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# The Failure of the Amending Bill: No National Consensus for Religious Education in England, 1920-1923"

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Between 1870 and 1944 a dual system of education existed in England wherein both the government and the various denominations provided elementary and secondary education. The dual system had been created because, during the nineteenth century, the English were divided over the issue of religious instruction in the schools. The state system consisted of provided, or Council, schools that received financial assistance from the government and the denominational component consisted of non-provided, or voluntary, schools that did not receive governmental funding. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Church of England still maintained thousands of schools within the country, but the strong role within national education was weakening as the calls for educational expansion increased.

In 1918, during the waning months of World War I, the government passed the Fisher Act, which was to institute major educational reform. Even though the provisions within the parliamentary legislation provided only for further secular education while doing nothing to appease the Anglican interest in religious teaching, members of the Church of England chose not to act in an obstructionist manner. The Anglicans hoped that once the government began to implement the secular provisions of the Fisher Act, they could prevail upon the government, as well as other parties interested in national education, to support a second parliamentary act that would provide for religious teaching in all elementary and secondary schools. However, in the years that followed the First World War, Anglicans failed to generate enough enthusiasm, even among members of the Church of England, to carry a bill through Parliament that would make religious education the law of the land. By the early 1920s, it seemed that some form of secularism, not Christianity, would become "the future creed of England."

After World War I the Board of Education attempted to implement the provisions of the Fisher Act as part of the postwar National Reconstruction. Simultaneous with the Board's effort to erect new institutions, such as the continuation schools, the Church of England sought to obtain a statutory guarantee that denominational religion, through an arrangement agreed upon by the various interested parties, would be taught in all the schools of the land. The Fisher Proposals of 1920 became the basis for an agreed upon scheme for many Churchmen, but for few of the other groups involved, to reform the dual system. Eventually, in 1921 these provisions were incorporated in a parliamentary bill, called the Davies Amending Bill. But, as with the government's attempt to expand England's system of national education, the Anglican effort to make religious teaching and worship an integral part of that system came to naught. Part, but certainly not all of the explanation for those failures, was due to the economic slump beginning in 1920-1921 which overwhelmed any effort to implement a major reform in education. Also of importance in accounting for the abortive Amending Bill was the renewed controversy over the place of religion and the role of the Church in English education.

One full year after the Armistice *The Times Educational Supplement (TES)* noted that "the year 1919 has been a period of marking time in education as in other fields of national endeavor."

But the editorial opined that "the Act came too late for an immediate reconstruction on the close of the war."

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Some time was needed for England's economy and society to readjust to postwar conditions before a considerable expansion of the school system could take place. In regard to the construction of the new day continuation schools, for example, not only money was needed. Once the academic accommodations for students were acquired, *The Schoolmaster and Woman Teacher's Chronicle* estimated that 32,000 more teachers would be needed to staff the class rooms.<sup>III</sup> The difficulty of finding so many teachers was compounded by the war's draining of teacher candidates from the training colleges to the trenches. High casualty rates during wartime service had depleted the profession of many experienced teachers, who could not be easily replaced.

Moreover, implementation of the Fisher Act was not the sole item on the government's peacetime agenda. Other high priority goals, such as new housing starts, competed with educational reform for the government's attention and financial expenditure. Hence, the appointed day for key provisions of the Act, whether that would be the commencement of new types of schools or the abolition of half time employment of young pupils, was temporarily delayed.

Although 2000 teachers had been killed in the war; 138,000 students were still displaced from their school buildings; the inflationary postwar boom had burst; and the provisions of the Fisher Act had not even been implemented; the Board of Education envisioned future sweeping reforms.<sup>iv</sup> That policy revision, which echoed the demands of interest groups, such as the National Union of Teachers, called for "the abolition of the distinction between elementary and secondary education." The term elementary, increasingly being viewed by educators as "an uncomely relic of a patronising, charity-dispensing, class-irritating Victorian past," would henceforth be replaced by primary. The connotation was that primary education, unlike nineteenth century elementary education, was not an end in itself, but would prepare students after the age of eleven to enter secondary schools. To set up such a uniform system of national education would involve tremendous costs for both material and personnel because in 1920 there were only 356,637 pupils in secondary schools.<sup>v</sup> Moreover, only 2% of English youth matriculated from the elementary schools into the elitist secondary system.<sup>vi</sup> Despite England's economic adversities during the 1920s, "secondary education for all," at least up to the age of sixteen, became the nationally accepted objective for education by the Labour Party and the National Union of Teachers.

As the Church of England and its approximately 10,700 non-provided schools (figure is for 1921)<sup>vii</sup> entered the postwar era, they were affected both by the existing parliamentary legislation and future goals for the schools, and also by the country's economy. These changes beset the Church schools with the imposing prospect of imparting religious education under modern conditions. Not only did the National Society face the difficulty of conveying religion to a country that seemed to have "managed to get along without it altogether," but in regard to the Fisher legislation, "the Church...would have very little control over the children after the age of eleven" because they would be in state-aided, non-religious continuation schools. Through notable voluntary efforts during the nineteenth century the Church of England had built a fairly extensive network of elementary schools, but now in the new century Anglicans were unprepared to develop that system, whether by continuation or secondary schools, and, thereby, to address the educational needs of pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen. Indeed, the early decades of the twentieth century showed the Church that it was unable to uphold elementary education. As families moved from the cities to the suburbs, the children most often entered state-aided Council schools run by the Local Educational Authorities because Anglicans could not afford to build enough new schools. The six year period between 1913-1914 and 1919-1920 disclosed an enrollment loss of 116,230 students in Church schools.\* Further bad news assailed the Anglican cause when the 1921 annual report showed that yearly contributions declined by £900 in 1920.\*

