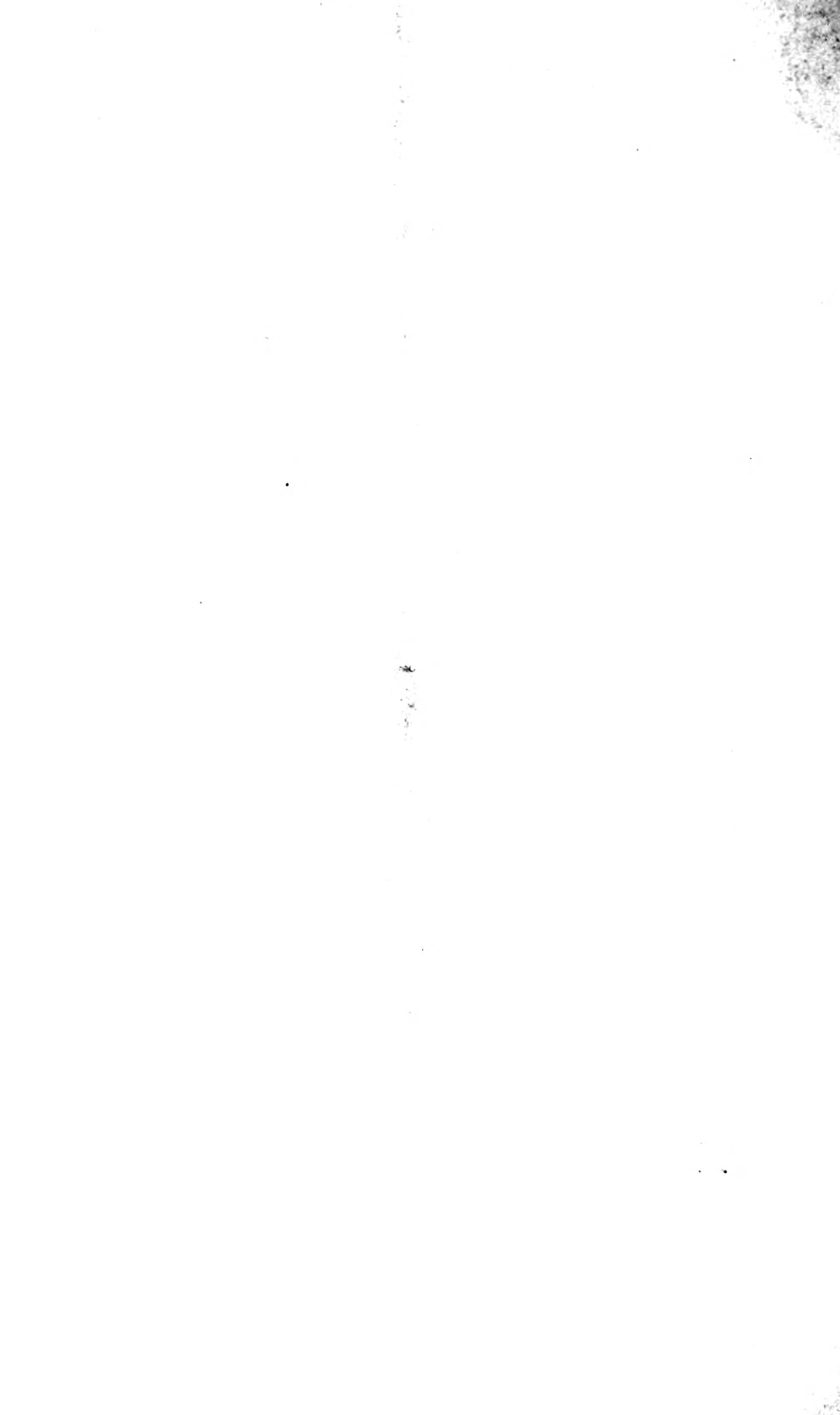




LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS





9

THE
CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IN 1866.

