

# THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**A**BOUT once every decade there is opened up for discussion the question of "religious instruction" in the schools. Such a period of discussion is now generally indulged in throughout the country. It is contended by many that the undesirable tendencies and customs of our "excitable" age are brought about because of lack of religious teaching in our schools. The jazz craze, reckless driving, and sensational movies, are all pointed to as proof of the contention that the rising generation is drifting into moral bankruptcy. These conditions are to be checked, say some, through the introduction into the public school, of Bible reading and religious instruction. Some advocate a plan under which classes may be dismissed once or twice each week, at such hour that those pupils whose parents so desire, may attend the church of their choice, there to receive the moral and religious instruction it is claimed that the schools do not impart.

In a recent communication to the school superintendents of his state, Ernest W. Butterfield, Commissioner of Education for New Hampshire, has this to say in objec-

tion to the proposed plan for weekday religious instruction on public school time:

"We Americans after centuries of experience, both in Europe and America, have decreed that for us forever there must be separation of state and church. Our own troubled experiences, and the experiences of other peoples, have shown us that in a republic there is no other path of safety. Our constitutions and our laws have declared this position in no uncertain terms.

"The plan proposed is contrary to this principle and in New Hampshire is illegal. Neither public money nor public administrative time and power may be applied for the schools of any religious sect or denomination. School authorities may shorten any school day they wish, provided that they shorten it for all pupils similarly situated, but for them to supervise and hold themselves responsible for the schools of sectarian religion and for them to enforce attendance at religious instruction or to make this desirable by presenting at the school the choice of two hours of nondescript work is plainly a prohibited use of public administration.

"Except in small villages where the population has religious homogeneity, there is not a shadow of a chance that worth-while schools will be furnished to all children. Parents will not approve the plan long if it means the traditional Sunday school transferred to a week day, and the denominational cost of trained teachers and standardized equipment would put the plan in reach only of the most wealthy churches.

"This would leave two groups of children unjustly treated. There would be those who would substitute for two hours of public school instruction a similar period in such schools as the smaller sects could furnish. There would be a large group of those whose parents do not choose instruction in dogma in any of the forms available. These children would remain in school and mark time until the others returned. In this period the teachers are but partly employed and the expenditure for school maintenance would go on without adequate return."

It will be remembered that during the recent session of the California Legislature, there was tabled, after prolonged and heated discussion, an assembly bill (A. B. 128) providing that school children, with the consent of their parents, might be released from school earlier than usual, up to three hours per week, to receive instruction by the various churches and ecclesiastical organizations.

It was contended for the bill that it would bring moral training to children who are not now being reached by the churches and Sunday schools. Opponents maintained that the measure might lead to an invasion of the schools by sectarianism.



## THE SCHOOL LEADS

There is need enough, all thinking people admit, of sound moral instruction for boys and girls in their upcoming through the schools. Home conditions are not as they were in the earlier days. There is, however, much loose thinking on this question. There should be keen discrimination between *general moral instruction* on the one hand and *denominational exploitation of "religious instruction,"* on the other. There is today not one of our human institutions, the home included, where, considering the few short hours spent there each day, *so much real moral training* is secured through precept, through practice, and through example, as in the public school.

No one has as yet devised a workable plan for the dismissal of pupils on school time for "religious" instruction in the many denominations. Admitting the contention that the hours of church and Sunday school do not offer sufficient opportunity for necessary instruction, why break into the ordinary school day? Most children today have all too few duties to occupy their attention before and after school, on Saturdays, and on Sunday afternoons. There are ample hours outside the regular school day for this instruction. Parents find abundant time for music lessons, dancing lessons, and athletics, for their children. If time, outside of school hours, is used for week day religious instruction, there is not raised for discussion those religious or sectarian issues that must have no place in the public school. Berkeley, for example, uses this plan with notable success. There would then be no distinctions drawn, as school instruction would not have to be provided for those pupils who remain in school while their fellows are at the many churches.

