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The Nottinghamshire Baptists and Education

BEFORE the nineteenth century educational opportunities for the poor were meagre. In Nottinghamshire there were ten endowed grammar schools and about fifty endowed elementary schools, many of them linked with chantry bequests. In country districts there were "dame schools" where a little reading and writing were taught at a fee of threepence a week. In Nottingham itself facilities were even scantier. For the few who could gain admission there were three endowed grammar schools, the Free Grammar School, the Bluecoat School and the High Pavement School, and a number of private "academies". Dearden's *Directory* of 1834 lists eighty-six such schools, and when the Education Act of 1870 was passed there were over a hundred, of which thirty-two charged less than ninepence a week.

One of the Nottinghamshire elementary schools, Collingham, was of Baptist foundation. In his will of 1699 William Harte left an endowment to provide a school for the children of the village; his wife, Mary Harte, increased this in 1713.[1] The teacher was to be a Baptist. In 1828 the school had twenty-three boys on its roll, of whom five were of Baptist families. Half a century later the endowment provided £50 a year and was supplemented by £15-£18 from public funds. The last surviving register, that of 1892-3, lists thirty-four girls but no boys. The school closed in the early years of this century.

Baptist ministers frequently supplemented their income by running private schools. There were at least two such schools in Nottinghamshire early in the nineteenth century; one at Beeston, conducted by Thomas Rogers, and another at Sutton-in-Ashfield, conducted by Clement Nott. A more pretentious school, just over the Derbyshire border, was directed by the Baptist minister at Ilkeston, the Rev. G. Pike. It was styled the "Ilkeston Academy" and the fees ranged up to £21 a year.

Sunday Schools

It was to provide for the education of the children of the poor that Sunday schools were started. In 1784 the idea was adopted in Nottingham when, on October 17th, a meeting was held in the Town Hall to consider founding a Town Sunday School. Several ministers and clergy were present, including Richard Hopper of the Friar Lane Baptist Church. As a result of the meeting, a Sunday school was established in the Exchange Hall. It flourished for many years; in 1802 it had 900 pupils[2] though by then it had become a Wesleyan school. By 1800, however, almost every denomination in the town had founded Sunday schools.

The first Baptist Sunday school in Nottingham was founded in 1797[3] by a group of young men, several of whom were members of the Octagon Place General Baptist Church. It commenced with thirty

children in the parlour of Mrs. Bull, Crown Yard, Long Row. Numbers increased rapidly and a schoolroom in Parliament Street was lent to them by Robert Goodacre. When this became too small, Thomas Heard, a Baptist manufacturer, lent two large rooms in his warehouse. In 1801 there were 160 scholars, and in 1803, 372. By 1811 the work had become so large that special premises were erected at a cost of £600 in Duke's Place, Stoney Street, to which the church had moved. The school later became a day school and was eventually taken over by the School Board after the passing of the 1870 Education Act.

The Particular Baptist Church in Friar Lane, Nottingham, founded a Sunday school in 1799 in Wheeler Gate. A committee of thirteen members was formed to administer the school and sixteen teachers were appointed, all young people from Friar Lane families who gave their services free of charge. The earliest minute book has survived and it indicates that the school had two sessions, probably of four hours each, beginning at 8.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. The morning lessons were singing, prayer, the catechism, spelling and writing, while the afternoon lessons were spelling, arithmetic and reading. A library was formed, financed at first by fines on the teachers if they came late. Examinations were conducted orally in public once a year by the managers of the school and other members of the Friar Lane congregation. In 1808 a branch school was founded in Arnold, staffed by a rota of eleven teachers. The Wheeler Gate School had 300 pupils in 1815; thereafter the detailed records cease.

The Development of Sunday Schools in the Nineteenth Century

Baptist Sunday schools began to spread in Nottinghamshire about 1806-1807. At the second Annual Conference of Midland General Baptist schools at Loughborough in 1808, twenty-five schools were represented, with 2,403 scholars, 434 teachers and thirty-one assistants.[4] In 1811 the Conference was attended by representatives of thirty-seven schools, with 3,700 children and 585 unpaid teachers.[5]

In 1809 John Burton, of the George Street Particular Baptist Church in Nottingham, called a meeting of representatives of Sunday schools and, as a result, the Nottingham Sunday School Union was formed in the following year. The Anglican schools soon ceased to be members and thereafter the Sunday School Union was the representative council of the Nonconformist Sunday schools. About the same time, schools began to question whether secular subjects should be taught on Sunday. At first only Stoney Street, of the churches involved, refused to accept the recommendation of the Sunday School Union to discontinue teaching arithmetic on Sundays, but there are indications that in later years other schools were teaching arithmetic on Sundays (e.g. a minute of 25th September 1836 shows that the Basford Baptist Sunday School was doing so) and probably very few discontinued teaching writing on that day. Friar Lane relegated arithmetic to a weeknight in 1809 and also writing five years later. In 1808 the General Baptist Conference agreed that arithmetic should be taught on Sunday if it could not be taught on any other day. Weeknight schools were thus commenced, and for the greater part of the century

most churches, Baptist and others, conducted a night school as part of their regular activities, even after Board Schools came into existence.