The problem for the ordinary Anglican was twofold. As a citizen of England, he paid rates to the local authorities and taxes to the government to provide for council schools. In addition, as a member of the Church of England, he was encumbered with the burden of freewill contributions to maintain the voluntary schools. By the early 1920s the venture to maintain Church schools for the purpose of teaching denominational religion was abating. In May, 1923 *The Times Educational Supplement* reported the following disturbing statistics on school closings for the three previous years.xii During that time frame of the 201 elementary schools that had closed, 196 had been run by the Church of England; in fact, all 97 of the elementary school closings in 1922 were Anglican. The solution for this continuous loss, according to Canon Winfield of Burnley, was to reach a compromise with the government, the teachers, and other church denominations.

In order to secure "definite Christian teaching...in all publicly supported schools by those desiring it," the canon believed that Church men would have to accept "the discontinuance of the dual control by Church and Local Educational Authorities, in favour of that by the Local Educational Authorities only."xiii Behind-the-scenes moves to end dual control had begun, and in March, 1920 the President of the Board of Education made public what quickly became known as the Fisher Proposals. During the previous months six Churchmen, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, and six Nonconformists, one of whom dropped out of the negotiations, had been meeting with Fisher. Their goal had been to come up with a unanimous scheme which the President could present to the country. Fisher attempted to do just that at the Kingsway Hall meeting on March 27, but "rowdyism" by teachers protesting against the Chairman of the London Education Committee made it impossible for the President to speak. Therefore, the text of the speech was printed in *The Times Educational Supplement* and *The School Guardian*.xv

The opening statements of Fisher's printed speech provided an explanation for his handling of the issue of religion and education during his first two years in office. He had avoided the introduction of religion into the recent Education Act because he felt it would have been "impossible to deal with it except on the basis of a wide general agreement." But, since the controversies at the turn of the century, Fisher claimed that "in the last five years many rough edges have worn smoother." Despite the conspicuous opposition of some groups to denominational religion in state-supported schools, he believed that "a purely secular system of instruction in public elementary schools" was contrary to current national sentiments. Therefore, Fisher intended to cooperate with interested parties, such as the Church and Nonconformist leadership, in order to establish a uniform system.

To make that step from a dual to a unified system of education, he proposed that the Church of England relinquish its control of its schools to the Local Education Authorities who would both manage them and pay for their upkeep. While this compromise offered the LEAs the free use of Church property along with the right to appoint, promote, and dismiss teachers, the Church, in turn, would receive relief from the onerous financial burden for the ownership of Anglican property. That burden encompassed both costs for existing maintenance and for any new construction due to expansion of the educational system. Under the proposed unified system that responsibility would be set with the local authorities who would also control the curriculum and the conduct of the schools.

It was this latter aspect of LEA control that caused alarm among Anglicans. However, reassuring statements in Fisher's address regarding the place of religion and the role of the Church in the schools offered some of them solace. He did not believe that Churchmen were animated by "any spirit of ecclesiastical dominance." He accepted as their "honest conviction" that denominational instruction was both the most effective means for imparting religious education and that religion was fundamentally important for "the minds and the hearts of the young." Therefore, the President wanted the LEAs to be obligated to make adequate provision for religious observance and instruction in all elementary schools during school hours. In order to carry this aspect of the proposition, and thereby to make the proposed unified system a successful possibility, Fisher needed to enlist the willing cooperation of the teachers. The sensitive issue here concerned who controlled the classroom. As asserted nearly weekly in the correspondence section of *The Schoolmaster and Woman Teacher's Chronicle*, religious education in schools for many teachers meant clerical entry into the class rooms or even religious tests for teachers.\*\* In order to forestall resistance by the National Union of Teachers, Fisher stipulated that "no teacher in an ordinary public elementary school should be obliged to give religious instruction unless specially appointed for the purpose only." Moreover, any teacher who refused to give religious instruction would not be in a worse position in the educational system than one who would agree to do so.\*\*vii

The Times Educational Supplement promptly endorsed the Fisher Proposals.xviii The editors of the journal agreed with the President of the Board of Education that the dual system needed serious reform. They believed that teachers and students should no longer be handicapped by inefficient schools because "they answer the demand of hundreds of thousands of parents for such a religious teaching of their children as they enjoyed themselves." While the TES editors trumpeted Fisher's initiative primarily for administrative reasons, The Church Times approved the President's ideas because "for the first time, the teaching of religion in school hours as a normal part of education was secured by statute for every public school in our land."xix Anglo-Catholic sentiment, then, rejoiced that religious teaching would become an integral part of education. The formal reaction of Council school teachers was one of reticence.

At the Jubilee Conference at Margate in April 1920 a resolution was passed which urged that "the Executive wait on the President of the Board of Education for further information as to the suggested alteration in the law concerning religious instruction in public elementary schools." But behind the formalities that counseled persistence, teachers expressed strong, negative sentiments.

Walter D. Bentliff, a headmaster and former president of the NUT, articulated the commonly held view that "the continuation of denominational teaching in the elementary schools was not compatible with the abolition of religious tests they all wanted."xxi So despite Fisher's reassurances to the contrary, many teachers saw the clergy attempting to ingress the schools "in the name of the parent." In the closing arguments of the conference, Bentliff raised the cry of "Hands off the Council schools!"

