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THE  
CHURCHMAN

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MARCH, 1897.

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ART. I.—THE NATIONAL SOCIETY.

IT is impossible in the short space at my disposal to give an exhaustive account of this Society, towards which at the present moment so much attention is being turned, and which has before it so difficult and so important a work. The Dean of St. Paul's, in his lately published work on "Elementary Education," has so ably and exhaustively traversed the whole rise and progress of the educational work with which the Society is concerned, that it is quite unnecessary for me to attempt a similar task. I purpose the far humbler object of seeking to interest your readers in a few points of the Society's history which are, comparatively speaking, unknown.

The work of the S.P.C.K., from its foundation in the year 1698; the heroic labours of Griffith Jones, Rector of Llandowror, in 1730; the subsequent efforts of Robert Raikes and others had prepared the ground, and in 1806 Dr. Bell opened his first parochial school at Gower's Walk, Whitechapel. There were many other schools, no doubt, in various parts of the country, but this school, which we are glad to say still exists, has probably the honour of claiming to be the first school of a new system which developed into one rightly called "national." Earnest men were urging Churchmen to take action, and on June 10, 1810, Dr. Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, preaching at St. Paul's, scandalized his hearers by telling them that two-thirds of the children of the labouring poor were growing up without any religious teaching worth consideration. In the following year Dr. Herbert Marsh, the Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, said much the same thing, and urged upon his hearers the duty of combined and systematic action. These two sermons were probably the immediate cause of the foundation of the National Schools,

and on October 13, 1811, we find the said Dr. Marsh writing to Joshua Watson, a well-known London layman, proposing that "We should dine together in a private room of some coffee-house, and that Mr. Bowles and Mr. Norris be of the party. In this interior cabinet we can arrange the propositions which are to be brought forward at the cabinet council." John Bowles and the Rev. H. H. Norris were both intimate friends of Joshua Watson, the former being a Surrey magistrate and the latter Rector of Hackney.

Then, as now, Englishmen could do nothing without a dinner, but we much regret that no record exists of this most important dinner, which seems to have taken place on Tuesday, October 15, for on the following Wednesday, October 16, the Archbishop (Manners Sutton) of Canterbury presided at a meeting at Bartlett's Buildings, when the National Society was formed. The committee met again on the two following days, under the presidency of the Bishop (Randolph) of London, and on October 21 at St. Mary le Bow, again under the presidency of the Archbishop, when the "rules and the regulations for the constitution and government of the Society were approved." During the formation of the Society the Rev. H. H. Norris was "acting secretary," but the general committee at its first meeting, held on December 3, 1821, at St. Martin's Library, elected Joshua Watson treasurer, and the Rev. T. T. Walmesley, Rector of St. Martin's, Ludgate, secretary of the Society.

The committee at once endeavoured to find a site in Westminster for a central school, but were unable to do so, and had to content themselves with a brewery in Baldwin's Gardens, Gray's Inn Lane, which was converted into a school for 1,000 children, together with rooms for the officers of the Society. Whilst this conversion was taking place, a temporary school was opened at No. 45, Holborn.

Such was the birth of the Society, which quietly and unobtrusively developed itself, each year helping to bring new schools into existence, and each year striving to do its work through diocesan boards of education. The National Society has the satisfaction of knowing that the committee, whilst always willing to act as the central education society, has always encouraged diocesan efforts.

In 1815 the Society experienced its first attack of impecuniosity, which has unfortunately since become normal. There seems to have been in all times a fixed resolution with the committee to hoard nothing, but to spend, with as few office expenses as possible, all that came in. We consequently find that Archbishops have from the very first been importuned to make special appeals to the generosity of the

public. The first appeal in 1815 was stopped in its infancy, because "the news of the most glorious but sanguinary battle of Waterloo reached this country, and brought with it a claim to British gratitude, with the operation of which the committee were unwilling to interfere by any competition for the public bounty."