Larger churches had more than one Sunday school. In the 1850s Stoney Street had Sunday schools in nine associated village chapels, with a total of 1320 pupils. Derby Road had two, one of which met in Arkwright's original cotton mill in Toll Street and later moved to the People's College which adjoined the chapel. A list of the nine original teachers is given in the Derby Road Jubilee Record—all young people from the wealthy families associated with the church. The other school was a "ragged school" commenced in 1851 by a group of young people inspired by a sermon preached by the minister, the Rev. A. J. Baynes, on "Son, go work today in my vineyard". They rented a room in the Red Cow public house in Colwick Street and thereafter moved to the premises of the British School, Bath Street. The children were of the poorest; one teacher had a class composed entirely of chimney sweeps.

As late as 1877 or thereabouts two or three ladies of the Derby Road Church founded yet another Sunday school for children living around Sneinton Market. It eventually settled in the Parade Hall where it remained twenty-one years. There were fifteen classes, with scholars ranging from two and a half to thirty-six years. The school was sometimes so full that pupils had to be turned away "though none were admitted who attended another school". Attendance at school was still not compulsory and it would seem that the Parade Hall school catered for children whose parents did not send them to a Board School, probably because of poverty.[6]

Sunday Schools in the County

It is probable that most Baptist churches in the county except the smallest had Sunday schools teaching secular subjects. The East Leake School was founded in 1807[7] and met at first in the cottage of George Burrows, then later in the bakehouse of Joseph Bosworth. Punishments were sometimes humiliating, such as fastening a log round the neck of the culprit and compelling him to walk through the village followed by the other pupils. Many pupils who passed through the school subsequently became valuable members of the denomination, including some who became ministers. Three of these were of the Underwood family and the most distinguished, William Underwood, became principal of the General Baptist College. Beeston commenced a school in 1809 and erected a schoolroom the following year. In 1812 it had sixty-six pupils and fifteen teachers. Basford's school, begun in 1815, had 325 pupils in 1838. The working class church in Kirkby-in-Ashfield had a school in existence as early as 1818. Retford not only founded a school in 1836 with seventeen male and thirty-four female teachers, but also had a weeknight school and a branch school at Clarborough. Southwell founded a school in 1811 which, for a time, had a salaried school master.

The Standard of Education in Sunday Schools

The schooling provided by Nottingham churches has been analysed by two modern historians of education. S. D. Chapman's comparison

of the major denominations suggests that in 1834 the Baptists were making a significantly greater effort in proportion to their numerical strength than the other churches.[8] He considers that the standard attained in most Nottingham Sunday schools was high. They had full morning and afternoon sessions and the teacher to pupil ratio was never less than 1:10. At Friar Lane there were only thirteen recorded absences of teachers in the first fifteen years. David Wardle,[9] on the other hand, considers the standards low. His view is based on the reports of the Children's Employment Commission in 1842 and the evidence given to the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in 1845 and 1847, and he suggests that results were poor because the schools were primarily concerned with teaching religion. Grainger, the sub-commissioner in 1842, found that a majority of a sample of children examined could read, though some did not read very well. About a third could write. In 1845 tests were applied by the Rev. Henry Mosely, who investigated Midland schools for the Privy Council Committee on Education. The results of these tests in respect of the George Street Baptist School are given as an example of what might be expected from most Sunday schools. Forty-three children were given reading tests; of these eighteen could read reasonably well, ten could read an easy book, fourteen could read a little and one could read the alphabet only. Fifteen were given a writing test. Of these one could write reasonably well, five could write a little and nine not at all.

It was certainly one of the aims of the Sunday schools to give religious teaching; they made no secret of this, but they did not therefore neglect the conveying of secular knowledge. Religion was the inspiration of the founders of the schools. Very few other people made any sustained effort at that period to educate the children of the poor. Compared with what some of the children might have attained, given ample opportunity, the standard reached was low. Yet considering the limited resources, financial and otherwise, of the schools, the fact that the teachers were voluntary workers giving up the whole of every Sunday to the work, and, above all, the disadvantages of the children, many of whom worked a sixteen hour day throughout the week, the wonder is that they learned anything at all.

The Report of the Children's Employment Commission of 1842 provides examples of the working conditions of children from Baptist schools. Samuel Carr, aged thirteen, worked in Moore's lace factory from 4 a.m. to 8 or 9 p.m. On Saturdays he finished at 3 p.m. He had two days' holiday at Christmas and one at Easter, Whitsun and Goose Fair. He was paid 3s. 6d. a week. He had been at school one and a half years and could read by spelling out the letters. He could not write. William Osborne, aged seven, worked from 4 a.m. to 9 or 10 p.m. for 2s a week: "He goes to sleep at work, then they shake him; ... his eyes smart of a night, they water, the lids stick together in the morning and he gets a sponge of hot water to them". William was "otherwise in good health". He also had been at school a year and a half and could read Scripture passages but could not write.