The initial response of the Anglicans, somewhat surprisingly, was minimal. A year after the original offer *The Times Educational Supplement* even complained that the Churchmen ignored Fisher's overture to the point of tacit rejection.xxiii Indeed, during that twelve-month period not much news emanated from the Anglican camp. A response typical of the Anglicans was a circular, summarizing the annual meeting of the National Society, sent to Church schools during the summer of 1920.xxiii While the Society recognized benefits in Fisher's ideas, that body felt the President had not provided them with enough information either to accept or reject. For example, John Kempthorne, the Bishop of Lichfield, wanted to know if the proposals would encompass secondary and continuation schools.xxiv The problem here for concerned clergy was that the future teachers of England's youth were trained in institutions where religious education was no longer a requisite to become an elementary school teacher.

In the autumn of 1920 a symposium entitled, "The Presentation of Christ to Young People," was held at the Church Congress. At that meeting Sydney Boyd, the Prebendary of Ilton in Wells Cathedral, delivered a paper, "Church and State Education--Line of Cooperation," that analyzed the differences between the existing dual and the proposed unified system. While the new system did not preserve the religious atmosphere of the Church schools, Boyd discerned the following advantages. Mr. Fisher's proposals offer the new and far-reaching advance of a statutory obligation to teach religion, subject to a conscience clause, in every school, within school hours, in accordance with the wishes of a parent and by a teacher belonging to the body. And they give this right, where it has never been given before, in the Council schools. If this system came into operation, the Church schools would not be Church schools in the sense and degree they were before, but their leading purpose would be secured, and a great deal more, viz, Church teaching for Church children where, they are now receiving no Church teaching at all.xxv

Boyd warned that establishment of this system would require the clergy to make sacrifices. For instance, "there would be no right of entry, and the religious teaching would be given in school only by teachers on the staff."xxvi Faced with this dilemma, Anglican educators needed to ask which was better: maintaining schools with religious atmosphere in a system that slowly atrophied, or obtaining some form of religious teaching in all schools set within a basically secular system of national education. In May, 1921 the Archbishop of Canterbury finally made an offer to the government which the National Society supported. Provided that "religious education of a definite and dogmatic character" would be given by properly qualified teachers, the clergy agreed to a transfer of Church schools to the State and the local authorities,xxvii

By the time the prelate had made that offer, the country was already in a recession. England's economic downturn significantly affected educational reform, including negotiations on religion and education, after 1920. From the vantage point of December, 1920 *The Times Educational Supplement* provided the following perspective regarding the near future: "If the outlook is cheerful from the point of view of education as such; it must be admitted that at the moment it is not cheerful for the ratepayer and taxpayer."xxviii Very few continuation schools had been started since the passage of the Fisher Act, and some of those few that had begun were closed. In Birmingham the Local Education Authority shut down the continuation schools after only one month of operation. In an effort to maintain teachers' salaries, which had risen by nearly £13,000,000 between 1913 and 1920,xxix LEAs curtailed, and even cut out, new programs. The effort availed little. In 1922 the government, under recommendations from the Select Committee on National Expenditure, chaired by Sir Eric Geddes, slashed spending. The financial cuts included teachers' pay and pensions. Moreover, in order to save money, the size of classes for teachers was increased while the school-starting age was raised to six. In December *The Times Educational Supplement* concluded that 1921 had been a reactionary year and that the nation was losing its confidence in Fisher, who later resigned from the Board of Education with the fall of the Lloyd George government in 1922.xxx

The weak economy and its effect upon the school system was what attracted the interests of educational activists and grabbed headlines in their journals. Part of the picture conveyed was that of juveniles idle on street corners. The closure of continuation schools "has thrown upon the streets armies of children who have left school," and with the recession "cannot get work."xxxi

Of course, pay and pension scale reductions angered the National Union of Teachers. Despite criticism for its opposition to the reduction of the Burnham pay scale, XXXIII William Cove, a Labour MP and President of the NUT, persisted in his censure, and labeled the Geddes Report a cover for the destruction of the education system. XXXIII Richard H. Tawney, speaking on behalf of the Labour Party, accused the Conservatives and their allies, a reference indicting Churchmen, of wanting to maintain socio-economic inequalities and to train cheap, juvenile labor. XXXIIV

As the economy continued to slump, the national dialogue on education shifted away from the implementation of the Fisher Act and the future reform of the dual system. During this crisis the Church sought to retrench and to restrict spending. Anglicans intermittently resumed their debate over religious education. Many Anglicans hoped that their more than 10,700 schools would provide the basis for negotiations. The premise was that a financially strapped state would make an attractive offer to obtain these buildings as the starting point for future educational expansion. The attractive recompense to the Archbishop of Canterbury was "religious education of a dogmatic kind for those who desire it" in the schools of the new unified system.xxxv Other Anglicans, generally not at the level of Church leadership, decried any change in the dual system. John Sawbridge, Canon of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, predicted that "no tests for teachers" and "everything, including religious teaching, under the complete control of the Local Education Authority" meant "the awful crash into mere secular and materialistic education."xxxvi For the canon evidence of this inevitability was the state of education in the United States. Although discussed during 1920-21, the debate over the dual system, especially among Anglicans, did not become enthusiastically engaged until after November.

On November 1, 1921 Thomas Davies introduced the Amending Bill in the House of Commons. Davies, an ex-teacher in Church schools and a Conservative MP from Gloucestershire, initiated this piece of legislation as a private member's bill at the end of Parliament's session. The hope of Davies and his supporters was that the bill would "be examined thoroughly by all the parties concerned within the next few months" so that "it may be reintroduced next Session as an "agreed measure.""xxxvii At that time, they imagined, the government with considerable support in the country would carry the measure through Parliament just as it had done with H. A. L. Fisher's Act in 1918. Toward the end of fashioning a measure widely supported among Anglicans, Davies aligned his bill with the Fisher Proposals of 1920 and official Anglican sentiment.