In 1816 a most important return was secured from fourteen dioceses, which proved that Bishop Bathurst's statement in 1810 was not exaggerated. It is so important, as evidencing the then state of the country so far as education was concerned at this period, that we give it in full :

Diocese of	Parishes.	Parishes which have made no Return.	Parishes which have neither Sunday nor Day Schools.	Parishes which have National Schools.	Schools partially on National Plan.	Obstacles to the Adoption of the National System.		How the Schools are Supported.		Parishes now United, 1816.
						Inability, Age, or Prejudice of the Teacher.	Want of Funds.	Endowments.	Subscriptions.	
York -	576		66	37	46	56	111	98	204	19
London -	557	106	72	81	6	2	10			170
Durham -	85		25	4	6	12		34	6	21
St. Asaph -	109	9	24	6	8	1	29	17	31	4
Bangor -	162		69	3		5	49	12	42	2
Bristol -	168		40	55	12	18	12	11	59	88
Carlisle -	130		24	5	8	9	22	30	20	1
Chester -	361		27	78	4	12	29	51	145	54
Exeter -	339		31	33	19	39	51	30	103	65
Llandaff -	152		78	5	4	6	6	5	14	7
Lichfield -	408		31	37	55	31	54	72	213	36
Oxford -	229		35	18	21	12	38	40	96	12
Salisbury -	384	89	40	20	46	22	46	26	143	11
Worcester	134	122	13	9	6	10	7	35	32	3
	2,818	326	575	391	238	235	464	461	1,108	493

It will be seen from the foregoing returns, that even after the National Society had been at work for four years, and things were beyond doubt better than they had been, 23 per cent. of the parishes making returns were not ashamed to own that neither on the Sunday nor the weekday was any attempt being made to teach the children anything. But each subsequent year's report shows an advance, and in 1833 the number of parishes in union with the Society had risen to 3,150. In this same year the secretary of the Society, the Rev. J. C. Wigram, afterwards Lord Bishop of Rochester, announced in his report the meeting of the Society for the first time in the new offices at Westminster, which from that time have been the headquarters of the Society.

In the year 1833 Government made its first grant for the education of the people, £20,000 being granted "in aid of

private subscriptions for the erection of schools for the education of the children of the poorer classes in Great Britain." The National Society and the British and Foreign School Society were made the means of distributing these annual grants. The 1834 report of the Society tells us that out of the £40,000 available for the two years 1833 and 1834, the Society asked for £38,436, but only got £11,187.

In the year 1840 the report of the Society describes what the committee considered "an unexpected and unhappy change," namely, the formation, during the preceding year, of the Education Department, through which henceforth all grants to schools were to be administered. It is somewhat curious to read in the same report that "To the inspection by a State officer thus insisted on the clergy and managers were decidedly averse, on grounds not only of expediency, but of principle." It was obvious to all concerned that the period was one of grave anxiety, and that the task of reconciling the managers of Church schools to what was inevitable, and at the same time preserving their position, was one which required both tact and courage. Fortunately, in the Rev. John Sinclair, then elected secretary, the Society obtained the services of a man whose knowledge of the world, combined with great strength of character, enabled him to steer the Society through troublous controversies.

The Education Department was yearly increasing in power, and the schools were yearly becoming more dependent upon the aid given by the State; this, notwithstanding the enormous sacrifices which Churchmen were continuously making. Mr. Sinclair's retirement from the secretaryship after four years' service, on his appointment to the important Vicarage of Kensington, coincided with the retirement of Joshua Watson from the treasurership, after thirty-two years' "most zealous and efficient services to the Society"; and Mr. Sinclair was forthwith appointed treasurer in his place, and shortly afterwards became Archdeacon of Middlesex. For thirty years Archdeacon Sinclair wisely conducted the work of keeping Church schools up to the constantly increasing requirements of the Education Department. The four training colleges of St. Mark's, Chelsea; St. John's, Battersea; St. Ursula, Whitelands; and Carmarthen, which are the property of the Society; and the Central Depository at Westminster, are all monuments of his energy and wisdom, and the position which Church schools were able to take in 1870 was quietly and unobtrusively secured for them by his patience and his refusal to be discouraged, however great the difficulties, which were constantly presenting themselves.