Those who conducted the schools were well aware of the impossibility of giving much education under such circumstances. The Children's Employment Commission Report[10] recorded a meeting of Sunday school superintendents in the house of the Baptist hosier, John Rogers, at which John Cooke, who had been closely connected with the schools of the town, stated that though Sunday schools were useful to a certain degree, they were "most ineffective as a general system of education". John Rogers himself was quite sure that the education Sunday schools could give was "totally insufficient". Another Baptist, William Vickers, agreed and considered that to supply the standard of education "quite indispensable for the community, it would be necessary to provide several large day schools which must at the same time give evening instruction". William Felkin, of George Street Baptist Church, expressed similar opinions. The views expressed by these men were well in advance of general public opinion in the country as a whole. It may also be said that Rogers, Vickers and Felkin, though busy leaders in the commerce of the town, all gave personal service as teachers in the schools.

At a school operated by a large central church the teachers might be well educated young people, children of such men as these. Teachers were not necessarily church members. A minute of the Friar Lane School of 8th October 1809 says that while "it is desirable that teachers be pious characters, if a full supply cannot be obtained . . . some . . . steady uniform characters [should] be admitted". At Stoney Street[11] none of the forty teachers was admitted without six months' trial. At some schools, Basford for example, some teachers had little education themselves. The schools had to make use of what material was available: better an ill-educated teacher than no teacher at all. They worked under immense difficulties and it would be unfair to contrast their achievements with the results obtained from modern schools. It is to their credit that they were pioneers in the education of the working classes at a time when it was not particularly popular and that they led the way the State was pleased to follow two generations later.

Day Schools

Lancasterian Schools in Nottingham

In 1798 Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, opened a small school in London in which he used the more advanced pupils to teach the others the lessons they had just learned—the "monitorial" system. This method of teaching spread rapidly and in 1807 the Royal Lancasterian Institution was formed for supporting these schools. In 1814 the Institution became the British and Foreign Schools Society. The religious teaching given was non-sectarian; the Society was largely supported by Nonconformists and its schools were called British Schools. The Anglicans considered that non-sectarian religious teaching was not religious teaching at all and, in 1811, founded a society with similar methods called the National Society for the Education

of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. Its schools were known as National Schools. Both these societies founded schools in Nottingham which employed full time salaried teachers and which were open throughout the week.

The first Lancasterian school in Nottingham was established in 1810. It was a boys' school and was housed in a disused cotton mill. The Corporation subscribed £5 5s., probably annually, to its work. In 1812 its budget was £229. Five years later a building was erected for it in Derby Road, accommodating 250 pupils, though its numbers never quite reached that figure. A school for girls, founded in 1820, had about 100 pupils. When subscriptions fell during the trade depression of 1837-38 it was united with the boys' school. Another British School, founded in 1833 or 1834 occupied the Duke's Place premises for a time but soon after moved to a building erected in Canal Street to accommodate 200 boys and 200 girls. The Corporation subscribed £100 toward the cost of the land. There was no space for a school yard and rooms were built over the River Leen which was then little better than a sewer. In 1851 the school transferred to premises in Bath Street which it still occupied in 1871. In 1835 its pupils numbered 160 boys and 110 girls and in 1871, 113 boys and 75 girls.[12]

The Lancasterian schools were able to offer a wider curriculum than the Sunday schools; for example, in 1842 the senior class at the Derby Road School was taught Natural History, Chemistry, Geometry and Algebra. They encountered similar difficulties to Sunday schools; funds were never plentiful. In 1834 there was a deficit of £300 in the Canal Street School account to which the Corporation contributed £100. In 1843 the deficit was £193.[13] After the first flush of interest public subscriptions tended to fall off. Teachers were ill-trained and not more than a third of the pupils remained at school as long as two years; less than a third remained for a year and the rest for shorter periods. Parents withdrew children as soon as they could earn a shilling or two in the factory. Grainger found that the average age of the senior class in five schools was a little over ten years and, while the monitorial system was economical, it was hardly an instrument of sound education.

By 1835 there were six British Schools in Nottingham with 1182 pupils. Almost the same figures were recorded in 1871—six British Schools with 1021 pupils. But in the same period the National Schools had increased from three (with 665 pupils) to fifteen (with 4827 pupils).[14] Even when the Wesleyan School and the large Dissenting contribution to the Workhouse School and Ragged Schools are counted in as part of the Nonconformist activity it would seem that between 1835 and 1871 the Nonconformists had slackened their efforts compared with the Anglicans. Wardle draws attention to the fact that up to 1835 the Dissenters had led the way in new ideas; they had introduced the monitorial system, established Sunday schools, and formed the Sunday School Union.[15] In assessing their work after 1835, however, certain other factors must be considered. One is the well-known tendency of later generations of wealthy Nonconformist families to

move into the Anglican Church or even out of Church life altogether. Another factor is that the government grant for education, which began at £20,000 in 1833 and rapidly rose thereafter, went mainly to Anglican schools. It was apportioned according to the sums raised by the respective societies and as, nation-wide, the Anglicans were far richer, they received most of the grants. E. A. Payne[16] points out that between 1839 and 1850 over £400,000 went to Anglican schools and only £50,000 to British Schools and £8,000 to Methodist Schools. In 1871 all 40 Anglican school departments in Nottingham received grants while only six out of the eleven British School departments did so. Under the 1870 Education Act School Boards were empowered to pay fees of children at voluntary schools; this favoured the Anglican schools again by the mere fact that there were more of them. Once the lead was obtained they could hardly fail to increase that lead.

