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## A RETROSPECT.

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF NONCONFORMITY TO EDUCATION UNTIL THE VICTORIAN ERA.

*A Paper read to the Baptist Historical Society.*

By W. T. WHITLEY, M.A., LL.D., F.R.HIST.S.

Two hundred years ago, "dissenters, in proportion to their numbers, were more vigorous in the course of education than Churchmen were. They not only helped in promoting charity schools; they had good institutions of their own. In some places the Nonconformist school was the only one to which parents could send their sons."

Such is the testimony of Dr. Plummer in his History of the English Church in the Eighteenth Century.\* It is not surprising that closer studies of the subject have been undertaken in the last five years. In the Cambridge History of Modern Literature, Dr. W. A. Shaw, of the Record Office, has appended a list of some Nonconformist Academies to a chapter on the literature of dissent for 1680-1770. Also from the Cambridge University Press has come a monograph on the same subject, by Miss Parker, lecturer in the training college for women teachers at Cherwell Hall, Oxford. These two studies, however, deal with only a part of the subject, the Academies. These are usually considered as they trained for the dissenting ministry, and though Miss Parker emphasizes and illustrates the value of these Academies to general education, neither student professes to expound the activity of Nonconformists in other grades of school. The purpose of this study is therefore to leave alone the technical and professional side of the Academies, even to disuse that name, and to indicate three sides of Nonconformist contributions to general education: Elementary schools, Secondary schools, Literature. Here and there it will be possible to give illustrations, and all shall be chosen from unworked fields, especially owned by Friends and Baptists. Tables are available, relating chiefly to Devon, Lancashire, and London, which will show the large number of schools hitherto uncatalogued; but their names shall not be obtruded here.

It is necessary, however, to indicate the state of the law at different periods, that it may be realised how shackled Noncon-

\* Edition 1909, p. 15.

formists were in their attempts to supply the need. For centuries it had been recognised that religion and education were closely associated ; not only did the Church provide schools, but it controlled them. It went further, and established such a monopoly that no school might be taught without licence from the bishop of the diocese. Thus there were no Nonconformist schools till Laud fell in 1640.

A period of comparative free trade set in at once, and lasted till Cromwell in 1655 issued a proclamation that no man who had fought for Charles might keep a schoolmaster as tutor ; no minister ejected or sequestered might keep a school. The principle once restored was accepted as natural, only in 1660 it was applied to cut the other way round, and all Nonconformist schools were utterly illegal. For thirty years they existed only on sufferance, and an informer could make a living by prosecuting, or could crush them out of existence. Not only so, but new laws were enacted to limit the supply of teachers. It was evident that many ministers ejected in 1662 might turn naturally to teaching, both trying for posts in the grammar and other established schools, and opening private schools. The Five-Mile-Act therefore tendered to all ejected ministers certain declarations and an oath of non-resistance ; the effect of these would be to deprive them of the " opportunity to distil the poisonous principles of schism and rebellion into the hearts of his majesty's subjects." If they refused these declarations, they were not only limited in their choice of residence, which was a very old feature of the law, but were forbidden to " teach any public or private school, or take any boarders, or tablers that are taught or instructed by him or herself or any other ; upon pain for every such offence to forfeit the sum of forty pounds."

Relief came with the Revolution, when the Toleration Act provided that schools might exist, on conditions which included that the master must sign most of the XXXIX. articles. The result was an instant opening of schools on all sides, and this movement increased when the judges in 1700 decided that the bishops' courts had no jurisdiction except over grammar schools, and when a further decision next year declared that no licence at all was needed for elementary schools. This was a great gain, for Bishop Patrick of Ely had congratulated the rector of Dodington on " stopping the progress of the Anabaptist faction by applying yourself to the justices to call the unlicensed schoolmasters to account," and had told how he himself refused a licence at Littleport, and was trying to organise systematic refusals.\* Fresh suits were therefore instituted in the courts, John Owen of Welwyn being prosecuted, and the plea being urged that " the right of teaching school belongs to the minister." Richard Claridge, another Friend, formerly a Baptist, was tried, and Chief Justice Holt laid it down that the law was

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\* Cole MSS., xxx. 148, cited in Stoughton : Church of the Revolution, edition 1874, p. 418.

aimed at Papists, not at Protestant Dissenters. A vigorous literary attack was begun by Samuel Wesley as soon as Anne ascended the throne, and repeated attempts in Parliament resulted in the Schism Act, which restored the clerical monopoly. Anne, however, died the very day when it was to come into force, and it was quietly repealed in a year or two, though Archbishop Sharp said that the "Dissenting Academies were a standing menace to the Church." The course was then plain till the upheaval produced by the American Declaration of Independence, which found its echo in a successful claim for the repeal of the law which required dissenting schoolmasters to sign the articles. Thenceforward there was no legal restriction, and Nonconformists had only to wrestle with the problems of finance and of social stigma.