An enunciation of that "agreed upon" sentiment was put forth in the form of the Three Principles of the Archbishop, which in themselves were an attempt to affirm Davies's bill. The principles originated as a result of a joint conference between six Anglican and six Nonconformist church leaders, presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury.xxxviii "To consider how the present dual system of elementary schools may be modified so as to secure economy, efficiency, and religious equality in elementary education," the conference asked that within all state-aided schools religious teaching should be given by teachers, competent and willing to teach it, to children whose parents desire that they should receive such education. Furthermore, the third point petitioned "that religious teaching must not be of a vague or indefinite character, but must mean for Christian children the definite teaching of the elements of the Christian Faith." Upon the basis of abstract theory many Anglicans and Nonconformists agreed in early 1922 about teaching "the Christian Faith." The question for the future was whether theory, especially in regard to the third point, could be transformed into practical application. An ominous hint to that matter was imparted during the conference proceedings when Dr. John Clifford, a Nonconformist clergyman opposed to the Anglican position on education since the Balfour Act of 1902, dissented from the principles.

For administrative considerations and a perspective "not directly concerned with the religious question save in so far as it impinges upon the national system," *The Times Educational Supplement* endorsed the Amending Bill.xxxix The editors of the newspaper believed that the stipulations set forth by Davies provided for broad consensus and a widely supported bill. In general, the proposed legislation afforded a united, integrated system of national education.

Articles one through four established the Local Educational Authorities as the governors of all schools, and stated their rights and responsibilities as the new managers. In recompense for that transferral of property and authority by the Anglicans, the latter four articles designated that the Church would have a role and religion would have a place in the schools. Numbers five and six, listed below, held particular importance for the Church.

That the local education authority shall make adequate provision in all public elementary and secondary schools for religious observance and instruction, differentiated as far as practicable in relation to religious tenets, such instruction to be given in school hours by teachers suitable and willing to give it, subject to a conscience clause and provision for withdrawal for religious observance or instruction elsewhere; That every training college for teachers (other than a college established for the purpose of training teachers in subjects of practical or physical instruction) aided by grants out of moneys provided by Parliament, shall provide a course of training which will prepare students to give such religious instruction as is suited to the capacities of children, and that where the giving of such instruction is directed by a trust deed, such instruction shall be given in accordance with those directions.xii

While article five made possible dogmatic religion in not only instruction, but also in observance, number six ensured that the colleges training the teachers to teach English children would prepare candidates to be religious educators as well as instructors of secular subjects. On paper, at least, it seemed that Davies's Amending Bill would secure support, but it was not reintroduced in Parliament during 1922. A month after Davies introduced his Amending Bill, *The Church Times* wrote that there was not "the slightest chance" that the government would carry the bill through Parliament "unless a very large measure of general support from all parties concerned" formed behind it.x\(\frac{1}{2}\) Two months later the journal reported on a meeting of the English Church Union Conference which showed that broad support would not be forthcoming.x\(\frac{1}{2}\) E. G. Sainsbury, who represented the NUT at the meeting, said that the teachers preferred to stay with the dual system because that, at least, allowed them to have separate schools without denominational religion or creeds for teachers. That predictable response by the teachers' union was not surprising, but the following one made by a Churchman was. Reverend Alfred Edwards, curate of Berkhamsted, 1918-1920, confessed that "he rejoiced that the National Union of Teachers was against the Bill, that the Roman Catholics were against it, and he hoped a sufficient number of Church people were against it to render the passage of the Bill impossible." The loud applause procured by the comment at a Church conference revealed that even among Anglicans it would be difficult to obtain favorable assent for the Bill.

Throughout 1922 various resolutions were passed by educational and religious organizations against Davies's bill to amend the dual system. In October the Annual Conference of the National Union of Teachers at Sheffield proposed "that the Board of Education Certificate should carry with it the right to teach in any State-aided school without the imposition of any religious or denominational test, and that no settlement of the dual system can be satisfactory which does not include this provision." As had been the case for more than fifty years, the non-Anglican teachers' organizations received support from many Nonconformist denominations. During the summer the Primitive Methodist Conference at Leeds took a stand against the introduction of sectarian religious education into state-provided schools and teacher training colleges. Furthermore, in defense of the teachers' position, the conference resolved: "We strongly protest against the right of entry into schools for religious instruction, and we strongly object to religious tests for teachers." XIV

A groundswell of support among the Anglicans united with this chorus of censure aimed at the Amending Bill. One example of that popular Anglican surge was the Church Schools Emergency League. A group of Anglican educational enthusiasts in Manchester had formed this league in order to keep the Church schools operational within the existing dual system. The League believed that the Church gave up too much in the compromise reached under Davies's Bill. In particular, it objected to the loss of control of Church school buildings to local authorities, the reduction of Church school managers from a 2/3 majority to a 1/3 minority on the LEAs, and the surrender of the power of appointment of the head teacher to the local authorities.xivi Through the year grass-roots Anglican movements organized in support of the dual system despite the call for its reform by the higher ranking clergy.