The public press, for the most part, as well as most of the leading educators the country over, who have expressed themselves, seem opposed to the plans proposed for week day sectarian instruction on school

time. *The Los Angeles Express* says editorially in a recent issue, under the caption, Liberty in Education:

"You claim for yourself the privilege of believing as you must, and the further privilege of writing it or communicating it to others. How about the other fellow?"

"You want your own beliefs taught your children. But do you want them taught the beliefs of the other fellow? There's the rub in mixing church and state. Is it not safer all around to leave the schools free?"

## SENSATIONALISM

We admit to a decided conviction that things are *not* as bad morally, as many people suppose them to be. In many instances the worst is on the outside. It is to be regretted that crime and wrongdoing are so prevalent and that the sensational is given such prominent place in our daily papers. In former days much of the vicious and abominable went on without coming to the attention of the general public. Today omnipresent news-service luridly capitalizes every swerve from the conventional.

Contrary to an oft expressed view, there are more persons today, on a population basis, attending church and Sunday school and meetings of a nature to elevate and instruct, than ever before in our country's history.—*Sierra Educational News*, official organ of the California Teachers Association.

SCULPTURE 99 44/100 PER CENT  
PURE

The Art Center of New York announces a national small sculpture competition among professional sculptors and students of sculpture, using white soap as a medium. This is the second competition held by the Art Center, Mrs. Ripley Hitchcock president, with the prizes presented by Proctor and Gamble. A jury of award consisting of nationally known sculptors will present the prizes on December 1st at a private view and reception at the Art Center, 65-7 East 56th Street, New York.

Two groups of prizes will be awarded by



the Art Center, in order to advance the interest of art students throughout the country and to inspire professionals to further the art of sculpture. The professional prizes consist of \$300 for the first prize, \$200 for the second prize, \$100 for the third prize. There will also be two Honorable Mentions.

The prizes for students are divided into two groups: senior prizes, for students over fifteen and under twenty-one years of age, \$75 for the first prize, \$50 for the second prize, \$25 for the third prize, and two Honorable Mentions. For students under fifteen years of age, first prize, \$25; second prize, \$15; third prize, \$10, and two Honorable Mentions.

Complete information can be obtained on application to the executive secretary, Miss Blanche A. Byerley. All work to be submitted in the contest must be received in New York between October 15 and November 2, 1925, all charges prepaid, addressed to W. S. Budworth & Son, 424 West 52nd Street, New York. It is suggested that each piece shall be wrapped separately in soft tissue paper, then in cotton, then in shredded paper or excelsior, and then packed in a wooden box and marked "Soap Sculpture Competition."

Professional sculptors and students are cautioned to mark their work with care, attaching to each piece submitted a title and description of the sculpture and the name of the artist, with full address. This will ensure identification of the sculptures and will prevent the possibility of loss by misplacement or lack of identification.

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#### STANDARDS FOR LIBRARY SCHOOLS

Minimum standards for library schools, as prepared by the Board of Education for Librarianship of the American Library Association and adopted by the A. L. A. Council at the Association's Seattle meeting in July, conform to the action of the Associa-

tion of American Universities in regard to the degrees to be conferred on the completion of library curricula.

The Association of American Universities recommends that four years of academic work, with a major in any humanistic or scientific subject, represented by the degree of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science be a prerequisite for admission to a professional library curriculum and be followed by two years of professional study. The first year library curriculum should include professional courses in library science or an equivalent experience for which a certificate should be granted; the second year should be organized on a strictly graduate basis, for which the degree of Master of Arts or Master of Science should be granted.

The Association of American Universities provisionally approves the degree of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science (with or without the qualifying phrase "in library science") for four years of undergraduate work including a major (approximately one year) in library science, provided this major is organized and conducted on a par with academic or professional advanced work usually constituting a major.

The Association of American Universities disapproves the degrees of Bachelor of Library Science and Master of Library Science.

The above decisions have made possible the preparation of minimum standards for all types of library schools with full knowledge of the extent to which they conform to acceptable collegiate practice. Part of the future work of the Board of Education for Librarianship will be to prepare a list of accredited library schools as judged by the standards adopted.

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Columbia University Library has added the millionth volume to its steadily growing collection. The education section is on four floors of the new building of Teachers College.