This background of legal disability being kept in view, we may now notice that Nonconformists never submitted to be debarred from keeping schools of their own, even in the time of strenuous persecution. We look first at the provision made for the masses of the people.

#### I.—ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

For the earliest, and most striking, expression of the Nonconformist passion for education, we turn to Massachusetts. Before that colony was twenty years old, while Charles yet lived, the thirty towns decreed that each town must have a school, that if the families numbered 100, it must be of grammar rank, to supply the new Cambridge with a stream of students. Here is not only elementary education, but an educational ladder, planned and reared. In Pennsylvania again, when the power of the Friends was dominant, it was enacted among the first laws that every parent must have each child able to read and write by the age of twelve; and a system of schools was in operation by 1689.

In England the task was more complex, because of pre-existing institutions. Yet no sooner did the Cavaliers of Charles II. attempt to revert to the conditions under his father, than they found it impossible to set back the hands of the clock. When the Bishop of Exeter called for reports as to schools in 1665, the rectors sent up the names of fifteen men in Devon, besides several women; in one case is the curious touch that the "seditious seminary" was wandering, recalling the hedge schools of Ireland or the peripatetic schools of Wales.\* In Lancashire there was a secluded district, so flat and marshy as to be called the Fylde or Field, with only one little town, Poulton. A few miles away, at Elswick, some Nonconformists built a school, and out of the school grew a church which celebrates its 266th anniversary this summer. St. Helen's was a village further south, neglected by the Establishment, where the people at their own cost had built a chapel, and where after the

\* Lyon Turner : Original Records, i. 178.

Restoration they built and endowed a school; the control of these by Nonconformists led to a series of lawsuits, and this case ended in ejection from the chapel, but seems to have left the school in their custody. In the hills over which the Rossendale forest had spread, two preachers did such good work that the people subscribed and built a school at Bacup, available on Sunday for the use of Protestant Dissenters. Here again, though the trust was perfectly explicit, the Anglicans encroached, and at last with the connivance of a trustee broke open the building which had been locked against them, and took possession. David Crosley, one of the preachers named in the trust-deed, settled at Goodshaw, a few miles over the hills, and maintained himself by keeping school on his own premises. Further south, at Bolton-le-Moors, a charity school was founded by Samuel Bourn, where twenty poor children were taught at his expense: he had had experience in harder times of gaining his living by teaching a private school at Derby.\*

Thus, a single county, at that time one of the most backward, illustrates many kinds of elementary school all at work before the seventeenth century ran out. There is no reason to think that it was in advance of other parts of the country, and one or two cases, mostly of the next century, may indicate that this variety was general.

When James II. issued his Declaration of Indulgence in 1687, and some Jesuits opened a Charity School, three Southwark laymen combined to offset it by a Protestant Dissenters' Charity School, built in Gravel Lane and named Zoar.† Funds for its support were raised partly by subscription, partly by adding a second storey which was let out for Sunday services; and the fact that Bunyan preached there once or twice has at once given it notoriety, and obscured the main fact that the upper floor was but an annexe to a Dissenters' Charity School, the first in London though outranked by Lancashire. The example was improved under George I., when Baptists and Pedobaptists united on equal terms to establish a Charity School for forty boys of eight years old, with twelve younger ones to be taught by a mistress; they met eight hours daily in summer, six in winter. At the end of their course the managers aided in apprenticing them. Expenses were met by subscription, and by collections after a sermon every two months. The first master was a Baptist.‡ The London Friends leased a large building in Clerkenwell, where by 1754 they educated nearly six hundred children. A generation later, the school was transferred to the Islington Road, and the numbers increased.

In Wales, Thomas Gouge started schools, and not long after 1674, three hundred towns were profiting. But an essential part of his plan was to teach English, and the schools died with him.

\* Jerom Murch: History of the Presbyterian Churches, &c., p. 61.