Amidst the controversy over the Amending Bill, *The Times Educational Supplement* raised its voice on behalf of the clergy determined to reform the dual system. Quite often editorials appeared in the paper which castigated those, like the teachers, for their opposition to the parliamentary bill. In May, 1922 the editors warned the teachers' organizations that "if the view becomes general that this revision is being delayed by the teachers, we can conceive that the general sympathy of the public for the teachers...will evaporate."xivii

Although the TES was primarily interested in the bill for administrative reasons, its editorials would also argue strongly for reform from a position of religious education. To the proponents of existing conditions under the dual system, the paper argued that "it is no satisfactory answer to this contention to say that in the majority of provided schools there is religious instruction."xiviii The fallacy with current conditions, the editors believed, was that "religious instruction is not essential" in state-aided schools.

In October, 1922 the *TES* declared for the statutory position on religious education which was the same position that the Anglican leadership took to Nonconformists and teachers in a final effort at compromise. At the end of that year *TES* editorials urged the aforementioned parties to secure an "agreed upon" scheme that the government could carry through Parliament as a reintroduced Amending Act.

Nearly one year after Davies introduced the Amending Bill in Parliament, Anglican educational activists struggled through the month of October attempting to procure the support of Nonconformists, and perhaps even the representatives of teachers' unions, to a compromise that would establish religious education within a unified school system. The basis for that compromise from the Anglican perspective was the Joint Memorandum issued by the Education Committee of the National Assembly of the Church and the Standing Committee of the National Society, the Anglican teachers' organization in Church schools, on July 6, 1922.xiix The Joint Memorandum acquiesced in the termination of the dual system in that the clergy would agree to transfer its schools to the control of the local authorities provided that the Church would receive statutory guarantees for religious education as outlined in the Fisher Proposals. Toward that end, the two committees requested that the following amendments be added to Davies's Amending Bill: the religious teaching in schools should accommodate the denominations of the districts, there should be inspection of religious education, and any voluntary school must have the option to "stand out" of the new system.

In October, as the Church leadership attempted to secure an agreed upon measure, *The Times Educational Supplement* endorsed the Joint Memorandum. "In a sense the Church may be said to have burnt her boats and to have adopted the policy that if the principles for which the voluntary schools stand become, as they ought to become, the principles relating to religious education throughout the national system, they are willing to hand over the schools to the State."

The newspaper anticipated the reintroduction of the Amending Bill as government-sponsored legislation. The Anglo-Catholic journal, *The Church Times*, also espoused support for the Joint Memorandum. Under the protection of a parliamentary act it envisioned for all English children a "religious teaching as an integral part of education, instead of as an extra which any Local Authority might expunge from the time-table."

Another aspect of the dual system slated for discontinuance, a fact which pleased many Anglicans, was the Cowper-Temple clause. In place of this non-sectarian instruction, which an Anglican civil servant, Sir Frederick Holiday, characterized "as the religion of nobody taught by anybody and paid for by everybody,"

Anglicans wanted an arrangement that Parliament had recently granted to Northern Ireland. There "the children of various denominations will do their secular subjects together, but there will be separate religious teaching. The teachers will willingly teach both, according to their denominations, and no friction is anticipated."

But this settlement, which *The Times Educational Supplement* praised in Ulster, failed in England.

Through October and into November of 1922 the Churchmen were unable to gain the support of the Nonconformists and the teachers for the Joint Memorandum which could be offered to the government as an agreed upon scheme. Although the various clergy could draw together upon the idea of the Archbishop's Three Principles, they could not agree upon a syllabus of religious education "which would contain what Anglicans regard as indispensable essentials, and, at the same time omit what Nonconformists would consider as doctrinal."\text{IV} Furthermore, the Churchmen were unable to appease the teachers' demands of "no tests" for teachers and "no entry" by the clergy while at the same time insisting upon definite religious teaching. Therefore, the National Union of Teachers and the Association of Education Committees rejected the Church's agreed upon scheme at the Memorial Hall Conference.

In the aftermath of the failure at the Memorial Hall Conference the various parties went their separate ways. In a number of statements made during the first part of 1923, teachers and their associates showed that they had little affinity for the Church's agenda on religious education.

In an address to the Unitarians Dr. Lawrence Jacks, Principal of Manchester College, said that "the schoolmaster of to-day is not as willing as he was thirty years ago to accept the parson's view that he is incompetent in the matter of religious teaching." Jacks concluded, "whatever Bills might be rushed through Parliament, the ministers of all denominations would have to reckon in future with the new mentality of the schoolmasters." According to a speech by Edward Stanley, the fourth Baron Sheffield, before the Education Association at Central Hall, Westminster, that "new mentality" was antithetical to traditional religious teaching. Vii

The octogenarian lord, a lifelong opponent of Anglican influence in national education, focused his criticism upon a joint conference of Churchmen and "Calvinist Methodists" to develop a religious syllabus for Wales. Scornfully, he labeled their thinking "an attitude towards historic Christianity which still prevailed in Sunday Schools." The implication conveyed was that Sunday school teaching had no place in England's future system of national education. Sheffield predicted that if the clergy attempted to impose their views in the national class rooms, they would be confronted by the non-cooperation of the teachers and the sullen resentment of the pupils.

What really excited the teachers were not symposiums that formulated a unified system with religious education, but rather conferences that outlined a unified system without the inclusion of religion. At their Brighton Conference in April the NUT renewed its earlier interest in a unified system of secular education. The teachers passed a resolution which declared that "the time has now arrived when the primary and secondary schools should be definitely correlated, the function of the former being to provide that general education which is the foundation of all further studies, while the latter should be of varying types suited to varying needs." Of the seven items stipulated in the resolution as necessary toward fashioning a unified system, none referred to religion. This was a revelatory sign to the nation regarding not only the clash between teacher and clerical interests, but also what national education in the future would be.

