in connection with the public school? That there would be a cloud of new troubles with public education if the state should undertake the teaching of religion is almost self-evident. Our great denominations are the monuments of the zeal of faithful followers of Jesus Christ in forming religious associations wherein their own pious convictions might have opportunity to work themselves out undisturbed. If we could be satisfied with having our own religious opinions and rules of conduct furnished to us by authority we could take both brains and conscience from the priests and save ourselves a great deal of hard work and responsibility.

How much better would it be to take our religion from the state than to take it from Rome or Russia? This is precisely what state control of religious education means. If the state should teach religion it would determine the course of study and the methods of instruction. It would also select the teachers. Now, if we should cast out of the course of study everything that some religious denomination or some Christian parents should object to, how much would there be left of it? How far could the state go in framing a curriculum that would give anything like general satisfaction?

Then there are the teachers. Some of the most pious and faith-

ful men and women in the land are teaching in the public schools, and many of them are taking on the additional burden of Sunday school teaching. But we all know that there are other teachers than these. There are a few that are selfish or cold or rude or vulgar or dissipated or profane or skeptical. Even as things now are, it is a common complaint that public school teachers sometimes go out of their way to undermine the faith of young people in the religion of their fathers and mothers, and to discount the teachings of the Bible and to deny its inspiration. Suppose for a moment that these teachers were officially authorized to teach these things. What would become of our children? And what would become of our faith? And these considerations must apply, even though religion is not taught in the public schools, if the state sets standards and makes requirements of church schools for state school credits.

It seems to me that we are trying to handle this question wrong end first. I have referred to the haste with which we have endorsed processes before considering principles. But we shall not get far with this. Principles must always come first. We must know just what we are endorsing or our endorsement will be vain. I have referred to the ambiguity of the term "religion." This is not at all a theological consideration, but a strictly practical one. The term religion, as popularly used, is so broad and so ill defined, and it means so many different things to different people, that it affords us at this moment no basis for a rational discussion of the questions that may be in our minds.

What is religion?

What things would we teach in order to teach religion?

Do the things that we teach out of books generate religion in the heart?

A minister was once visiting a Sunday school where he found a stern visaged woman teaching the story of the flood to the boys and girls. She had a highly colored picture of the flood at the worst stage of its horrors, with struggling beasts and drowning people prominently displayed, and the rain pouring in torrents from the sky. The story was told in the crudest possible fashion with continuing emphasis upon the horror of the scene. After the exercise was over he asked the teacher what her aim was. She replied in surprise,

"Why, I'm saving the children's souls!"

This is one way of teaching religion. The catechism is another way. There are people who believe that a passage of Scripture has in it inherent and extraordinary virtues. They do much memory



work. They seem to think that the Bible is a book of incantations. Merely to speak or to write the words of the sacred Scriptures imparts a spiritual influence, or works in some mysterious way for the abatement of the penalty of sin. There are multitudes who repeat Paternosters and Ave Marias with this same end in view. There are perhaps millions of Christians in this country today whose chief reliance for forgiveness is in such repetitions.

The examination of a considerable number of the curricula proposed for religious education in connection with the public schools shows a bewildering variety of opinions as to what the teaching of religion is. Some of the elements of these curricula are excellent. Some of them, it would seem to me, are entirely unsuited to be handled by paid agents of a political institution like the public school. The greater number of them, however, would not come under a strict definition of religion at all, but rather of morals. As such, they can be taught in the public schools without difficulty now, and they are so taught. We need no special dispensation in order to teach truth and love of truth, righteousness, justice, purity, honor, peace and peace-making, humility, reverence, faith, hope, moral earnestness, and of multitudes of other virtues. We are enjoying today in the public schools all the freedom that we need for the teaching of these things. The amount we get out of it varies with the teachers themselves. High-souled and conscientious instructors are doing a vast deal to promote the higher ethical values among their pupils. The selfish and skeptical and mercenary are doing very little for these virtues. We have no right to suppose that any alliance of the churches with the public schools would improve these conditions at all. We would get good results from good teachers, but the highest and best things would fare badly in the hands of some. I am clearly of the opinion that the great majority of such public school teachers as are best qualified by character and disposition to teach religion have the least confidence in their own ability to teach it in the public schools, and the least sympathy with any plans that look toward this.