† Wilson: Dissenting Churches, iv. 188.

‡ Crosby: History of the Baptists, iv. 118.

Native effort was more lasting ; even in 1697 the Independents had schools on Sunday in the Neath district. Dr. Williams, the great Nonconformist benefactor, made large bequests for the education of the poor. His trustees were directed to appoint several schoolmasters, at a salary of £8, to teach twenty poor children in each of several towns named. Since, however, the clergy and leading inhabitants of several of these towns resisted the establishment of schools using the Assembly's catechism and conducted by Dissenters, the scheme was varied, and other towns were substituted, such as Newmarket in Flint, Pwllheli in Carnarvon.\* These schools grew in number and value, and to-day there is a fine boarding-school for girls at Dolgelley.

Other Nonconformist Charity Schools are heard of at Bartholomew Close and at Shakespeare's Walk, Wapping ; from the latter, Adam Taylor dated his history of the General Baptists.

His brother Dan began his career at Birchcliffe as master of a private school, which grew so fast that he engaged as usher John Sutcliffe, afterwards famous at Olney. The West country had shown many such : the Dunsford family had three members owning private schools at Bampton, Kingsbridge, and Tiverton, at one time.

Other schools were established under the auspices of churches, and we hear of Caleb Evans riding to inspect the work at Downend and Mangotsfield, as well as in Bristol itself. These cases lead us to consider a new type, the Sunday school.

The eighteenth century showed a change in the social and economic conditions. The invention of various machines for spinning and weaving, which could be driven by water-power, led to the rise of mills where hundreds of people assembled, almost ending the old home manufacture. Then it was found that the machines could be tended by children, adults being needed only to remedy breakdowns and to install the machines. And thus the opportunity for the multitude of children receiving any education was most seriously abridged. In two or three quarters independently it was recognised that Saturday afternoon and Sunday were the only times left free. It is claimed that the fruitful seed was planted by a Dissenter, William King, a woollen-card maker at Dursley. When visiting Gloucester jail, he called on Raikes and told him of the success he had obtained ; Raikes responded that any further movement would prosper better from the Church of England than from Dissent.

Once known, "Sunday schools" sprang up far and wide. This name has such a different meaning to-day that many people are ignorant of the scope of these schools at first. They met on Saturday as well as Sunday, and on both days taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, giving all the schooling that many children ever received ; promotion to the writing-class was reserved at some schools for those who were proficient in the Bible. The accounts of some early Lancashire schools show

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\* Monthly Repository, xi. 379 (1816).

quills and pen-knives, sand-troughs for the juniors to write in—by no means a modern American invention—singing classes, and items like straps, whether to be applied round books or round children being uncertain. Some teachers were paid by the church, on the old Charity school method ; others were volunteers from the church.

In Wales, the Sunday Schools developed in two directions. Edward Williams, of Oswestry, an Independent, soon branched out with Circulating Day Schools, and before the century closed had thirteen, with 553 scholars. Morgan John Rees, of Pontypool, a Baptist, grafted on Night Schools, and met a great need by writing school books in Welsh.

In another respect the Sunday schools marked a new conception of education for the people at large. Around London and Westminster there were barely four thousand boys and girls in all the Charity schools, and the children were marked out by a special costume—a habit surviving to-day chiefly at Christ's Hospital, Chetnam's Hospital, and a few scattered institutions. It seems to have been thought that clothing and education were complementary, and as funds for clothes were hard to come by, the numbers benefited were but few. But the Sunday schools offered education to all comers, on the simple condition of coming with clean hands and face ; and in some districts children were even paid to come, in actual cash, which to-day is commuted into treats and prizes. It was a new ideal, the dawn of popular education for all, and for its own sake.

Two or three interesting Baptist cases may be given from London. The church at Old Ford engaged a mistress, who worked up the school so well that presently there were four branches away from the main premises. After fourteen years one was differentiated into a charity school, and opened daily ; this continued till a change in the public attitude caused it to be merged into a newer type. The church at Wild Street sought to lighten the darkness round Drury Lane. More interesting is the story of the school connected with the Kingsgate church in Eagle Street. A girl of Portsea, Ann Price, came here in her seventeenth year, when her mother married the pastor, and at once exerted herself to start a school. It succeeded so well, that at her death four years later a tablet was erected to commemorate her services ; and a generation later the last public act of her stepfather was to open new premises for the school and as almshouses, as a second tablet testifies.