Ragged Schools

Several witnesses to the Employment Commission pointed out that there was a class of children who did not attend the existing schools because they were too poor and, in particular, because they lacked presentable clothing. Some efforts had already been made by Sunday schools to cope with this. The Friar Lane School accounts for 1812, for example, include such entries as "Wilson, Cannon Yard: 2 pairs of shoes—6/6: Clifford, Platt Street, jacket and trousers, 10/-: Lucy Grainger, a new frock, 4/6". At Beeston later in the century, "penny readings" were held to help buy clothing for poor children of the Sunday school. There were, however, still many children not catered for in this way and it was for them that "Ragged Schools" were established.

The Salem Chapel, Barker Gate, an independent chapel on the fringe of Baptist life, established such a day school in 1831 where reading, writing, arithmetic and English grammar were taught. About 170 boys and 180 girls were under instruction the following year. In 1833 a letter from the school to the Corporation, published in the Borough Records, had two signatories, one of whom was Hugh Hunter, minister at Stoney Street Baptist Church. The Town Mission founded a ragged school in 1839. In June 1849, according to a report in the *Nottingham Review,* it was in Wool Alley and among the committee members were the ministers of the three largest Baptist churches, J. A. Baynes, J. Edwards and Hugh Hunter, and several prominent Baptist laymen. The Town Mission also formed another ragged school in Colwick; this had 245 pupils in 1871.

The Workhouse School

The Workhouse School was established as the result of the efforts of Absalom Barnett, Assistant Overseer of the Poor and Master of the Workhouse, and a member of the George Street Baptist Church. In 1832 he took over a building which had been used as a hospital during a recent cholera epidemic and converted it into a school for workhouse children.[17] In that year 115 boys and 72 girls were being taught. Support for the school came mainly from Poor Law funds,

though parents also made a contribution. A resident master and mistress were provided.

When the 1870 Education Act came into force the voluntary religious societies had made very substantial provision for the elementary education of the children of Nottingham. The Statistical Committee of the School Board reported in 1871 that there were 12,472 places available with an average attendance of 6,859. Compared with the estimated number of children of school age, there was a deficiency of 1,190 places only. This would be reduced to 300 if six sub-standard schools were improved. That there was not complete coverage was due to the failure of many parents to take advantage of such facilities as were provided.

Lancasterian Schools in the County

In addition to Sunday schools, two attempts were made by Nottinghamshire Baptist churches to found British Schools. A school founded in 1848 by the Leake/Wymeswold Church lasted for several years, and a school supported by Southwell, with a salaried schoolmaster, survived from 1841 to 1843. Neither school was long-lived, but it should be recognised that the attempts were made by village churches with very meagre resources.

Libraries

Almost every school mentioned had a library of some kind. The Children's Employment Commission of 1842 reported the number of books in several school libraries; those relating to Baptist schools were: Broad Street, 189 volumes; Duke's Place, 505; George Street, 370; Independent Hill, 140; Scotch Baptists, 110. The books dealt with a variety of subjects including history, travel, biography and moral treatises.

The largest Baptist library during the century was probably the Derby Road Church library. Catalogues were published annually and some of them have been preserved in the Bromley House Library, Nottingham. In 1860 the number of books reached 640; it fell to 350 thereafter but rose again to over 500 in 1897, the date of the last available catalogue. Basford established a library in 1833 and, according to the school minutes, there were upwards of a hundred subscribers and nearly a hundred books in 1836. Southwell had a library in 1839 with 170 volumes; the subscription was a shilling a quarter. It had 200 volumes in 1851. The library is mentioned in the church minutes in the 1870 and in 1901, so it would appear that it existed for a good deal of the century. Libraries at Beeston, Retford and Sutton-in-Ashfield are referred to in respective church minutes.

Baptists also helped to promote libraries for the general public. The committee of the Nottingham Artisans' Library, which was founded in 1824, included the usual groups of Dissenters active in social affairs. In 1853, for example, three Baptists, Heard, Birkin and Barber, were committee members. The library was taken over by the Corporation in 1867 when the Nottingham Public Library was organised. The New

Basford Public Reading Room and Library was founded and largely supported by Baptists. It was housed in the Palm Street Chapel. Richard Birkin, lace manufacturer and member of that church, was for many years president and the committee included, among the Baptists, the Revs. A. J. Baynes, W. R. Stevenson, G. A. Syme, and the laymen Mallett, Bayley, Barber and Felkin.