There is another grave question. How can two institutions so diverse in their fundamental ideas as the church and the state cooperate in the teaching of religion? How can two work together if they are not agreed? The state is a political institution. It is established by law and its officers and teachers are paid agents of the state. They are supported by taxation. Their foundation is authority. They ask no privileges from any of us. They take our money by compulsion for their support, and they take our children.



They fix their own courses of study and put everything through with no consultation or coöperation with parents at all. Their work is well defined and their processes are rigidly determined. They can compel attendance and study, and they have police power to enforce discipline.

When we consider the church, however, we find a radically different situation. The church has no authority. It is a voluntary system throughout. A man may join the church or he may withdraw from the church, at his own pleasure. The Sunday school is not a real school at all as compared with the state schools. We have no paid teachers, no contracts, no compulsory attendance or study, and no power to enforce discipline. As a general thing, we have no real recitations, no real examinations, and no such teaching, even down to its basic principles, as we have in the public school. This is not a disparagement of either institution. I do not criticize either, but, on the contrary, commend both, each in its own sphere. The state assumes authority to compel the instruction of the children of its citizens in general knowledge. The church, on the contrary, simply makes a proffer. It operates under the voluntary principle exclusively. It compels nobody to do anything. It works by love alone. Divesting itself of authority thus, and abjuring the great feature of compulsion, it is in a position to teach the highest and purest ideals. It has a rare vantage ground from whence the hearts of its pupils may be reached, their sympathies touched and their aspirations kindled.

This, as it seems to me, is the only way whereby we can attract souls and work with them in the interest of real religion. The Sunday school teacher is far more a pastor than a teacher. Working in the religious realm, his first interest is not to inform but to evangelize. He is trying to teach his pupils, not a compendious body of facts, but only a few elementary principles. His main work is in the application of these few elementary principles to the development of the soul in prayer and penitence and faith, in love to God and loyalty to Jesus Christ, and a continuing communion with the Holy Spirit; and in the graces of personal character that adorn the soul and qualify it for the service of God and man.

The educational content of religion, so considered, is comparatively narrow in its scope, but it is very deep. It sounds the depths of the nature and controls the springs of all the activities of life.

I confess to a strong sympathy with those who hold that religion, primarily considered, cannot be taught in the public schools nor in any other school. Religion is caught rather than taught. The

maturing of reverence and faith and love comes through contact with holy and loving souls, and not primarily from anything that is learned out of any book. The first lessons in religion come from the best and most exalted priesthood, the parents of the child. When the mother looks into the wondering eyes of her little boy and tells him that God is his Father and loves him, and teaches him to fold his little hands and pray to his heavenly Father, she is imparting the first and profoundest lessons of religion. As that boy advances he sees God revealed in his father and mother. He watches them. He is keenly sensitive to every modulation of their voices and to every expression of their countenances and to the tender light in their eyes as they are telling him to be good and to love God and pray to him and be truthful and obedient and clean. In fact, if religion is well taught before any child reaches the public school age he has learned the most there is to know about it, and he has learned this through the unspoken influences that have rained upon him from the souls that he loves and admires and trusts.

This is how children become religious, and if habits of reverence and prayer and penitence and trust and service are early formed, they are formed for the lifetime. I am free to say that there is not much more for any such child to learn, in the way of vital religion. If these primary influences are wanting in the life of the homeless\* or neglected child it is a deplorable fact. Something of this want may be supplied through the kindness of Christian friends, but I do not believe that it can be supplied in any considerable degree by any course of study in any state school.

While it is quite true that many things that support and supplement religious faith may be learned from books, it is by no means true that religion can be learned from books as can the sciences. Religion is not primarily knowledge. While its basis is truth, its essence is emotion. Its chief function is in the domain of conscience and the volitions. It is a great mistake to suppose that the more courses of study we have the more religion we are teaching. The best religious teaching is direct and positive and personal. Religious influences are intuitively felt, rather than logically worked out, and they are absorbed rather than comprehended. It would be a great mistake for us to have too much time for the teaching of religion. The temptation would be to bring in a mass of more or less correlated matter that would be almost certain to displace the essentials in actual practice.

We are incurring this danger right now in some of the new courses that we are preparing for our young people. There is a

tendency to make our Bible lessons studies in archaeology and Biblical origins and Hebrew antiquities. Interesting as these things may be to theologians, they are positively useless as instrumentalities for doing the elementary work in morals and religion that we must do with our young people in the Sunday school. Our first and most urgent work is to go straight at these young people in direct fashion and by the shortest route, laying all possible emphasis on the practical virtues which alone can make a man a Christian. If we undertake to go back two or three thousand years and to pilot him through the mazes of history and theology in order to teach him to be honest and industrious and clean and sober and prayerful and consecrated, we shall lose him before we get fairly started. The moral and social questions of our own country today call for similar direct treatment. The history of Israel has its didactic value, of course; but to get the habit of going around through ancient Israel to get at all the moral problems of the United States of America is pedantic and vain.