The appearance of schools maintained by churches or societies reminds us to look at the great Society of Friends, which from the beginning evinced a steady interest in education. In 1667 George Fox advised the setting up of a school at Waltham for teaching boys ; also a girls' school at Shacklewell, for instructing them "in whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation." Specially noteworthy is their care for girls ; in 1681 at Aberdeen their mistress saw not only to book-learning, but to their being taught to support themselves by the weaving

of stockings.\* The fact that Friends were more highly organised than other dissenters accounts for the fact that their masters were soon gathered into conference, to plan a curriculum; but their chief work did not lie in education for the thousand, and their admirable work within their own ranks will be considered presently.

The Methodists also were well organised, and so we hear of Whitefield beginning a school for the children of colliers at Kingswood, whose first master was John Cennick. Orphanages arose in Georgia and then at Newcastle, early examples of that philanthropy which is so well evinced by Dr. Stephenson's Homes to-day.

It is from the Friends that there came a great development of elementary education, on a national scale. One of their members, Joseph Lancaster, began teaching poor children in 1798, and opened a room in the Borough Road, Southwark, in 1801, with the inscription over its doors:—"All who will may send their children and have them educated freely. Those who do not wish to have education for nothing, may pay for it if they please." The success was so rapid that he could not engage assistants enough, and devised the plan of monitors, elder scholars keeping order and helping in the teaching. This led on to his training teachers, and so effective were his methods that he won royal support, and by 1808 was founded what was soon known as the British and Foreign School Society. Its work extended fast, so that similar schools were opened in the interests of the Established Church: the sequence of events was summed up by Lord John Russell two generations later:—"The clergy of those days—even the liberal clergy—were generally opposed to the education of the poor; but finding the cause of education made progress they agreed, in 1811, to set up a society for founding and maintaining schools." Thus we may even say that the effective impulse towards the nation assuming the duty of educating all children was given by a Friend.

But there have always been adults who wish to make up their early deficiencies. In 1817 the Congregationalists of Kirkham established four Adult schools, but the effort was not maintained on those lines. Another experiment was made at Nottingham, but again it was the Society of Friends, which in 1845 began at Birmingham a movement which has spread widely, till now there are more than two thousand such schools associated and working on systematic lines.

## II.—SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

So far we have traced how Nonconformists had a substantial share in the great task of offering education to all comers. We now turn to consider what has been done in the field of secondary education, and we shall find that here some pioneering was accomplished.

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\* Barclay: Inner Life, 482.

This was especially seen in the character of the new schools established, even by men who had been bred in the old style. Take, for instance, Hanserd Knollys, who indeed had been touched with the spirit of the colonies, but returned to take a share in rebuilding the Mother Country. We often think of him as a preacher, but while that is true, he earned his living by keeping a school. In this he was so successful that he had amassed enough money by 1658 to buy a building on the old Artillery Ground in Spitalfields, outside the walls. This he re-modelled into a school, to which many city merchants sent their sons. It is somewhat surprising that while he prepared them for a commercial life, apprenticed out in some of the City companies, yet he was conservative enough to keep up the old classical traditions. This, however, is amply proved by the books which he wrote for the purpose, including grammars of Hebrew and Greek and Latin, and the roots of the New Testament. These little works of 1663 onwards may surprise us as intended for City apprentices, to whom they were dedicated; their importance lies largely in that he was independent enough to compose his own introductions and not rely on the ancient books, written by Latins for Latins. And this pioneer work was presently followed up by Jehudah Stennett with a little Hebrew grammar.

Bristol was then the chief port, where commerce was supreme. Edward Terrill devoted himself to a school preparing for this, and found it so remunerative that despite frequent fines, he left a large estate devoted to teaching, whence has grown up the Bristol Baptist College training for the ministry. Ecclesiastical bigotry was very strong at this city, and Colston expressly excluded dissenters from any benefit in his endowments. The challenge was at once taken up by the Friends, never prone to sit down meekly under persecution. As soon as the temporary Conventicle Act expired, they began negotiating for a school-master to teach in their meeting-house daily. By 1674 the work was actually begun, in the teeth of a new and permanent act, and the third successive master was of such education and value that he closed his career as Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.