SPEECHES

DELIVERED IN

THE CHAPTER-HOUSE OF YORK MINSTER,

ON THE 13TH OF OCTOBER, 1866,

BY

JOHN GELLIBRAND HUBBARD, M.P.,

AND

THE REV. GEORGE TREVOR,

CANON OF YORK.

LONDON:

JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,
AND NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCLXVI.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY JOSEPH MASTERS AND SON,
ALDERSGATE STREET.

THE CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IN 1866.

A VERY numerous meeting was held in the Chapter-House of York Minster on Friday the 13th of October, 1866. The spacious hall was filled to overflowing, and large numbers were unable to find seats.

The Hon. and Very Rev. the DEAN OF YORK presided, and having congratulated the meeting on the large and influential assemblage gathered to consider so important a subject as the progress of popular elementary education, he called on Mr. Hubbard, Member of Parliament for Buckingham, to move a resolution.

Mr. HUBBARD said : Mr. Dean, No subject has been considered at this congress, fraught with more important consequences than that to which you have now invited the attention of this crowded audience. The following is the motion which I shall venture to submit to them :—

“That a deputation be appointed to wait on the Prime Minister and represent to him the serious injury to popular education which had resulted from the practice of the Education Department of the Privy Council in making the Conscience Clause a condition of Building Grants.”

I can assure this meeting that my opinion expressed in this resolution has not been hastily formed, but is the result of long and careful study of all available evidence, and especially of the Reports of the Select Committee on Education, the last of which has been recently printed, and I purpose to present to their notice such portions of that evidence impartially collected as may justify their affirming the resolution which I propose.

In proposing the Educational Grants for 1866 in the House of Commons, the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education remarked that the sum of £18,880, then proposed for Building Grants was £9,400 less than the grant for 1865.

The retrospect may be profitably carried further. The Building Grants for Elementary and Normal Schools, actually paid by the Education Department for the last seven years have been as follows:—

1859	. . . . .	£137,000
1860	. . . . .	118,000
1861	. . . . .	106,000
1862	. . . . .	66,000
1863	. . . . .	42,000
1864	. . . . .	28,000
1865	. . . . .	19,000

Why (is the instinctive inquiry) Why this rapid and progressive decrease? Is it that the country is thoroughly supplied with schools, or that the country has become indifferent to the spread of education and that school promoters have ceased their efforts?

The Reports of the National Society for the Education of the Poor, may answer this inquiry, and show that, while the Church Educational organ increased the number of its grants 25 per cent., and the amount of its grants 100 per cent., the State Education Department decreased its grants 90 per cent.

The number and amount of school grants made by the National Society in the last seven years have been as follows:—

1859	Grants 146	£3,248
1860	„ 146	5,348
1861	„ 193	6,670
1862	„ 148	4,195
1863	„ 149	4,247
1864	„ 173	4,893
1865	„ 184	6,590

From a comparison of these tables, it is obvious that the decrease in the Building Grants of the Education Department is due, not to any relaxation in the voluntary efforts of school pro-

motors, which are still far from having satisfied the need of the country, but (partly to the previous rate of 4s. per foot having been decreased to 2s. 6d. in 1861, yet) mainly to the repelling power of the Conscience Clause, which in most cases is presented to the acceptance of Church school builders as a condition of their receiving the share of the public grant to which they are entitled.

The country has been already abundantly supplied with controversies and communications touching the Conscience Clause. The publication of the Evidence on Education, taken in 1865; by a Committee of the House of Commons, assisted in disclosing its origin, purpose, and character; but the recent Report of the Committee re-appointed in the last session, presents us with additional information upon this most important subject which it would be culpable to neglect.

The evidence of 1865 contained a vast deal of discussion upon the true construction and legal force of this Conscience Clause. This question at all events is now decided, and the interpretation of the Clause may be stated authoritatively in the words of Mr. Bruce, the late Vice-President of the Education Department, who prefaced a question (5079) to Mr. T. Gee, on the 4th May last, with the information, that "as a matter of fact according to the interpretation which is put upon the Conscience Clause by the Committee of Council, in every Church school with a Conscience Clause, the parent has the power of withdrawing his child from any portion of the religious teaching, even from the exposition of the Bible lesson, if he chooses to do so." And again, he asks (5088) "Does it not appear from the Conscience Clause interpreted by the Department, who may be fairly supposed to understand it, you have a power to withdraw the child from all religious teaching." And he answers the question himself (5089) "I state that you have the power."