The so-called "Gary Plan" has for its objective week-day instruction by the churches. While it does not seek to coöperate with the state schools in religious education, it does establish a sort of *modus vivendi* with them which, in some places, has involved very serious consequences. With the great need of week-day religious instruction by the churches, it is unfortunate that any plan to realize this should become involved in the hateful processes of priestcraft. This plan, as I take it, must be judged, not by its prospectus, but by its actual operation, and it would seem that the place to study it just now would be New York City rather than Gary, Indiana. I am not inclined at this time to go into details concerning this. In general, however, it brings the church schools and the state schools so near together as that both are harmed. Also, it gives opportunity to sectarian teachers to do active proselyting among the pupils for their own churches; and furthermore it tends to inject the whole sectarian question into the public schools and therefore becomes a divisive force therein.

It is difficult to see why we need any agreement at all with the public schools in order to prosecute the work of religious education. Along with the claim of the churches to the right to teach religion to their children and youth, untrammelled, has gone the parallel claim of the ability to do it. It were well nigh fatal for the churches to admit that they are unable to carry out their own chosen programs in religious education or to depend upon the public schools in any way to help them out in this. It is distinctly a bad thing for any

church to go to the doors of the public schools to get its own children for the purposes of religious education. It is anything but edifying to see a group of priests, rectors, or plain preachers, waiting for the children to come out that they may line them up and file them off to their several churches. It does not look well for any interprising church to hire a hall opposite a public school building and to equip it, perhaps, with public school furniture, and then to seek to corral all the pupils possible into it for sectarian instruction. It is distinctly bad if a public school teacher inside is canvassing her classes for recruits for her own church, particularly so if she should force children into her own sectarian group against their will, or coerce them by violent means, or by threatening them that they will not be promoted if they do not yield. Even if there is nothing of this kind, such schemes as this exert a baleful influence upon the public school by the mere fact of splitting it up into sectarian groups. Loud are the complaints from disinterested and far-seeing public school teachers of the discords and the sectarian jealousies which have already been thus introduced.

The principal of one of our New York schools says: "It is profoundly astonishing to me to note the very great increase of sectarian consciousness that has arisen in our public schools since the discussion of the Gary religious instruction plan. I have taught for a number of years alongside of teachers and never knew their church relations. I have taught many hundreds of children and never knew what church they attended, and I feel that my work was much more effective for them educationally and ethically on account of this failure to emphasize the sectarian side. Now it is rapidly transpiring that every teacher is either wondering or inquiring what the religious convictions of every other teacher may be. When some children go from school to church and from church to school, and others do not, it does not take a very great stretch of the imagination to see how this sectarian consciousness will spread to the entire community, young and old."

There is another consideration: that exceedingly important work done by our public schools not specified in the curriculum—the assimilation for citizenship of the diverse human elements brought into this country by immigration. The menace of unassimilated immigration has struck every Christian investigator in recent years. The men on the watch towers have not ceased to warn us against the dangers of bringing into this country large numbers of aliens who neither sympathize with nor understand our free institutions. In the recent riots in Youngstown, Ohio, it was found that of the

fifteen thousand inhabitants of East Youngstown only four hundred were voters. We are told that not more than one-third of the seven millions of immigrants who became a permanent part of the population of the United States during the past decade have given any evidence whatever of becoming American citizens. These people are sending three hundreds of millions of dollars a year back to Europe; and, what is worse, only a third of those who are living here have acquired with any degree of mastery the language of our country. It is said that seventy-five per cent of our immigrants come from the agricultural districts, though barely ten per cent of them seek the rural sections of this country. The masses crowd into the industrial centers, polluting these with the unhealthy conditions under which they live and becoming the easy prey of agitators and a fruitful source of anarchistic outbreaks. Our free institutions have been strained to the limit in recent years by the crude masses of people that have well-nigh overwhelmed us. We have only been able to hold our own against these influences for many years past, and the chief agency for our salvation has been the public school. Only as we can gather the children of these aliens into the public schools and train them in good morals and in patriotism can we have any hope for the future of our country. Again, only as we can eliminate from these schools the sectarian consciousness and give them an object lesson in the great principles of democracy in the school itself can we hope to influence them as we desire.