When Archdeacon Sinclair retired in 1870 the position

occupied by the Church was undoubtedly strong. Churchmen had, since the foundation of the National Society, spent £15,149,938 on their schools and training colleges, and had provided accommodation for 1,365,080 children, of whom 844,334 were in average attendance. But the very strength of the position courted the attack, and when the Education Act of 1870 was brought forward there were not wanting those who despaired of the Church being able to hold her own in educational matters. It was then that the National Society needed a treasurer who would have real courage, and who, avoiding untenable positions, would never willingly surrender any principle which it was the duty of Churchmen to maintain. In Canon Gregory, now Dean of St. Paul's, the standing committee secured such a leader.

The immediate work of the National Society in 1870 was to secure, within the very short space of time allowed by the Act, sufficient accommodation for all Church children requiring it, even though there were as yet no means of compelling such children to attend.

In introducing the Bill, Mr. Forster roughly computed the deficiency of accommodation at 1,500,000, and directly appealed to voluntary managers to supply this deficiency. To the question which he asks, "How can we cover the country with good schools?" he himself supplies the answer in the following terms: "There must be, consistently with the attainment of our object, the least possible expenditure of public money, the utmost endeavour not to injure existing and efficient schools, and the most careful absence of all encouragement to parents to neglect their children. Our object is to complete *the present voluntary system*, to fill up gaps, sparing the public money where it can be done without; procuring as much as we can the assistance of the parents, and welcoming as much as we rightly can the co-operation and aid of those benevolent men who desire to assist their neighbours."

To this invitation the National Society replied without one minute's delay, and meetings were organized and held in every part of England and Wales to procure money for the work of bringing up Church Schools, both as regards accommodation and efficiency, to the required standard. The laity and clergy alike came forward with munificent donations and subscriptions, and it is no exaggeration to say that within about five years upon buildings alone Churchmen had sunk two millions of pounds. It should not be forgotten that this and subsequent expenditure was made upon the faith that the distinct assurances given from both sides of the House of Commons, that voluntary schools were an integral part in the educational system of the nation, would not be set aside. The

repudiation of the National Debt would, morally speaking, not be more excusable than the failure at any time to recognise the money sunk by Churchmen upon their schools. It will be convenient here to note the total expenditure of the Church during the existence of the National Society upon elementary education, separating the period before 1870 from the subsequent years :

From 1811 to 1870 Churchmen spent	-	-	£15,149,938
Since 1870 they have spent	-	-	£23,840,080
Making a total expenditure of	-	-	£38,990,018

As regards accommodation and average attendance, the following facts are also most deserving of attention :

	Year ending August 31, 1870.	Year ending August 31, 1895.	Increase.
Accommodation in } Church Schools }	1,365,080	2,702,270	1,337,190
Average Attendance	844,334	1,850,545	1,006,211

There are no signs of defeat. On the contrary, Church schools are at the present moment in a stronger position than they have ever occupied before.

Immediately after the passing of the 1870 Act it became the duty of the National Society to consider what should be done with respect to the religious examination of the schools. Up to 1870 the Government Inspector examined in religious as well as secular subjects, and those of us who are old enough will remember with pleasure the earnest interest taken in this by our best inspectors, and the reluctance with which they abandoned that portion of their work. Able as were most of the volunteer diocesan inspectors, it became necessary now to organize their work, and the National Society was prompt to secure that in every diocese at least one competent paid inspector should give his whole attention to the work.

The Society also undertook, in 1875, the entire expense of the religious inspection and examination connected with the training colleges. The importance and magnitude of this work, which is increasing every year, is hardly realized as it ought to be.