The dilemma in which this interpretation of the Conscience Clause places its authors by showing that they have been insisting upon secular education as the condition of a grant to Church schools, is obviously felt by Mr. Lingen, who, under the able handling of Lord Cranborne, in vain endeavoured to reconcile the recognition of a right to secular instruction on the part of

all who asked for it, with the provision appended to the Clause, that “*it shall not otherwise interfere with the religious teaching of the scholars, as fixed by these presents,*” (3439)—and to the searching inquiry “how in your mind, would the two operations “be combined by the clergyman who remained charged with the “religious teaching of Dissenting scholars, while he was bound “not to teach them the doctrines of the Church of England?” Mr. Lingen answers, (3443,) “it would be entirely in his “hands so long as he and the parents of those children *agreed* “upon the matter; it might vary conceivably in every individual case.”

“Agreed,” indeed! Mr. Lingen is here sketching not the operation of the Conscience Clause which implies *disagreement*, but the liberal, wise and judicious course spontaneously pursued by the clergy who are unfettered by a Conscience Clause. Mr. Lingen admits (3446) that a clergyman is, by the Conscience Clause, placed under no obligation to teach a mutilated religion. He affirms (3450) that he would have *felt entire confidence* if a clergyman in saying to the Dissenting parent, “Your “child may come to the secular lessons of my school, but under “the conditions which you impose I can have nothing to do with “his religious instruction.”

Of the legal construction of the clause as now laid down by Mr. Bruce and Mr. Lingen there can be no further doubt. It gives a title to a secular education to all who choose to ask it at the hands of such school managers as have been unwary enough to admit the Conscience Clause into their trust deed. Remembering the repeated and unequivocal declarations of Parliament that National aid should be given only to such education as comprehended instruction in Religion, it is not surprising that the Education Department should wish to escape from or conceal a result so contrariant to the national will (3447, 3451—3453, 3482, 3483.) Their object would be attained by inducing the National Society either to sanction the Conscience Clause, and so veil its irreligious character—alter its terms of union so as to delude school builders with the idea that they can consistently serve two masters (the Church and the Education Department)—or better than either, that they should get their charter altered and destroy the foundations of faith

and doctrine on which the society have ever stood. But what inducement have the National Society to act upon either of these suggestions? They have it from Mr. Lingen's mouth, (3453,) "that supposing a trust deed to provide that the clergyman with an appeal to the Bishop shall have the superintendence of the religious instruction of the children, there is nothing in such a deed which in absolute terms is inconsistent with exempting a certain number of children whose parents desire it from the religious instruction which is to be given in the school. . . ." "But if in addition the trust deed puts the school in union with the National Society, it really is the same thing as if those terms of union were set out in the deed, and then it is necessary to consider whether those terms require that every child shall receive certain specific religious instruction. That is the point to which the Committee of Council has endeavoured to call the attention of the National Society, in the hope of coming to an understanding upon it."

Union with the National Society is here distinctly recognized as the only barrier to the gradual establishment of a system of education from which every particle of religious instruction might be eliminated; and when Mr. Lingen claims for a Conscience Clause the precedent afforded by trust deeds prepared with a Conscience Clause in 1839 for Church schools not in union with the National Society, he only suggests a feeling of thankfulness that few, if any, schools have declined union with the National Society, and to be constituted under provisions which would expose them to the obligation of teaching anything or everything but the knowledge of God.

It has been held by the advocates of the Conscience Clause that even though in England it might have been dispensed with, the relative majority of Dissenters to Churchmen in Wales rendered its introduction there an indisputable necessity. The larger portion of the recent Report is occupied with the evidence of witnesses on the state of education in the Principality, and on that evidence I shall now comment.