Further Education

The People's College

The People's College was founded by the efforts of private philanthropists, including the usual quota of Baptists. George Gill, one of the Whig-Radical circle, was prime mover. In 1844 a meeting was held under the chairmanship of the mayor, William Vickers,[18] a member of the George Street Church, to consider establishing a college of further education. Vickers, Heard, Wells and Rogers were among the Baptists supporting this effort. The college was handed over to the School Board in 1880 as a higher-grade school.

The School of Art

In 1836 William Felkin wrote to three newspapers proposing a School of Design. He continued to press for such an institution for several years and several witnesses to the Children's Employment Commission of 1842, including Vickers, Rogers and Birkin, emphasised the need. Eventually a meeting was called in 1842 and Felkin was asked to prepare a memorandum on the subject for the Board of Trade. The Board responded with an annual grant of £150, to which the Corporation added £50 and the Nottingham School of Art and Design, now part of the Trent Polytechnic, was established.

The Mechanics' Institute

This was founded in 1837 by much the same group of evangelicals including the Baptist laymen Vickers, Rogers and Herbert. It aimed at bringing education and culture to artisans and provided lecturers on physiology, astronomy, music, poetry, silk manufacture, railways, printing, botany and science, and, in 1838, in French, English, mathematics and art. The Institute, however, appealed to clerks and shop assistants rather than those for whom it was originally intended.

Baptists and State Education

At the end of the 18th century there was no great enthusiasm for universal education. When Hannah More organised Sunday schools in the 1780s some people considered them a danger to public order. In 1796 Pitt proposed the universal extension of the existing limited number of Schools of Industry where pauper children were taught a trade. The bill was not even put to the vote. Eleven years later Samuel Whitbread's Bill proposing a rate-supported school in every parish was rejected. It was, incidentally, supported by Dissenters. In the early nineteenth century both Anglicans and Dissenters felt that education should be in the hands of the churches and that it should have a religious basis. Both National and British Schools, however, accepted the limited government help which was provided from the

1830s onwards. The view held by many people, that schools should be entirely free from Government support or control, gradually changed when it became obvious that universal education could not be sustained by voluntary subscription alone. Many Nottingham Baptists had reached this view by 1842, though it was a quarter of a century later that Edward Baines and Edward Miall, the Nonconformist voluntaryist leaders, did so. Some held that although secular education should be supported from public funds, religious education should not. Later the view gained ground that biblical teaching should be given so long as the formularies of any particular church were not taught. At the time of the 1870 Education Act many Nonconformists joined with the Radicals in pressing for secular education supported by the State, though by "secular", "non-sectarian" was frequently meant.

The attitude of Nottingham Baptists became clear during the enquiries of the Children's Employment Commission. Baptist employers were among those who expressed themselves in favour of restricting the hours of employment of children and providing better educational facilities for them. The universal education that many of them recommended implied State support, but they protested against clauses of the 1843 Factory Bill which provided for clerical control over schools. Petitions against these clauses were sent to Parliament. The Broad Street Chapel was used for a meeting of protest, and there are records of the Baptists of Hucknall, Collingham and Beeston joining in the local Nonconformist protest at that time. The Midland Baptist Conference[19] considered the Bill "a deliberate and insidious attack on religious liberty" and practically all its member churches petitioned against it.

Later, in 1846, the Privy Council Committee on Education proposed that the monitorial system should give way to a scheme for training pupil-teachers; grants would be provided to enable those who passed an examination to go to training colleges, and to supplement the salaries of qualified teachers, and schools would be open to inspection. The voluntary education societies, after some hesitation, accepted the proposals, but Baptists and Congregationalists, as a whole, opposed the scheme. They found it difficult to accept government aid and they objected to what seemed an attempt to subject education to further government and clerical control. The Midland General Baptist Conference, meeting at Beeston in 1847,[20] considered the scheme "unconstitutional, insidious and wicked" and urged churches to petition against it. At the Conference at Kegworth later that year churches were urged to increase their efforts to provide voluntary education and those who had the franchise were urged to use it "in support of the high and sacred principle of religious freedom".[21] There is no indication, however, that the Nottingham churches either increased their efforts to provide voluntary schools or petitioned the Government. The former may have been partly due to lack of resources, but it was also due to the fact that leading Nottingham Baptists, such as Thomas Bayley and William Felkin, were moving gradually to favour some form of State education. In his evidence to the Children's Employ-

ment Commission Felkin pleaded for "Universal education . . . at the hand of parent or State". In 1852, when he was mayor, he presided over a public meeting in Nottingham in support of the National Public School Association which had been formed to promote free, universal and "secular" education financed by the rates and under popular control. Two Baptist ministers, Baynes and Stevenson, were present and in support.