I have discussed in a general way three typical propositions for the extension of religious education: First, that which proposes religious instruction in and by the public schools. Second, that by which the state recognizes the churches as auxiliary to the scheme of education, assigns a share of the work to them, which it recognizes by credits for graduation in the state schools, and, third, the proposition to take pupils directly from the public school at regular intervals for instruction in the churches.

These propositions, and all others which involve the coöperation of the churches with the state schools, the recognition of religious education by the state, permission by the state to the churches to teach religion, or any arrangement of times or programs whatever which shall bring the two systems together into any sort of intimacy, are positively dangerous and should be condemned by the churches in the interest of both Sunday schools and public schools. So recently in the long evolution have we attained to our religious liberties, that, without the closest watchcare, there is constant danger of reversion and degeneration. It will be impossible for the church

and the state to come to close quarters in education, even without formal coöperation, without acute danger of somebody's taking advantage of the situation. Only in keeping separate in educational work is there any safety for either church or state. If the churches would be true to their time-honored principles in this country, let them adopt this principle first and nail it to the mast-head at any cost: **WE STAND FOR THE ENTIRE SEPARATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE MATTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.** Having done this, there are many things we might do positively and constructively. I am cordially in favor of the largest possible provision for progressive education in and by the churches. As fast as we can get together, I am in favor of coöperation. Related religious denominations, and local churches should coöperate in the work of neighborhood churches. Where they can agree upon courses of study and teachers and the conduct of a common school, they are in a position to prosecute this work cheerfully and constructively, with no concession to political authority and no interference from it. At the same time, the direct religious influence upon the pupils will be of the freest and the best. Everything is good that promotes spiritual religion and keeps free from entangling alliances.

But there is no progress in reaction. All forms of coöperation with state schools are reactionary and full of mutual peril. To open up communication with the public schools and to dicker with them for any division of time or interest is un-American, and un-Protestant, and un-Christian. There is no hope for religious education in this direction. It will be useless for us to try to take any forward step there. To push this innovation will be to divide our own forces and to alienate many of our best workers and supporters.

The slogan stoutly raised by our fathers in days gone by should be loyally cheered by their sons in all our churches today: "Hands off the public schools!"

REV. PERCY R. STOCKMAN  
*New York City*

I was very much interested in Dr. Lewis's paper, especially in his reference to New York. I would like to state the attitude of the Episcopal Church there in view of the facts. It is a very practical problem there, far beyond the theoretic stage. Here is the situation: A certain school in the Bronx adopts the Gary program, and that means that the children below the fifth grade have certain hours a day when they are sent home. Some do not come to school till

10:30 because they are not wanted till that time. Others leave at 10:30, and so on through the day. Now, one church in the neighborhood of that school said that they had been taking their children for sometime from the school, but after school hours. They were glad to coöperate with the school program, to take the children when they are released from school. This was the Roman Catholic Church.

The Jewish community immediately planned to rent a store near that school and begin in February the work of religious education.

Now, what were the Protestants to do? Here were the Roman Catholic children receiving religious instruction; they had been doing it before. But now they were adapting themselves quickly to the school system. Here are the few Jewish children, who are about to be given week-day religious instruction. If the Protestants make no attempt to impress the parents that they have something to teach on week days, it looks very much as if they had nothing to teach the children on Sunday. So our Episcopal Church decided to do what it could for its children. We have just twelve children in that school of 3,000 children. Now, that situation is rapidly going to become acute. There are at present six churches in the Bronx that have adopted the Gary schedule, and there are six others almost ready. What is the church to do? Is it going to say that all these years we have been thinking about week-day religious instruction for our children, and some day we are going to give it to them, but not now, because if we go in now, it will mix up the church with the school and make it look like this new school program is a program of the church? Or is it going to look at it as if this is a new opportunity for the parents and say we can coöperate with this new school program, and take it up and offer one hour or one period a week for the children.

Now, it is true that the majority of the churches in New York have taken Dr. Lewis's attitude, to do nothing, and to oppose the Gary program as a school program, and to oppose any opportunity for religious instruction. And some have gone to the extreme of saying as he did, that it is unchristian, undemocratic, and unpatriotic.

My own attitude is that we should try to reach the children and the parents and to create a desire for week-day religious instruction. Then if the Gary program as a school program proves ineffective, we shall have something on which to get the children when we go back to the old school system.