A generation later we see how the example of Knollys was improved, in that a layman, Thomas Crosby, kept a mathematical school on Horselydown in Southwark, where young gentlemen were boarded and taught arithmetic, algebra, geometry applied to measuring, surveying and gauging, trigonometry applied to navigation, geography and astronomy, the use of globes, charts and other mathematical instruments, with book-keeping. The school flourished for twenty years, and then an advertisement of 1740 shows a partner; and the premises were good enough to accommodate a church which was for a time without a building.

A few years later again, and Liverpool had come to the front as a port, with the result that John Holt and his son kept a mathematical and commercial school there, with a special eye on navigation and accounts. The advertisements of Crosby, offering to take pupils from a grammar school and qualify them speedily

for business, read singularly like those of modern Colleges of Business, or even like the crammers who make a speciality of Civil Service coaching; it is clear that the contempt of the practical man for Winchester and Dulwich and Shrewsbury is no recent growth.

Turn then to establishments which might compare with the ancient Grammar schools, and we shall see that Nonconformists could appreciate this side of education, while they were enlightened enough to improve it. The Restoration found some of them in masterships at such schools, and ejected all who would not fall in with the new order of things. So it fared with Sagar of Blackburn, who had such confidence in his own ability that he quitted the school, resigned the endowment, and opened a rival private school on the same lines, close at hand, to which many pupils followed him. So again with Thomas Delaune, who when ejected from a grammar school simply continued his work at his own risk. This was very real, and after repeated fines he turned to printing; but accepting in good faith a challenge from Dr. Benjamin Calamy, he was thrown into prison, where he died. Another successful master was Thos. Singleton, from Eton, who came near London and established himself in the rural village of Hoxton, where his school was conducted on the old traditional lines. A century later, the best classical school in all Wales was kept at Castlehowell for fifty years by David Davies.

If these were professional schoolmasters, there were many others, ministers, who, being ejected from their livings, sought to support themselves by teaching. Richard Adams, at Mountsorrel, was told by the justices that if he preached he would be sent to jail, but they would not object to his opening a school. The earliest notable case was at Coventry, where matters were perhaps facilitated by a Baptist butcher, John Hobson, being chosen mayor. Obadiah Grew at once started private tuition, and there is much correspondence in the State Papers as to the local feeling which prevented the enforcement of the laws. The most remarkable case was certainly that of Richard Frankland, who in the remote hamlet of Rathmell, near Giggleswick, built a fine school, to which pupils came from all over the north. He was too bold indeed, and had to flee to another hamlet, Natland, and had to stop altogether in the reaction after the Popish Plot. But when James II. began courting the dissenters, he opened again at Attercliffe, and when the Toleration Act secured liberty, he triumphantly reoccupied his school, which became a Nonconformist centre where synods and ordinations were held. Modern pilgrims say that though the premises are now used as a farm, the old bell that wakened the boarders is yet remembered as hanging on the wall. For twenty years one of his early pupils aided him, teaching French, Italian, German and Dutch. Of his 308 pupils, 47 went on to universities, especially Leyden; eleven became schoolmasters.

The number of people who earned their living as masters of schools, but are generally spoken of as ministers, is rather

surprising ; and the fact has to be borne in mind when we wonder at the low salaries paid by churches. Their pastors were often not whole-time men ; it may even be said that some pulpit duties were taken as a relaxation from the cares of running a school all week. This, too, may explain the decay of so many churches, which had only the remnants of a schoolmaster's energies. One recent expert even says that in the eighteenth century it was almost the rule that the Dissenting minister kept a private boarding school for boys. He cannot have become rich even so, for Caleb Rotheram at Kendal charged only twelve guineas a year, and left them to pay fire, candle and washing.

There were, however, many others who did divine that the work of teaching was honourable enough and important enough to claim all a man's thought and energy. Joseph Stennett did indeed take a pastorate, but he then disposed of his school. John Ward again, himself a pupil of a doctor whose sole occupation in Highgate and Clerkenwell was teaching, opened a rather high-class school. Mr. Brock told something about this in his study of Ward\* ; it need only be added that when he was chosen professor at Gresham, he sold the school to a former pupil, Isaac Kimber, who was thus enabled to serve a poor London church as pastor. Kimber in turn sold to Sandercock when he went down to Nantwich.