Mr. HUGH OWEN is chief clerk of the Poor Law Board, and has for many years taken great interest in education in Wales. In 1843, by means of circulars, he invited the attention of many hundred persons to the defective state of education in Wales;

and asked for information and assistance. In October, 1843, he brought the subject before the British and Foreign School Society, and induced them to appoint the Rev. John Phillips as agent in North Wales, with the duty of promoting the establishment of British schools. In 1853 they appointed the Rev. William Roberts to the same office in South Wales. Previous to 1843 there were scarcely any British schools in Wales: there are now more than 300.

The relative numbers of Churchmen and Dissenters in Wales are variously estimated as 1 to 4, or 1 to 5. The property, however, is chiefly in the hands of Churchmen. The Calvinistic Methodists are by far the prevalent sect.

Mr. Owen thinks that the Conscience Clause, which appears to be framed for the relief of a minority, is not adapted to Wales, where those for whose relief it is devised would be largely in the majority. (2860.) He laments the want of harmony between Churchmen and Dissenters; he would make all possible efforts to induce their united action rather than see two schools founded; and suggests some such scheme as this, (2841:)

1. That the management be vested in subscribers of not less than ten shillings per annum.

2. That the parish clergyman be *ex officio* chairman of the committee.

3. That the Holy Scriptures be read and taught daily.

4. That no catechism or creed peculiar to any religious denomination be used during school hours.

5. That the duty of regular attendance at *some* place of worship and Sunday School selected by the parents be urged on the children.

Excellent and honourable are Mr. Owen's intentions from his point of view, but we shall find that Welsh Dissenters generally, though they agree in his rejection of the Conscience Clause, do not concur in the measure he proposes to substitute.

The Rev. J. PHILLIPS, agent to the British and Foreign School Society in North Wales, states, (2617—20:) that to meet the peculiarities of Wales a grant should be made for Church schools, and also for a school on liberal principles wherever a sufficient number—say fifty—children could be supplied to

the smaller school. Where the Church population is too scanty to support a school he would have but one school (2608, 2623) upon liberal, that is, upon comprehensive principles, or in other words, upon the principles of the British and Foreign School Society, which makes them thoroughly and truly National. The school should be managed by a committee elected by the subscribers. The parish clergyman might be a subscriber, and might be elected as one of the committee of management ; but in no other light would he be recognised.

Mr. Phillips repudiates in decided language (2655, 6, 7) the proposition to establish a National school with a Conscience Clause as a substitute for a British school, because although children of Dissenters are exempt from learning them, the Creed and the formularies are taught, and the whole management is in the hands of the Church.

The Rev. WILLIAM ROBERTS, Baptist minister, and agent for the British and Foreign School Society in South Wales since 1855 (4400—4402) “ considers that where three-fourths or four-fifths “ of the population are Dissenters they are unfairly dealt with “ unless they are allowed to participate in the management of “ the schools.”

Mr. THOMAS GEE, a publisher at Denbigh, and a Calvinistic Methodist, is deeply interested in the question of education, and has for some years given great attention to the establishment of schools in North Wales. His evidence is given with a tone of confidence and of conscious authority. Mr. Gee seems to have been the prompter of the body of Dissenters who in the parish of Dyserth conferred with the incumbent, Mr. Watts, upon the provisions of a school to be satisfactory both to Churchmen and Dissenters, each party having previously applied for grants for a Church and British school respectively. The promoters of the British school proposed a scheme unacceptable to Mr. Watts, who offered terms comprehending a Conscience Clause, but (subject to that Conscience Clause) vesting the control of the religious instruction in the incumbent, who was to be *ex officio* chairman of the committee of management, itself elected annually by subscribers of five shillings and upwards. The proposition of Mr. Watts was rejected by the Nonconformists, who, however, built no school, “ for they had no funds.” (4674.)

Mr. Watts, whose project for a Church school had in the first instance been supported by all his parishioners, failed in consequence of the opposition subsequently stirred up, to obtain any grant from the Privy Council, but he built his school without a grant, and it is now well attended, chiefly by Dissenters.