Meanwhile, one month after the Brighton Conference the National Society held its annual meeting at which a majority of Anglican educators voted against the Joint Memorandum of their own Standing Committee of the National Society and the Education Committee of the National Assembly of the Church. *The Church Times* reported that "to everyone's surprise, the annual meeting of the National Society, on Wednesday, was crowded beyond its doors; indeed, the anteroom could not accommodate the later comers." Whereas the previous meeting had had only twenty-two participants at its commencement, the ranks of ordinary Anglicans swelled this meeting to pass by a majority of ten votes a resolution that called for a revitalization of the dual system. Although there was complaint that those against the Joint Memorandum had packed the hall with "London enthusiasts," later correspondence in *The Church Times* resolved that the National Society's annual meeting really was widely attended from persons all across the country. Indeed, in responding to Canon Cairns's charge that the hall was packed, Laura Helen Sawbridge claimed that members from the following organizations had attended: the National Society, the Manchester Schools Emergency League, the Church Extension Association, the Church Managers' and Teachers' Association, and the Association for the Defence of Church Schools.

That the Joint Memorandum was repudiated at the National Society meeting should not have been a surprise to clergymen, such as Canon Cairns. Events during the six months preceding the conference showed that many Anglicans preferred abiding with the dual system. This was especially true after the Church leadership failed to convince the Nonconformists and the teachers' unions to support the Joint Memorandum. For example, one month after the failure of the Memorial Hall Conference a petition signed by 1100 clergy, teachers, and managers was presented to the Bishop of London. The petitioners urged that "the policy of diplomatic negotiation should be abandoned as tending negatively to diminish enthusiasm for Church schools, and for the cause of religious education generally." Instead, they wanted the clergy to call upon devoted Anglicans to maintain their schools with the same "self-sacrificing spirit" by which they had been established. Through the subsequent months numerous Anglican organizations concerned about religious education passed resolutions in opposition to the proposed unified system. The sentiment behind these resolutions favored the dual system because it, at least, allowed a place in their schools where dogmatic religious teaching could be given.

A statement delivered in early May by the Church Schools Emergency League and the Association for the Defence of Church Schools asked for a revitalized dual system and much more. "We now call upon Church people," it read, "who value Church schools and who desire that education shall be based upon religion, to join us in the determination to maintain those schools, and to insist upon definite religious education for all schools--elementary and secondary."

IXI

Along with maintaining the particular environment of their own schools within the dual system, many Anglicans now insisted that all state-aided schools within that system teach dogmatic religion. This was the attitude that prevailed later that month at the annual meeting of the National Society.

The meeting commenced on May 30 with an attempt by Sir Frederick Holiday who made a motion to reaffirm negotiations based on the Archbishop's Three Principles. Holiday's motion was challenged by Francis Thicknesse, Rector of St. George's, Hanover Square, who said he wanted to amend the motion. The contents of Thicknesse's statement, in fact, negated Holiday's attempt to affirm the Church hierarchy's abandonment of the dual system. Thicknesse's statement, which carried by a majority of ten votes, proposed the following:

That the National Society considers that it is urgently necessary that the authority of the Church should be respectfully invited to abandon the policy of negotiation for the surrender of Church schools and to aid the Society by putting a strong appeal to all Church people to maintain Church schools and training colleges in a condition of the greatest possible efficiency, while pressing for the definite teaching of the Christian faith to Christian children in all schools.<sup>[Xiii]</sup>

Thicknesse, who received considerable applause during the meeting, defended his resolution with the rhetorical question, "But why need we give up our church schools in order to improve the others?" Thicknesse and his supporters asserted the position that Anglicans ought to keep their Church schools and "claim our rights in the other schools." While clerical influence in Church schools would ensure Christianity being imparted there, Thicknesse resolutely insisted that teachers be religiously trained in order to teach Christianity in Council schools. The majority at the meeting carried this point also, and a resolution in support of religiously based training colleges was passed. At this point the Archbishop of Canterbury sadly commented that the Church did not have the resources to finance both the building of new training colleges and the renovation of elementary schools. Indeed, the National Society, itself, had reported last May that voluntary contributions in 1921 were only £17,110 while in 1913 they had been £21,634. Despite these criticisms based on actual conditions, Prebendary Thicknesse and two of his associates were elected to the Standing Committee of the National Society where they might try to implement their agenda.

In the aftermath of the victory at the annual meeting of the National Society Thicknesse and his confederates had to make a concerted effort to solicit voluntary contributions to preserve their own schools within the existing dual system. This had already begun when the bishops were unable to devise a compromise with the Nonconformists and the teachers at the Memorial Hall Conference. Anglicans, acting with inspiration from Prebendary John Hall, founded two organizations for the preservation of Church schools: the Church Schools Emergency League and the Association for the Defence of Church Schools. Since the bishops were unable to solicit universal support for the Joint Memorandum at the Memorial Hall Conference, these two organizations and others began a campaign to stop the transfer of Church schools to the local authorities. Anglicans supporting these organizations perceived the transferrals as abandoning children, even Church children, to secularism. For example, the Church Managers' and Teachers' Association made the following claim on this issue.

This meeting of the Bury St. Edmunds and District Association is of opinion that the Church Elementary Schools should not be surrendered as suggested in the memorandum issued by the National Society last October, but considers that every effort should be made to defend all Church schools for all generations of children and to secure full Christian teaching in all other State-aided schools attended by the children of Christian parents. Eventually, under sustained criticism from Anglicans determined to hold on to the Church schools, the Joint Committees of the National Society and the National Assembly issued a call to maintain a firm defense against individual transfers of schools until a general agreement could be reached on the unified system. In May, when even a majority of Anglicans voted against the unified system, this course of action was officially accepted by the Church.