Ward's school brings us to a problem that exercised many teachers, the curriculum. Was it enough to continue on the old lines, teaching the same hackneyed subjects with the same ancient text-books ? Ward himself deliberately retained Latin as the medium of instruction, with the quip that its compulsory use greatly diminished the flow of chatter. And he was in excellent company, for right down to the middle of the eighteenth century we can trace the same habit. At the numerous excellent schools run by dissenters, both day and boarding, Latin text-books and Latin conversation were the rule. There was more to be said for this than we quickly recognise. Latin was still the language of scholars all over Western Europe, and it was the only tongue in which George I. and his prime minister could converse. Both therefore for scholastic purposes and for the Grand Tour it had real value. Text-books were written in Latin by Dutchmen like Erasmus, Moravians like Comenius, and the French educators of Port Royal. To adopt English meant to cut off pupils from the stream of continental life and thought, and to push them up what was at best a lagoon, even if somewhat spacious. And this was the more dangerous when Prussia was just entering on a course of compulsory universal education, intended to bring her, a small nation, to the front by sheer force of knowledge.

The question was ignored by most English teachers, but it was deliberately faced and discussed by the Society of Friends.

George Fox, as early as 1649, had been troubled as to the need for pious schools; ten years later a General Meeting at Skipton had bidden each particular meeting help parents in the education of their children. Fox had undertaken a tour of "our Latten schools," and was apparently not easy in his mind as to thoughtlessly perpetuating the old methods. The yearly meeting of 1690 urged that masters and mistresses be provided, faithful Friends, for teaching and instructing children. A meeting of schoolmasters was called, and as there were some fifteen schools approved by the Society, it is clear that there would be some experience to compare.\* After some prolonged deliberation, it was decided to disuse Vergil, Horace, Juvenal, Terence, Ovid, Erasmus, Esop's fables, Corderius, &c., which had hitherto been used by Friends for the instruction of youth in the Latin tongue. It is true that the reasons were moral rather than scholastic, that "heathenish authors" were not deemed likely to be useful in forming the mind, or to be "agreeable to truth"; but whatever the motive, the fact stands that the Society did in 1705 convene an educational conference of experts, who did reform the curriculum. They were not averse to Latin as Latin, and even revised Lily's grammar, which had held its own for nearly two centuries, and was destined to trouble Etonians for years to come. Nor did they eschew the ancients, for Cato was introduced, with the Vulgate; but there also came in *Sententiæ pueriles*, Castalion's dialogues, *Academia celestis* or the heavenly university; while the value of modern Scotch educators was recognised in the adoption of Buchanan and Barclay.

The lead given by the Friends was not rapidly followed. An important school under Samuel Jones, a graduate of Leyden, held first at Gloucester, then at Tewkesbury, was conducted wholly in Latin; though there were such modern books as Locke; some of his MS. lectures are yet to be seen in Dr. Williams' Library, at the Memorial Hall, and at New College. The value of his work may be seen not only by the few pupils who became ministers, including Joep the first Bristol tutor and Andrew Gifford of Eagle Street, with Joseph Butler and Archbishop Chandler; but also in four Doctors of Medicine, Hollis the antiquary, an attorney, and a Lord Chancellor of Ireland, with two or three authors; no had record for twelve years. Now, Jones' school ended with his early death in 1719, and within a generation Latin had vanished as the medium of instruction. The transition is well marked by the practice of Doddridge at Northampton, who kept school from 1729 to 1751. At the beginning he was like Crosby, and would take lads from the grammar school, intending to give a finishing course; but the numbers grew, once touching sixty-three, so that he engaged two assistants. He himself lectured in English, and towards the end Latin had become almost an extra. In the second half of the century it would appear that a sound English education was the staple offered, in which

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\* Barclay: *Inner Life*, 496.

Latin might be studied as a subject of drill in grammar and for its introduction to the ancient literature, but was no longer used as the universal medium of communication between scholars.

Northampton was a great centre of Nonconformist education. Though Doddridge closed, John Collett Ryland brought his school from Warwick eight years later, and continued till he removed it to Enfield in 1786, when he devoted himself purely to scholastic work. During his Midland career, there was a flourishing girls' boarding school, kept by Martha Trinder from 1765 to 1789, to which pupils came from many parts; her merits are extolled on a tablet in the Baptist church. Her establishment was paralleled by others at Honiton, Bristol and Hackney; and indeed the Young Ladies' Seminaries of that period might occupy much attention in themselves.