Mr. Watts rejoices in having failed to obtain a grant; for knowing more than he then did, he declares, (5642,) “for my own part I would forego the Building Grant rather than submit to the Conscience Clause as it stands.”

But why did Mr. Gee and his friends reject Mr. Watts' terms? Mr. Gee explains, (4678.) *They objected to the Conscience Clause.* “The Conscience Clause makes the majority subject to the minority, and they considered that as they were the majority they ought not to be made subject to the minority.” (4685) “The governing power of the school throughout is in the hands of the clergyman and of members of the Established Church.”

Mr. Gee is then asked—

“4689. Are you aware that all the doctrines and formularies of the Church of England are equally excluded by the Conscience Clause?”—He replies, “I am aware that they are excluded; but, although they are excluded, so long as the religious teaching is in the hands of a clergyman, and subject to his control, he has the power of introducing doctrines, or of introducing questions which will lead to answers, and those questions may be questions of which Dissenting parents may disapprove.”

Again he is asked whether (since he finds that these unfortunate religious dissensions impede the extension of education in Wales, and constitute a cause of bitterness and bad feeling) he can suggest any remedy?—He replies (4701) “I don't know that you can apply any other remedy; but *give us schools without any denominational peculiarities*; that is, really National schools.”

4702, 3. “You mean, I suppose, giving you British schools?—I fancy that British and Foreign schools are really National schools. . . . I don't know that any fair compromise can be agreed upon; but if we cannot establish un-denominational schools, the present denominational system should be carried

“still further, and grants should be given for the establishment
“of schools in proportion to the number of children which
“Church and Dissenters may have to educate.”

5021. In the case of Llanychan, Mr. Gee considers a Church school with a Conscience Clause, “a constitution which it was
“insulting to offer, and which it would have been degrading
“and humiliating in the extreme on the part of Dissenters to
“accept.” And he repeats, (5096,) “In a case like Dyserth,
“where five-sixths of the population are Dissenters, to offer a
“Conscience Clause to a district of that kind is really insult-
“ing.”

5109. “I really do not see why clergymen should not meet
“on equal terms with Dissenting ministers ; we are not inferior
“to the Church in any sense connected with education, we are
“superior to them ; we do more for the education of the people
“than the Church do, as may be proved by the statistics which
“I have laid before you ; but to place us in a position of social
“inferiority, and to degrade us by giving the grant to the Church
“and putting us under a Conscience Clause, is putting us in a
“position which we will not and cannot accept.” But Mr. Gee, while he asserts the superiority of Nonconformists to Churchmen in Wales alike in numbers, intelligence, and zeal, concurs very heartily in desiring to give fair play to each denomination. He had already suggested, as the only fair solution of the supposed difficulty, that grants should be more liberally assigned both to National and British schools, and he further suggests (5154, 5) that when the denominational minority in any parish is insufficient to support a school, parishes should be grouped. “I would group parishes ; I think that is the best system. You
“would remove from the Church what they consider to be a fair
“ground of complaint, and you would remove from Dissenters
“what they consider to be a fair ground of complaint. I would
“allow parishes to be grouped where the number of children
“were very few, and would let the grants be made in proportion
“to the number of children to be educated alone ; and it should
“be immaterial to the Committee of Council whether they be
“Church or Dissenting schools ; let the same rule apply to all,
“then no section can complain.”

Nothing can be more fair or reasonable than this suggestion,

the ground of which is that where people disagree they should work separately; and how futile, on the other hand, is the attempt to constrain an united action between those who hold antagonistic principles may be inferred from Mr. Gee's replies to a subsequent inquiry. "Supposing the Churchmen and Dissenters of a parish to be equal, and collectively to be too few for two schools, what would you advise then?"—(5157) "I would advise that they should meet on equal terms."

"5158. When you talk of putting them on equal terms, what do you mean?—I would let the school be upon the principle of the *British and Foreign School Society*.

"5160. Do you see any advantage to the nation in a National Church?—No; I think that there is a disadvantage in it; I am a Dissenter.