Through 1923 Anglicans could claim some success in an increase in voluntary contributions for Church schools. Laura Helen Sawbridge wrote to *The Church Times* in March, 1923 that the following monies had been received: £520 for Ashmonbaugh, £1500 for Aylsam, and £200 for Hempton. She believed that with the uncertainty gone regarding whether the Church would keep the schools within the existing dual system, voluntary support would only increase. An editorial in *The Church Times* admitted that "enthusiasm ran high" for the £100,000 goal set by the Association for the Defence of Church Schools.

Still, the editorial wondered whether those parents who could afford subscriptions would not rather send their children to public schools and that those who couldn't afford the fees would not have the money available to contribute to Church elementary schools.<sup>IXX</sup>

Although the failure of the Memorial Hall Conference had brought many Anglicans to unite among themselves to save Church schools, some Churchmen still sought to reach consensus with other educators. During 1923 Anglicans within the diocese of Manchester met with Nonconformists and teachers, but this conference also did not achieve agreement. Thereupon, the Bishop of Manchester formed a committee to address the question: "What is meant by Christian Education, and what is the place of Denominational Schools in relation thereto?" Although *The Church Times* was correct in criticizing the Memorandum as too abstract and without any "concrete proposals for preserving and extending" religious education, the following statement, submitted to the Diocesan Conference on November 20, did delineate well what the committee meant by Christianity and how it should impact the lives of English youth.

Our aim is to train characters which are truly and thor oughly Christian and to suggest an outlook upon life which is directed by Christian conviction in all respects. This involves a complete permeation of the whole school life with Christian principles. The goal is reached...when the children go out from school, having at least begun to learn the lesson that love to God and love to men can alone guide rightly the decisions which they have to make either as individuals or as citizens. A school which is giving a truly Christian training is one which keeps before its members this question:

Are you prepared in all matters, small or great, private or public, to act as one who believes that the supreme power of the universe is revealed in Jesus Christ?

Our aim is to lead the rising generation to an intelligent apprehension of the Christian faith as it is set forth, for example, in the Apostles' Creed. Our aim is to convey what we believe to be the truth concerning God and consequent duty of men. Further, our aim must be to convey this, not as a set of opinions which happen to be held by a certain group of individuals but as body of truth, `articulated' in the several `articles' of the Creed, which is held by a body pledged to a life corresponding thereto; which body is the Church. Care must be taken that the whole instruction given leads to a living and intelligent grasp of Christian truth, not a parrot-like repetition of sounds that convey no meaning to the mind. To this end, actual religious practice must form a part of religious instruction. [xxiii]

Considering the historical context in which this statement was made, Anglicans faced a struggle to convince the nation that a vital knowledge of Jesus Christ as defined in the creeds was of paramount importance and then to implant that ideal within a national school curriculum. Other than the few activists in Church organizations, there were not many persons living in 1920s England who involved themselves in promoting Christianity as did the few Anglicans. *The Church Times* complained that even among Anglicans, "only about once in ten years, when some Parliament Bill forces it upon their notice and makes it a political issue, will the mass of Churchpeople show any real interest in religious education." It supported this assertion with reference to attendance at National Society meetings, which were "mostly composed of old ladies." Moreover, *The Church Times* claimed that Church Convocations usually shelved proposals on religious education from the National Society in order to focus on other issues, such as the prospect of "women preachers." IXXXX

Worse yet for Anglican intentions, the general populace seemed to show an even greater indifference. In March, 1921 *The Church Times* ran an article entitled, "Christianity or Paganism?." Speaking for Anglo-Catholics, its thesis opined that "we are drifting perceptively towards paganism, and that no adequate steps are being taken to check that movement." As evidence, the essay lamented "the queues of children ranged outside the cinemas of a Sunday evening" and "fathers who take the schoolboys and schoolgirls of their families to spend the whole of Sunday on the golf-course or the river, giving them no encouragement to attend a place of worship except for a smart wedding." In contrast, the article noted that practically every Christian denomination in England tabulated a decline in Sunday School attendance during recent years. In an essay about the spiritual training of working boys, Francis Underhill, Canon of Birmingham Cathedral, asserted that the minimal Christianity imparted to English youth was eroded away in the daily life of the office and the factory. In these places Underhill believed the Christian sentiments to whither under assaults of "insane criticisms...by anti-Christian associations" and "the cheap arguments of ignorant windbags." Insane criticisms...by anti-Christian associations" and "the cheap arguments of ignorant windbags." Insane criticisms...by anti-Christian associations" and "the cheap arguments of ignorant windbags." Insane criticisms...by anti-Christian associations" and "the cheap arguments of ignorant windbags." Insane criticisms...by anti-Christian associations" and "the cheap arguments of ignorant windbags."

The Anglicans' remedy for these dilemmas was the nurturing of Christian youth in national schools under the influence of the Church. But, even here there were problems for Churchmen. First and already discussed, there were many Englishmen, especially among Nonconformist activists and the teachers, who felt "it was the duty of the nation to supply the education and the duty of the Church to supply the religion--outside the school."