The earlier view that Government should have no part in religious education at all sprang both from the anti-Erastian principles of Independents and Baptists, and from the privileged position given to Anglicanism and the reluctance of some Anglicans, especially Tractarians, to agree to a conscience clause as a matter of right. Less extreme views, however, gained ground as the century advanced. E. A. Payne says: "Gradually, in the decade before 1870, Nonconformists came to favour 'non-sectarian' teaching. This was a reversal of their former attitude. It came partly from a desire to break the Anglican preponderance, partly from a growing rejection of dogmatic, credal religion".[22] At the Midland General Baptist Conference at Lenton in September 1868,[23] the Rev. J. T. Gale of Loughborough argued strongly for State-supported education, including religious education, but on the basis of equality. Attendance at religious lessons should be voluntary. He pointed out that Baines and Miall, who had maintained for twenty years that Government grants for education were needless, had now changed their views. Voluntaryism could not meet the need. In the 1860s a society was established which in 1869 became the National Education League, to campaign for free elementary education, based on rate-aided "non-denominational" schools. This was supported by leading Nottingham Baptists at a public meeting held in Nottingham on 9th March 1870, a month after the Education Bill had been introduced. One of the most prominent of them, William Felkin, had published a series of five articles in the *Nottingham Review* in 1868 and 1869 surveying the educational systems in continental countries and arguing for what were, in effect, the principles of the League.

The Elementary Education Act, 1870

The Education Act of 1870 established School Boards where existing school accommodation was insufficient. It allowed Boards to pay fees for children in denominational schools and gave Boards authority to compel children between five and thirteen to attend school, with an exemption for children over ten if they had reached a specified standard. A conscience clause permitted children to be withdrawn from religious teaching and the Act prescribed that no religious teaching distinctive of any particular denomination was to be given (the Cowper-Temple clause). The voluntary societies were given until the end of 1870 to produce plans to fill the gaps in educational provision with the help of existing grants from the State. The Nottingham Baptists viewed the situation with mixed feelings. At the Annual Meeting of the Sunday School Union in 1870,[24] the Baptist chairman, John Barber, said that Sunday

School teachers would soon be relieved of one of their most irksome burdens, secular instruction. He objected to an act which would exclude Bible teaching from the schools but did not strongly condemn the teaching of Anglican dogmas in schools. He warned teachers against signing any petition for "secular education" in the sense of no religious teaching.

In many places a trial of strength took place between Anglicans who wished to keep the Church in a privileged position and Dissenters who wanted non-sectarian religious teaching. In Nottingham, however, a surprising degree of agreement was achieved. In May 1870[25] a meeting was held in the Exchange Hall to consider a resolution, passed by an earlier meeting of Anglican and Nonconformist clergy, aiming at avoiding religious controversy. About fifty were present including the Revs. F. Morse, Vicar of St. Mary's, and J. B. Paton, principal of the Congregationalist College. Among the Baptists present were the Revs. W. R. Stevenson and S. Cox, and Messrs. John Barber, G. Stevenson, H. Goodliffe and Alderman Herbert. A fair number of Anglican clergy wished to see denominational schools continued; they agreed that religious teaching in supplementary schools should be confined to the Scriptures, but refused to accept that such teaching should be undenominational. These clergy withdrew after placing their views before the meeting in a letter. The meeting passed resolutions that religious teaching in supplementary schools should be both biblical and unsectarian and that there should be "timetable" and "conscience" clauses. The meeting also agreed that such clauses should also apply to denominational schools and that existing schools should accept grants from the rates and be placed under the School Boards. They agreed that their proposals should be placed before the Prime Minister, Gladstone, and that a committee should be appointed to meet the clergy who had withdrawn.

In November, 1870, Morse and Paton called another meeting[26] to reach an agreement about a fair representation of all parties on the School Board. There was opposition in some quarters and an election for the Board was necessary, but the main aim was achieved in the election of a Board consisting of six Liberal members, six Anglicans and one Roman Catholic who was expected to vote with the Anglican party. This meant a "sectarian" majority, but it was a fair representation of the interests involved and, although there were disagreements during the first few years, for most of the period of the School Boards there was very little sectarian strife, the Board placing the interests of the schools before sectarian opinion. The scheme of religious education put forward by the "sectarian" majority was adopted by the "non-sectarian" members without demur and was retained when the latter obtained a majority at the next election. A scheme of inspection by Anglican and Dissenting clergy in alternate years was agreed on.[27] Many Baptists served on School Boards in Nottingham and in the county during the next thirty years.

There was little sustained opposition to the 1870 Act among any of the Nottinghamshire churches, including Baptists, once it became

law. Some historians have felt that the opposition among the churches in the country as a whole has been over-rated and that the religious issue was a debating point rather than a real bone of contention. Pauline Gregg says, on this point: "A conference of schoolmasters which assembled while the debate was taking place believed it to be so. In the House of Commons, schoolmasters and a clergyman asserted that a conscience clause worked smoothly and unobtrusively in their schools".[28] The Vicar of Holy Trinity, Nottingham, in a letter to Charles Seely, M.P., in the *Nottingham Review* of 18th March 1870, stated that in his parish there were 1,260 children attending National Schools, including a large number from Dissenting families. He had always acted as though bound by a "conscience clause", yet not a single child had been withdrawn from Scripture classes and very few from liturgy and catechism. From the other side, a Dissenter, replying the following week, declared that his children had attended an Anglican school for several years but he had never dreamt of creeds and catechisms doing them any harm. The only results he had observed were general religious impressions.