We must, however, pass on to another great development which was contemporaneous with Ryland, the establishment of Public Schools, established or controlled by subscribers or governors or trustees, and not run at the pleasure of a headmaster. These were of course no invention of Nonconformists, for many Grammar Schools under the control of boroughs can be traced back to the Plantagenets, as at Preston. But Nonconformists had not had enough corporate solidity to establish similar institutions, though the Friends had undertaken to recognise, and to some extent control, many private ventures. There is one case, at Dukinfield, where a school can be traced through the eighteenth century in one building; but we are imperfectly informed as to its constitution and the composition of the governing body.

The new era dawned in the north, and almost simultaneously two institutions were founded. One was promoted by a Presbyterian minister of Warrington; he obtained many subscribers, the trustees secured premises in that town, and, what was more important, admirable teachers in Joseph Priestley, who took the opportunity to learn chemistry from a Baptist surgeon, and became the foremost scientist of his age, and Joseph Holt, the successful head of the Liverpool mathematical school. Although a great deal has been written about this school, so that we have full lists of the students, the curriculum, &c., yet it closed its doors in 26 years. The failure was due partly to putting a minister at its head, instead of either of the competent educationists, each of whom had already done good work independently; partly to a growing distrust of the religious views of the promoter, the trustees, and the headmaster; partly to the incompetence of the latter to maintain order, so that the school obtained a well-deserved bad name for rowdiness. It is fortunate, however, that the new departure in Nonconformist school management was vindicated by a lasting success. In 1758 the Friends, whose pioneer work in many ways has never been adequately recognised, formed a committee to consider the right direction for progress.\*

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\* Barclay: *Inner Life*, 550.

An Education Fund was soon raised, and presently a school was founded at Ackworth, near Pontefract, which continues to this day. So popular did it become, that presently many Friends, who had supported themselves by keeping approved schools, found their livelihood menaced. The seriousness of this problem may be seen when we note that in Ireland Mountmellick flourished from 1701 to 1782, that Shackleton at Ballitore had the training of Edmund Burke; but the corporate spirit triumphed, and a Nonconformist Public School was assured support against private interests. Another attempt was made by the Lancashire Presbyterians at Manchester; the institution was removed to York, then back again, then to London; and in 1853 it narrowed its scope to theology, so that the Manchester College, now at Oxford, no longer plays any part in general education. Without touching one or two other failures, attention may be called to Mill Hill, now in its second century, and to Sidcot, where private Friends had long taught, but where in 1809 the Society established its second Public School. Wigton followed in 1815, Bootham at York in 1823. Others with more than a hundred years to their credit are the Methodist school at Woodhouse Grove, midway between Leeds and Bradford, and the Congregational school at Caterham. Both were at first for the sons of ministers, like Wesley's foundation at Kingswood; but both have widened their scope to different degrees. So successful has the system of public management proved, that several schools originally private or proprietary have been transferred, and there are not many quarters of the kingdom where a parent cannot find a good Secondary School under permanent Nonconformist management.

From the Secondary School a boy or girl proceeds often to a university. Have Nonconformists done anything in this direction? They intended to, for Cromwell drew up plans to found one at Durham; but two centuries passed before there was any attempt to repeat the experiment. Meanwhile we must look again to the American colonies to see what Nonconformists desired and achieved. Harvard and Yale stand to the credit of the Independents; the Friends made an attempt in 1689 at Philadelphia, though the institution did not develop far enough. Presbyterians are responsible for what is now Princeton, and even in the throes of the War of Independence they endowed Virginia with a college commemorating Hampden-Sidney. It was in 1765 when the Baptists took their share, and obtained a charter for the Rhode Island College.

Funds for this were contributed from the Baptists of England, and the question soon arose whether they should not have a college of their own, at home. They did get so far as to establish a Bristol Education Society, absorbing the work initiated by Terrill nearly a hundred years before. Dr. Andrew Gifford was then minister at the Kingsgate church, one of the most cultured of Baptist pastors, a pupil of Samuel Jones and student at Gresham College, a fine antiquary, assistant librarian at the

British Museum, in touch with Scottish universities, peers, and even the king. He pleaded hard that the Society should seek for Bristol such a charter as had recently been granted, under the authority of the same king, for Providence. But the tutors were too timorous, the Society too little imaginative, and the opportunity was lost.