"5161. Your ideas are based upon the fundamental view that a National Church is an injury to a nation?—Yes.

"5162. And that any national profession of religion is rather objectionable than otherwise?—I think so."

Mr. WILLIAM HENRY DARBY, coal and iron master, near Wrexham, is a member of the Society of Friends, and has liberally assisted the establishment of schools. "He thinks (4777) that the British and Foreign system is a comprehensive unsectarian system, suitable for Church and Dissent; but the National system seems fit only for Church persons."

4836. Looking at the population of Wales in matters of religion, his opinion is "that no national assistance ought to be given to any but the schools on the British and Foreign system, as a system in which all can fairly unite." "The religious teaching of the British and Foreign schools is undenominational and unobjectionable," (he thinks) "except, perhaps, to Roman Catholics—except, perhaps, also to Jews, and possibly to Unitarians." (4840, 4874.)

4861. Mr. Darby objects to the Conscience Clause in Church schools, because it "*requires Dissenters to make an objection.*" He would say (4863) "That in Wales they should support an undenominational system, and that is what he considers the British and Foreign system."

The Rev. DAVID CHARLES, Calvinistic Methodist minister in Monmouthshire, concurs in this character of the British and

Foreign schools. 5707. "Generally the Bible is taught."
 "There is no catechism taught." 5753. "A chapter of the
 "Bible is read." 5754. "There would be no exposition. I
 "have never known any exposition given in any British school
 "at all."

Mr. Charles joins the protest against the Conscience Clause. If a Church school were offered with a Conscience Clause, a mixed committee of Churchmen and Dissenters, and the clergyman as chairman, the Dissenters, if in a majority, would refuse it. (5748.) "They would feel it to be degrading to themselves
 "to be subject to the Conscience Clause." 5750. "They would
 "soon come out, and have a school of their own, rather than
 "submit to a Conscience Clause."

Mr. EVAN DAVIES was for some years principal of a Training College on the principles of the British and Foreign School Society, and is intimately acquainted with school work throughout South Wales.

Mr. Evan Davies being asked (5862) whether he considers a Church school, even with a Conscience Clause, a proper school for the rural parishes in Wales, replies—"I do not." "I think
 "no school would be satisfactory to the Welsh Dissenters in the
 "management and control of which they were not recognised as
 "having a full share and right."

Mr. Davies' evidence concludes as follows :—

"5937. Is it your own view with regard to this question that
 "we should put out of consideration everything in the nature of
 "a national Church?—I think so.

"5938. Or anything like a national profession of religion?—
 "I would not say that.

"5939. How would you maintain a national profession of
 "religion by putting all denominations on an equality?—I
 "should say that we must put aside a preference to the national
 "Church.

"5940. Is it consistent with your views that there should be
 "an organ, by which the nation, as a nation, should profess any
 "form of religion?—It is not consistent with my views.

"5941. *Mr. Liddell.*] You stated, did you not, that the
 "system which would be most acceptable to Dissenters in Wales,
 "would be one in which the religious instruction was left en-

“tirely in their hands?—I think so. I mean that they should not be compelled even to give the slender certificate which is required now; not that they would prefer a secular education, for they would not prefer it.

“5942. Appealing to your great fairness (for I consider that the way in which you have expressed your views is thoroughly fair), do you think that that is a system to which any conscientious clergyman could agree?—Many clergymen would, *but I have no doubt that a sound Churchman, or a High Churchman, would object to it*, and that appears to me to be the reason why co-operation is hopeless.”