Sunday Schools after 1870

The work of Sunday schools in secular instruction gradually ceased after the introduction of State education. They were no longer schools for the poor only, but schools for the religious instruction of all children. The change was gradual, especially as Board Schools did not immediately begin to function. The number of children attending Sunday schools did not decrease; indeed, the numbers attending Baptist Sunday schools in Nottingham, according to the figures given in the *Baptist Handbooks,* almost doubled, from 5,728 in 1870 to 10,399 in 1901, though as a proportion of the population they remained remarkably steady at about two per cent. At the same time other activities for young people grew up, Guilds, Brigades, Christian Endeavours, Bands of Hope and Mutual Improvement Societies. It would seem that, released from the burden of giving secular education, the teachers now found many other constructive outlets for their activity.

The Balfour Education Act, 1902

By the end of the nineteenth century, compulsory free elementary education had been secured, and although there were still 14,000 Church Schools compared with 6,000 Board Schools, the latter had almost as many pupils as the former. Nonconformists still pressed for undenominational schools to be available in all districts, especially in the villages where it was difficult for a Dissenting labourer to withdraw his children from classes where Anglican denominational teaching was given. Nonconformists were excluded from the headship of Church Schools and from any teaching post in single (i.e. Church) school areas. Nonconformists were now almost unanimously in favour of religious, though undenominational, teaching in all schools.

The 1902 Act abolished School Boards and constituted the local Council as the education authority. Two of the six members of managing committees of voluntary schools were to be appointed by the local

authority; the cost of providing instruction, secular and religious, would be met out of the rates and the local authority would be in charge of secular education. Nonconformists might teach in church schools but could not be appointed to headships. Provision was made for extending further education, including training colleges.

Nonconformists felt that the 1902 Act had brought a return to what they had most feared before the 1870 Act. Their influence through School Boards would go and Anglican village schools would be given a new lease of life at public expense but would remain under the control of the parson and the squire. R. G. Ford, a former minister of Hyson Green Baptist Church, Nottingham, feared that because the majority of training colleges (35 out of 45) would be Anglican, Free Churchmen would not be able to enter them, although they were maintained at public expense; thus the majority of teachers and headmasters would be Anglicans. When the Act came into force, it aroused strong opposition in Nottingham. John Clifford, whose opinions carried weight in Nottinghamshire, led a "passive resistance" campaign, urging refusal to pay the education rate. Many suffered distraint of goods through refusing to pay. In Hucknall, two Baptists, F. E. Teed and W. Burton, had goods distrained, so had the Rev. C. A. English and three other members of the Collingham Baptist Church. The Revs. J. T. Frost of Southwell, Henry Collard of Retford, W. Slater of Bulwell, F. A. Jackson of Old Basford, Alfred Firth of Mansfield and W. Williams of Kirkby-in-Ashfield, were all prosecuted. Among Baptist laymen, two deacons at Hose, three at Long Clawson and four members at Kirkby-in-Ashfield were prosecuted, as were Henry Ashwell and William Hunt, former Nottingham School Board members, usually for non-payment of a few pence, the amount of the education rate.[29]

An organisation called the "Citizens' League" was formed to purchase goods distrained and return them to their owners. After the goods were sold—and purchased—the parties usually adjourned to hold an enthusiastic meeting, having thoroughly enjoyed their brief excursion into martyrdom. Some Nottingham Baptist leaders did not favour such extreme action. Joseph Gay, minister of the Woodborough Road Church, after first urging non-payment of the rate, adopted a moderate view and, in 1903, suggested a compromise solution. Professor G. W. Bowser of the Midland Baptist College refused to commit himself to passive resistance.

The controversy over the 1902 Act produced a reaction in favour of the Liberal Party which won the 1906 election and in that year, Augustine Birrell, who was the son of a Baptist minister and whose sister was the wife of the Rev. Edward Medley of Derby Road Church, Nottingham, drew up a compromise scheme. The Bill, duly modified, came near to acceptance but foundered on Conservative opposition in the Lords. Baptist opinion in Nottingham on the proposals was varied. Bowser believed the Bill honestly tried to do justice to all concerned but felt that state education should be confined to secular subjects. The Rev. George Hill of Derby Road also felt the Bill was an honest,

courageous attempt to secure agreement. It provided for control of secular education by those who paid for it and for fundamental Christian teaching, with denominational teaching at denominational cost. After the withdrawal of the Bill the *Nottingham Express*[80] obtained the comments of various prominent local people. Alderman Brownsward (Baptist) was "rather pleased". The Rev. E. Carrington of Woodborough, brother-in-law of John Clifford was "delighted that the Bill was wrecked". Others, especially J. B. Paton, whose wise policies had contributed so much to harmonious relationships in Nottingham, greatly regretted the demise of the Bill. Two further bills were introduced in 1908 to modify the 1902 Act but they provoked less interest and the outbreak of war in 1914 put an end to the issue for the time being. The 1902 Act remained in operation until the passage of the 1918 Education Act, when a new generation had arisen which was much less concerned with the old religious disagreements and was more ready to approach the situation in a spirit of compromise.