If, however, we are not slaves to words, and will look at facts, we may justly say that many of the better boarding-schools already mentioned, although they were private ventures, with only three or four teachers, were yet doing work of university rank. This was recognised at the time in various ways, for students from Taunton and three or four other schools were allowed terms at Leyden or the Scotch universities; some Anglicans actually preferred to send their sons to be taught by dissenters, rather than let them mark time at Oxford or Cambridge; Butler, who went to both, speaks of his years at the university as worse than wasted after his course with Samuel Jones. Thus, in reality, though without charters or permanence, Nonconformists did give for quite two generations the best university education in the kingdom.

The tendency of the nineteenth century has been to free education from all ecclesiastical control. Colleges indeed are still founded in connexion with one communion or another, but the older universities have been thrown open to all, and the newer are neutral in fact as well as in name. Towards this moulding of opinion, it may be thought that Nonconformists have done their share.

### III.—LITERATURE.

So far we have looked at the actual schools and school-masters; but an army in the field is helpless unless supplied with munitions, and with leadership in ideas. What have Nonconformists done in the way of school-books, of educational thought?

School-books are hardly literature, and we no longer live in a day which retains in use the classical works of Lily, Donatus, Euclid. It is therefore easy to forget that Milton not only taught pupils, but wrote an *Accidence* and compiled an enormous Latin Dictionary, printed after his death. Colonel Henry Danvers, a rather famous Baptist contemporary, compiled a little book of Proverbs which was in use for eighty years, edition after edition appearing. More dramatic was the venture of a young country tailor, Benjamin Keach, who drew up a *Primer in English* which excited such horror that he was honoured with a State Trial, and was placed in the pillory for it. The whole large edition was destroyed so utterly that he himself could never get a copy; that mattered little while he had his brains, and he rewrote it. It profited by the advertisement, and ran to many editions, both in England and Massachusetts, where good books were valued. Time would fail to tell of the publications.

by Tryon, Crosby, Isaac Watts, John Fawcett, John C. Ryland, John Evans, Walkden Fogg, John Collett, William Bengo Collyer, Hannah Neale. But perhaps some of us have learned from the Pennsylvania Friend who came to live near York, and whose grammar, written 120 years ago, has kept alive the fame of Lindley Murray.

From the arsenal turn to the admiralty; from writers of ephemeral text-books to masters of method. Here again Milton heads the list with his Tractate of Education. His somewhat nebulous ideas were by no means so practical as those of his contemporary Baptist, Richard Haines, a Sussex philanthropist, who put out many pamphlets as to industrial training and poor-law children. On his death, another thinker took up his plans, John Bellers, and was fortunate enough to enlist the sympathy of William Penn and other Friends in an attempt to realise them by voluntary effort. Another indefatigable theorist was Daniel Defoe, to whom is really due much of the modernising of method which we have already noted. A generation later, the leader was Joseph Priestley, who not only taught and investigated, but set forth his theories and his experience in a systematic treatise.

There is no long list of such writers, but this is a remark true for all England, and not for Nonconformists alone. Comenius, Frœbel, Pestalozzi, Montessori have few British analogues. Our national habit is not to think out *a priori*, but to experiment and occasionally to discard the outworn on *a posteriori* results, or, as unkindly critics put it, to muddle through without seeing how or why. When we look at the state of education at the beginning of the eighteenth century and at the end, we cannot but see four changes of great import, not to be paralleled for centuries before.

To begin with, education was freed from shackles, so that men who wished to teach might teach, without being subject to any veto. It may be that this opened the way to charlatans and to Dotheboys Hall, but a period of unrestrained liberty was a great gain; and even yet it has not given way to any control of teachers by teachers, as in the case of other professions in which men engage; the guiding principle remains yet that professional licence, if carried too far, will certainly bar the way to success.

Then, education was freed from the conventions of a dead past, and was related to the needs of daily life. The title of Priestley's essay, "A Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life," shows that the aim had been discerned, and clearly stated.

Thirdly, and as an obvious corollary, education was now imparted in English, even in its highest branches. The very universities had to recognise this needed change and to yield.

Lastly, with the barriers of law, custom, language thrown down, it had become evident that education must be offered to all, and that quite freely.

Such were the special contributions made to national education before the Victorian era by nonconformity ; subsequent advances are in the same general line and have been supported, if not initiated, by the Nonconformists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even if it takes more care to isolate their special contribution.

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