The Rev. Dr. THOMAS PRICE, Baptist minister in Glamorganshire, well acquainted with the educational condition of both North and South Wales, considers, (3336,) “That a Church school with a Conscience Clause is not adapted to Wales. A large number of the Welsh people would not send their children to such a school, they would rather not send them to school at all.” (3382, 3383.) “Of course the Nonconformists would prefer the British system pure and simple,” but to meet the views of all parties he would recommend “one school with a Conscience Clause and one open committee entirely elected by the subscribers (of say 2s. 6d. upwards.)” (3387.) “The committee being elected would have a voice in the kind of religious teaching to be adopted in the school, and I think *that* would be so simplified that it would be confined to the *reading of Scripture.*”

The ambiguous complexion of such a school as here suggested seems to have struck Mr. Bruce, who asks :

“3418. I did not clearly understand, when you spoke of a Church school with an open committee, in what respect the Church school bore a Church character?—I scarcely see that there is much of Church or Dissent about it, when the committee is open; that is supposing that the whole of the committee would be elected, chairman and all. The fact is, that in Wales we do not speak so much of a Church school or a Dissenting school. When we talk of a British school, we simply talk of a school, we have no religious element at all introduced, further than the reading of the Scriptures, we make no religious matter of it.”

I have presented briefly, but I believe faithfully, the evidence given in the Nonconformist interest, I now turn to that of Churchmen.

The Rev. JOHN GRIFFITH, Rector of Merthyr Tydvil, has a Church school in union with the National Society. There is of course no Conscience Clause. The Catechism is taught to all the children, numbering 800. Of these 800, 700 at least are the children of Dissenters, who know that the children learn the Catechism, but never object to their doing so. The average Sunday attendance at Church, which is quite voluntary, is about 100.

It is his opinion that the majority of the clergy in Wales have a strong objection to the Conscience Clause, but he thinks it desirable that the feeling should be overcome, and the Conscience Clause be introduced in the National Schools in Wales.

The Rev. E. B. SQUIRE, has been twenty years Vicar of Swansea. (3863—3865.) He teaches the Catechism (excepting the three first questions) to all the children in his schools. In fifteen years 12,402 children passed through his schools, and in *one* instance only had an objection to the Catechism been raised. He has ascertained that from seven other schools in South Wales with an average attendance of 1,346, only *two* objections proceeded during a long period of years.

3941. Mr. Squire says that "the clergy in Wales as a whole "are decidedly adverse to the Conscience Clause."

The Rev. R. J. BINNS is an Inspector of Church schools in Wales. He supposes that the clergy in Wales would generally be satisfied with the adoption of the *principle* of Church schools with Conscience Clauses. Many of them would, he thinks, feel it a disadvantage to be cut off from the National Society by the adoption of the Clause; but opinions are divided—many are in favour of the Clause, and others are adverse to it. (4252, 4253.) Mr. Binns admits (4251) "that he knew very little of the working of the National Society."

The Rev. ALEXANDER STAMMERS has for twelve years acted as organising Master of Church schools in Wales, and is intimately acquainted with the state of education in the whole of South Wales and the county of Monmouth. During that period he

says: "It has been a subject of conversation between myself and the managers and teachers of schools—how to meet the religious difficulty which impedes the progress of education in Wales and (4897) the conclusion to which we came in every instance was—that the religious difficulty was one not felt at all by the parents of the children; but was one put forth by other people outside the schools, who rather make it theoretically."

Mr. Stammers is asked:

"4903. Can you state what has been the general practice of the clergy and managers of Church schools throughout that large area as regards the treatment of the children of Dissenters?—Generally speaking, with the exception of a very few schools indeed, the children of Dissenters are treated with the greatest possible liberality; wherever the clergy and the school teachers are aware that children have not been baptized, which is the case with a very large proportion of the Welsh people in the district of which I speak, they are not in the habit of putting those questions to them which would involve their saying that their godfathers and godmothers did that for them which they did not do. A very large proportion of the clergy make the basis of their teaching to consist of the Bible, combined with the Creed, the LORD'S Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the explanation of those Commandments, and the explanation of the LORD'S Prayer; that, in fact, is our own practice at the school of which I am officially the superintendent; it is the basis of our own instruction; I found it so when I went there, and during nearly eight years that I have been there I have seen no reason for altering it. . . ." (4908.) "The attendance at the Sunday Schools and the attendance at Church is in almost every instance with which I am acquainted perfectly voluntary."