NOTES

[1] A. F. Coles, "The Baptist Churches at Collingham and Newark", *East Midlands Baptist Magazine*, Jan. 1902.
[2] S. D. Chapman, "The Evangelical Revival and Education in Nottingham", Thoroton Society *Transactions*, 1962, p. 35.
[3] B. Baldwin, "Historical Notes on our Sunday Schools", *General Baptist Magazine*, 1871, pp. 20ff.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[5] Adam Taylor, *History of the General Baptists* (London, 1818), II, p. 465.
[6] "The Derby Road Record"—Mss. relating to the Derby Road Baptist Church, in James Ward Collection, Thoroton Society, Nottingham.
[7] Baldwin, *op. cit.*, p. 279.
[8] Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[9] D. Wardle, "History of Education in Nottingham" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Nottingham University, 1965), pp. 245, 314.
[10] *Report of the Children's Employment Commission*, 1842, pp.7, 73, f.35, f.47, f.109.
[11] *General Baptist Repository*, 1802, p. 193.
[12] *Nottingham Journal*, 13th Dec. 1833 (paper by R. Hooper to Nottingham Literary Society); D. Wardle, *op. cit.*, pp. 295, 299.
[13] *Nottingham Borough Records*, VIII, p. 443.
[14] D. Wardle, *op. cit.*, p. 295; *Report of Statistical Committee to Nottingham School Board*, 15th May and 3rd July, 1871.
[15] D. Wardle, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
[16] E. A. Payne, "The Religious Education Dilemma", *Baptist Quarterly*, XXIII, 1970, p. 362.
[17] Absalom Barnett, *The Poor Laws and their Administration* (London, 1833), p. 63.
[18] *Nottingham Review*, 24th May, 20th Sept., 1844.
[19] *Baptist Reporter*, 1843, p. 148.
[20] *Ibid.*, 1847, p. 150.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 213.
[22] E. A. Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 363.
[23] *General Baptist Magazine*, 1868, p. 353.
[24] *Nottingham Review*, 23rd April 1870.
[25] *Ibid.*, 27th May 1870.

[26] *Ibid.*, 15th Nov. 1870.
[27] Wardle, *op. cit.*, p. 463.
[28] Pauline Gregg, *Social and Economic History of Britain 1760-1970* (London, 1971), p. 512.
[29] *East Midlands Baptist Magazine*, 1904, pp. 35, 37, 97, 233; 1905, pp. 14, 72, 115.
[30] *Nottingham Express*, 24th April 1906.

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BOOK NEWS

The Religious Census of 1851: a calendar of the returns relating to Wales, vol. 1. *South Wales*, ed. I. G. Jones and David Williams (History and Law series, 30. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976). Ecclesiastical historians have long made use of the report on the Religious Census of 1851. Those able to visit the Public Record Office have sometimes made use of the returns. The editors of the present volume are to be congratulated on making the returns for South Wales available in print. It is to be hoped that many local record societies will now turn their attention to this neglected source.

Sources of Jamaican History, 1665-1838: a bibliographical survey with particular reference to manuscript sources, by K. E. Ingram, 2 vols. (Zug: Inter Documentation Company, 1976. Sw. Fr. 176). This thorough and important survey deals with all the sources of Jamaican history from the English conquest of the island to the abolition of slavery. Baptist historians of Jamaica will already be familiar with the Baptist Missionary Society archives, well described in this guide, but they should be aware of the valuable material in the records of other missionary societies and the many other collections investigated here.

The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible (Cambridge University Press). A number of volumes other than those recently reviewed appeared during 1976: *Leviticus*, commentary by J. R. Porter (£5.95); *Numbers*, commentary by John Sturdy (£7.50); *The Second Book of Kings*, commentary by J. Robinson (£8.25); *The First and Second Books of the Chronicles*, commentary by R. J. Coggins (£7.95); *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, commentary by R. J. Coggins (£4.50); *The Book of Daniel*, commentary by Raymond Hammer (£4.95). It is perhaps worth remarking upon the very high standard of production and the elegance of the typography. By present day standards prices are modest. The series is also issued in paperback.

The following publications have also been received:

Jesus the Christ, by Walter Kasper (London: Burns & Oates; New York: Paulist Press, 1976). 289 pp. £6.95.

The Wilts and East Somerset Association of Baptist Churches, 1862-1975, by F. W. Cooper (The Association [1977]). £0.30.

A Short History of the Devon and Cornwall Baptist Associations, by G. L. W. Beards (Devon and Cornwall Baptist Association [1975]). £0.15.