Secondly, Anglican enthusiasts encountered parental indifference regarding the Christian upbringing of English children. *The Church Times* complained that many, "perhaps even a majority" of parents do not exercise their rights through the conscience clauses under existing laws to obtain their own denomination's religious teaching for their children. The excuse most often given for failure to exercise this option was "I do not want him differentiated from the other children; think how uncomfortable he would feel." Apparently, then, the attitude prevailed among the English people that one's religious sentiments should not interfere with the teacher's daily routine in the classroom or with what the children of their peers accepted in that environment. Reverend Ernest Barnes, a theological modernist and the future Bishop of Birmingham, predicted that "this meant the schools will rule the churches." While Barnes optimistically interpreted this phenomenon as the means of reunion for England's fractured school structure, he did admit that pessimists might foresee "the virtual repudiation of Christianity" through the Church's diminished role in society.

In conjunction with the internal debate among Anglicans, numerous articles appeared in the educational journals and newspapers which discussed and analyzed the presiding impact of the schools upon English society. In a front page lead article for *The Times Educational Supplement*, the correspondent asserted that whereas present-day methods of religious education seemed irrelevant to the lives of English youth as they matured, the professional teacher's pedagogy impacted the student as pertinent to his life. The correspondent believed this because the Council school teacher exercised enough control over his discipline so as "to inoculate students with his ideals;" moreover, the teacher anticipated and thereby led public opinion. Teachers and educators were not unaware of their tremendous social influence. Speaking before the Fifth Annual Conference of Reading and District Teachers' Association, Spurley Hey, Director of Education, denominated the men and women in England's classrooms as "thousands of teacher missionaries." President C. Barras of the National Federation of Class Teachers envisioned a crusade for these "thousands of teacher missionaries" which was "moulding the life of a nation." "Their work," Barras proclaimed, "ought not to be confined to the schools, but they should be in touch with social problems."

England's teachers had indeed assumed a notable role in social reform. J. E. Cuthbertson, Director of Education at Barrow-in-Furness, wrote to *The Times Educational Supplement* "it is well that it should be noised abroad that there is a vast amount of public service being performed quietly and unostentatiously." Some of this public service to which Cuthbertson referred was voluntary work done by teachers to provide breakfasts and lunches six days per week for 1/6 of the school children during the recession. In 1923 England's educational system received indirect praise from the annual report of the Ministry of Health. It was reported that the infant mortality rate was down to 77 per 1000, and *The Times Educational Supplement* attributed this achievement to the health services provided in the schools. The editorial even advocated that "every school should be a centre of propaganda" through which literature from the Ministry of Health could be distributed to the homes.

The Church Times evaluated these social developments with a degree of apprehension. "The effect of the education that exists to-day is to develop the mental and physical rather than the spiritual side of life," stated the editorial. It was evident that the material well-being for the lower class English was much better than two generations ago, but the writer doubted that the spiritual health had been improved. The journal assessed the impact of these conditions on students to be that they realized "that religion really occupies a small place in the minds of the teachers....In this scheme of instruction the State and the world are everything." This was not an indefinite critique launched out at cultural intangibles. As evidence, The Times Educational Supplement indicted the report of the Consultative Committee on secondary education, which claimed to deal with "the curriculum at present in use, including all school activities," for completely ignoring religion. The Anglican fear, to paraphrase the words of Jesus Christ, was that the English were fashioning a society which could live "on bread alone."

Along with the obstacles of the teachers' opposition and the parents' indifference to religious education, Churchmen confronted a third challenge to their attempt to promote Christianity through the schools; this one came from within. Speaking to the National Society on modernism, Lord Hugh Cecil said there was a movement which "seems to be unlike Christianity to which we have been accustomed." Instead of fostering the "personal worship of a Personal God," Cecil claimed modernism presented god as "a principle without being a Personal Being." In a lecture given at Bingley Training College, Reverend Ernest Barnes expounded upon this movement.

His comments show that the modernist interpretation of the Christian religion might have been quite different from the Statement of Aims composed at the Manchester Diocesan Conference. Whereas the Diocese spoke of truth "articulated" in creeds, Barnes emphasized "a reasoned and reasonable interpretation," and whereas the Diocese preached "the supreme power.... revealed in Jesus Christ," Barnes focused on his manhood and love for others. The reverend admitted that he "deliberately ignored the Old Testament, because he would not have Christianity seem dependent on primitive barbarism or mythology." Clearly, this was a different approach to Christianity from what more traditional Anglicans followed in their propagation of the faith. So, while the Church of England demanded the legal right to teach Christianity to the English youth, all Anglicans had not reached agreement on what that was.

For the Anglicans the year 1923 ended without an agreed upon resolution to the problem of religious education in a national system of schools. In contrast to 1918 when the nation had rallied behind H. A. L. Fisher to pass an education act without religious provisions, not much stirred in the nation a few years later except opposition when the Archbishop of Canterbury and Thomas Davies promoted a bill that was specifically religious. Admittedly, the economy had slumped into a recession, but nonetheless, the Churchmen had not successfully handled the three challenges they had faced. They did not attain agreement with the Nonconformists and the teachers on the issue of religious education within a unified system of schools; the clergy were unable to inspire the parents to zealous involvement for the sake of religious teaching in the schools; Anglicans had not united among themselves over an interpretation of Christian education. To be sure, there was enthusiasm among the dedicated Anglicans, especially during 1923 when they campaigned both to save Church schools and to invest Christian education in all other English schools. That latter demand was shouted rather loudly by Canon Thicknesse and his associates at the National Society's meeting in May, 1923. But, two simple questions by Canon James Cairns criticizing Thicknesse's posture of making demands spoke even louder. "From whom are we to demand it? Is the present Government, or any alternative Government in sight, in the least likely to listen?"xc That was the Church's dilemma during the 1920s. Who, besides devout and devoted Anglicans, would listen to the cry that Christianity was vital for the life of the nation?

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