Prebendary Reynolds, one of our most competent educational experts, visits annually every Church training college, and reports most fully, not merely on the proficiency of the students in their religious examination, but also as to the whole condition of the college. Liberal grants are made every year by the Society to almost every training college, and the Society rightly desires to satisfy itself that in all matters the students are well cared for.

The actual work of examination is conducted by a Board,

composed of representatives of the two Archbishops—the National Society and the principals of Church training colleges. About 36,000 examination papers are annually distributed from the office of the Society, the examination centres arranged for, the papers again received from the centres where they are worked, divided amongst competent examiners whose marks, when received, are tabulated, and the candidates arranged in classes.

In 1876, mainly through the exertions of the present Earl of Harrowby, who is still a valued member of the National Society's Standing Committee, a supplementary Education Act was passed, which has been the means of saving many Church schools. From our point of view, its most important provision was the introduction of the principle which has since been extended—that schools serving small populations should receive special grants. A large number of village schools were, under this principle, placed upon a firm basis, which has enabled them successfully to hold their own against a School Board. The Bill also contained a clause for the "dissolution of School Boards under certain circumstances," which may, we hope, be further extended in some future Bill.

During the past ten years, commencing in 1886 with the Royal Commission on Education appointed in that year, various efforts have been made, directly or indirectly, through the National Society, to redress the increasing difficulties under which Voluntary Schools are suffering, and in spite of which they are continuing to prosper and advance. Public opinion is beginning to realize the vitality of a system which lives and grows in spite of the most serious discouragements. A fair field and no favour is all that Church Schools ask for, and there is a growing desire in all parts of the country to secure this for them. At the present moment the Education Bill of 1897, which is before the House of Commons, is being most carefully watched by the Society's standing committee, and Churchmen may depend that no opportunity will be lost in securing the best possible terms in the forthcoming legislation. No surrender of our existing rights to teach fully all that the Church teaches is possible; we must keep the appointment and dismissal of teachers in our own hands; but, subject to these leading principles, there are many possible methods under which a substantial and satisfactory settlement of the education question may be arrived at. For this the Society will continue to work with unabated vigour.

But, besides its labours in connection with the political situation, there is a direction in which the work of the Society is annually increasing. To quote the words of the last annual report: "The Society is the great agent of the Church of



England in watching and protecting the interest of Church Schools. School managers obtain from the officers of the Society, free of charge, advice on any points of difficulty which arise in the course of their work. . . . The Society is ready at all times to supervise the drawing up of trust deeds, to give the best legal advice obtainable on the interpretation of trust deeds, and of the now numerous Acts of Parliament which affect school managers; to organize resistance to proposals to divert property held for Church School purposes to other uses; and generally to defend and extend the machinery of the Church for the religious education of the children of the poor."

Immediately below the Society's office in Westminster is the Society's depot for the supply of school books and apparatus at the lowest possible price consistent with good quality. The Society is constantly publishing new books, and keeps ahead of all educational wants. The sales amounted in 1895 to £51,483, but it should be remembered that no profit is sought from these sales, and any surplus that remains after defraying working expenses is applied to the reduction of prices.

It remains only to add that it is much to be desired that Churchmen in all parts of the country should not merely realize what the Society has done, but also what it is doing, and should continue to use it as the servant of the Church for doing God's work amongst the lambs of the flock.

J. S. BROWNRIGG.



## ART. II.—PATIENCE, HUMAN AND DIVINE.

### A DEVOTIONAL PAPER.

**H**OW many times in the history of the world has one portion of the history of Job repeated itself! The rich man rejoices in the abundance of his possessions with a happy sense of security, and in the time of his wealth he is piously devoted to the service of God. Then, metaphorically, if not literally, he is given over into the power of Satan, who attacks him with great wrath because he knows that he has but a short time in which to do his worst. Job's troubles come not singly, but in shoals: all the fruits of his labours disappear, all that he loves best is taken from him, nothing seems left to him for which life is worth living. If he looks backward, it is but to realize that "sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things"; if he looks onward, nothing is before him but black darkness, which hides the very face of God itself.