PROFESSOR VERNON P. SQUIRES  
*University of North Dakota*

I must enter a protest to some of the underlying assumptions that were mentioned in the paper by Dr. Lewis. There seems to be an assumption there that in this present-day plan there was an attitude on the part of the state to dictate in the matter of religion. There may be some such plan, but that is not the spirit of the plans in North Dakota, and Iowa and Washington and Colorado. There is no assumption on the part of the state to dictate the terms of religious training for the children.

Discussing the attempt to have religious instruction in the public school by public-school teachers or in public-school hours is beside the point, building up a man of straw. The North Dakota assumption is that Biblical instruction, and instruction in the fundamental Christian concepts are necessary parts of a liberal education. They are a part of the racial heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race. *But*, the idea is that the church and the church teachers shall teach religion, without let or hindrance. There should be and is no domination by the state. The only requirement is that honest work should be done, and our children should have just a little encouragement by the state saying that the work ought to be done, although the state teachers, as such, cannot do the work. Yet the state should say that the work has value, and that it will recognize the value, and give it credit in the work of the school. And then, the church can do the teaching that it thinks right and proper, and the parents of the children will have perfect freedom in saying what kind of instruction shall be given. It seems to me that there will be no dictation on the part of the state in any such way as seemed to be assumed and suggested in the paper.

PROFESSOR W. J. THOMPSON  
*Drew Theological Seminary*

The supreme object in our society is the child. Our supreme work is to transform the child to what he ought to be, and in this transformation, the greatest agent is the public school. The public school cannot do all of this work. They are doing part of it all right; for instance, they are looking after the child's body, the teeth and the eyes,—but we have not yet done away with the family physician. So there is something to be done outside the public school. They do teach morals at the public schools, but not a complete set of morals.

The school says that it does not try to do the work of religious

education. That work is delegated to others than the public schools. Then if the public school recognizes that it does not do the entire work of education, they must have the other educational agencies to coöperate with. The home and the church are two such, and there must be some coöperation between the three of them. Now, if the church can do this all on Sunday, we will have no difficulty until the public school says that they want to use Sunday. We must tell them, "You must not consume all the child's time in work." The child is fairly fagged out at three o'clock in the afternoon. Can the church use the time after that? We should correlate with the public school at this point. There must be an opportune time of the day so that we can coördinate the work of the curriculum, and for this reason we cannot say, "Hands off the public schools." There must be some relation between the school and church regarding the time of the work, and the work itself. My contention is not "hands off" but "fair coöperation."

PROFESSOR F. P. RAMSAY  
*Kendall College, Tulsa, Oklahoma*

For some time I have been troubled with the fear that we would here in America develop what might be termed the "American religion," taught by the state in its schools, and under the circumstances, necessarily a type of religion which would ignore, if not reject, the fundamentals of the Christian religion. Because it is impossible for the American state to teach Christianity just as it is impossible for the state to teach Judaism, this would follow. But the American state, if we adopt the view that the political is the whole, must have a religion, and we are certainly going to have a religion, and we are going to teach it to our children.

But now I see some hope. If these two social institutions, both the state and the church, both necessary in the organism of human society, and each having its distinct function which it can perform and the other cannot,—if these two can find how to coöperate, then we can preserve our American heritage of religious liberty. But if we cannot find how to coöperate, how to coöperate in the education of our children, some plan by which the religious society shall be free to teach what it believes without let or hindrance, have time to do it, and freedom to do it, then inevitably this American people will teach a religion, a common religion, an American religion, such a religion as the American political organ can endorse, and it will not be the Christian religion.

Now, the plans that are before us have their practical difficulty.

but they too have in them the preservation of this principle of private religious liberty. The Jew can teach religion, the Roman Catholic can teach the catechism to its children and we shall all be free, and at the same time we shall be able to preserve our American heritage of freedom.

But if we should adopt the contention of that first paper (by Dr. Lewis) "Hands off the public schools," if we should adopt the theory that the state is one thing and the church is another and should have nothing to do with each other, then inevitably the principle of religious liberty must perish, and we would come under the subjection of the political program.

The state reserves the right to take our children from us, for the purposes of education. When the state shall say that we need some time for the training of our children, we can say nothing to it, but if we work upon this assumption that these two organs of society each has its place, and the only way that each can be free from the other is to let each do its own work, but in coöperation, then we can preserve our religion, and we can ask that the church shall have the opportunity to do its own work, and shall have our children long enough to give them adequate religious education.

That is the principle of freedom. But if Dr. Lewis's paper would persuade us that the eye shall do its seeing and the ear shall do its hearing, but that they shall not coöperate at all, then the eye shall see and tell the finger where to put itself, but the ear shall not listen to the music.

PRESIDENT ROBERT L. KELLY  
*Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana*

I should like to speak from the standpoint of the public schools, and the teacher in the public schools, and from the standpoint of the administrator in the public schools. From both of those standpoints I am inclined to take issue with Dr. Lewis. I think the public schools have no desire to be autocratic and to dictate a policy for religious education. I think that is not the true situation so far as the public schools are concerned. The public school recognizes the fact that they are teaching the children of the people, and they wish to be in touch with the people, and with the parents of the people. The great idea that is being presented by our educational activities today is the idea of the socialization of the public schools; and instead of there being any disposition to hold themselves in power and to consider themselves autocrats and to fear lest somebody attempt to interfere with their work, the attitude of the public

schools is just the opposite. They are asking for suggestions and that influence be used to promote the enterprise in which they are engaged. And the chief interest of religious educational workers is the fact that they have kept their hands off too much, and have not indicated to some degree the attitude of the public schools.

Now I do not believe in the teaching of the science of religion in the public schools, but the teacher in the public schools must believe in religion, and the art of religion should be presented by them in the public schools.

I dissent from the view that this plan is going to build up a great chasm between the public-school teachers and the teachers of religion, because I know that the public-school authorities are desirous of coöperating.

EDWIN S. LEWIS, PH.D.

*(Closing the discussion and answering objections to his paper)*

I would be glad to say a word concerning this assumption that is imputed to me. I feel that there is a misapprehension. I certainly would be willing to retract any such assumption if there is such in my paper. I do not know anything in my paper or in my mind that would represent a tendency on the part of the public schools to dictate to the churches. I am not afraid of the state schools dictating to the churches, nor of the church schools dictating to the state schools. I simply ask that each be independent to do the work that is its own to do.

What I said is this: if a public school is to give credit for work, it must dictate the terms. There is no autocratic spirit there. What business has the state to graduate a pupil or to give a diploma unless it knows what the child has done? It must dictate standards and grades and methods of work, and standards of maximum and minimum. But here is where the difficulty would come: in the recognition of religion by the state. It is a recognition of religious education by the state. It is the determining of matters of method, both quantitative and qualitative, and it opens the way for a sort of formal coöperation that is extremely dangerous. Now, all this moral coöperation is good, of course. I do not think there is a word in my paper that would reflect that it is not. I tried to make it very clear that it is this formal and official coöperation to which I object. But here is a question: if the state recognizes religious education and assigns that part of the education to the churches to do, then the laborer is worthy of his hire, and the church is doing a part of public education. Therefore it is justly due to compensation. If

it does the work of the state, it is entitled to pay for it, and that would lead to the division of public-school funds.

Now, as to the matter of coöperation. I think I have been in favor of week-day religious instruction. I am sure we shall have to have it. But the question is, How? There are only two entities: the state and the church. I know what the state is, but who knows what the church is? Scarcely two of them are organized alike. We have Presbyterian, and Independent and Baptist, and we have the Jewish bodies that do not call themselves churches at all, and we have thousands in this country who do not belong to any church at all.

It seems to me that the Christian principle must be fairness and justice first and always. Now, as I say, we have as many different kinds of churches in this country as we have churches. Which one is the state to deal with? There is such a unified body, and it is citizenship. We can deal with the state and ask the state to look over the general field of the welfare of these boys and girls, and mark off the work of public education and take no more time than is necessary to do it. It seems to me it ought not to lie with the Catholics or Protestants or Jews to deal with this situation. The citizenship of the country is the body that has the power to do with this as is best, but no church has the power.

I do not think there is a chasm at all. I can live with my neighbors without a fifteen foot fence between us, but our families must be distinct and separate. If the churches will keep out of the public schools, accepting everything that will help, and avoiding this political coöperation and the things that will open the way for advantage to one side or the other, we shall be safe, and we shall each prosecute our work in the best way.

## THE NEXT CONVENTION

The Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Religious Education Association will be held in Boston, Mass., February 27th to March 1st, 1917. The meeting will be of the general convention type with popular evening sessions and departmental meetings all centering about the theme, "*Religious Education and the Coming World Order.*"

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