In the whole diocese of Llandaff, Mr. Stammers knew only of two schools where the Conscience Clause was embodied in the trust deed. (4928.) "*Decidedly the great majority of the clergy are opposed to the adoption of the Clause.*" (4931.) "Judging from his own experience, Mr. Stammers thinks that the establishment of Church schools throughout Wales would not be distasteful to the parents of the children who might be expected to attend them." (4945.) While on the other hand

the clergy could not concur in the establishment of British and Foreign schools, the teaching of which they could not accept as being really religious teaching. (4946.) The character of the religious teaching in the British schools is very defective. The results of the Monmouthshire prize scheme for 1861—5 shows that 40 per cent. of the children in Church schools obtained prizes against 12 per cent. of the children in British schools, and that each prize in a Church school was worth 15 marks, and each prize in a British school 11 : the result indicating, as the value of the religious teaching, 100 in Church schools relatively to 22 in British schools. (App. 4.)

The Rev. GILBERT HARRIS, Rector of Gelligaer in Glamorgan-shire, a parish of 6,000 souls, has been fifteen years interested in the education of the poor. In his parish school, (5305,) the children's attendance at Church or at the Sunday School is voluntary, the Catechism is taught, but in the case of any unbaptized child the first three questions are taught generally thus : "What are children made in their baptism? What are the promises which godfathers and godmothers make?" No objection has been raised by Dissenters or others to the teaching of the schools. (5313.) *The objections to the Conscience Clause in Wales are very general, almost universal.* (5358.) "The endeavour to enforce the Conscience Clause is retarding and will continue to retard the establishment of schools. The only solution of the difficulty is that the Clause should never be insisted on." (5414.)

Sir THOMAS PHILLIPS has been ten years a member of the committee of the National Society; he originated the Welsh Education Fund in 1846, has been the promoter and manager of important schools in Wales, and is personally conversant with the progress and state of education in the Principality. It is to be regretted that Sir Thomas Phillips was not the first instead of being nearly the last witness examined. His testimony to the school management required by the rules of the National Society would have saved much time to both questioners and witnesses. Sir Thomas Phillips declares that the terms of union with the National Society do not require the Catechism to be taught to all the children in a school—do not require the attendance of all the children at Church or Sunday School—do not

require the exclusion from the school of unbaptized children. (5462, 5468.)

Sir Thomas Phillips cited on these points from the letter of the Secretary of the National Society addressed to the Colchester School Committee, in December, 1860, the following words:—
“In the opinion of the Committee, the terms of union which relate to the religious instruction in schools are so framed as to allow the clergyman a fair liberty in the application of them to the several children, and also to enable the same clergyman, or successive clergymen of the same parish, to make alterations in the practice of the same school, so as best to adapt it to the varying wants or circumstances of the place, due regard being always had to an honest conformity with the purposes for which the society was incorporated.”

Sir Thomas Phillips, in a school which he had himself founded in Wales twenty years ago, framed rules which were to secure a religious education for all the children (5538) “by giving the master a discretion with regard to his teaching, the Catechism is either entirely taught or taught in parts,” (5488;) but Sir Thomas Phillips well explains the broad distinction between a system which, to ensure a religious education, vests a discretionary power in the master, and a system which, through the Conscience Clause, excludes religious education by vesting the discretionary power in the parent. He is asked, (5494,) Why “should the objection be greater if a Conscience Clause were in the deed, than if it were not in the deed, the liberal practice prevailing?—In the one case (and whether it is right or wrong I am not now saying, but that I apprehend is one of the strong objections felt to the Conscience Clause by the clergy at all events,) the discretion is with the clergy; they are to judge of the fitness of excusing a particular child from the teaching; they have to take all the surrounding circumstances into consideration, and they come to the conclusion that it is not expedient to force, as it were, the teaching upon that child. On the other hand, the choice is entirely with the parents, and the clergyman is required to abstain from teaching, whatever may be his own sense of duty on the subject.”

The following question (5495) I would gladly omit, conveying as it does, an unmerited and ungenerous insult to the clergy, but for the excellent reply.

“5495. Then the general effect is, that where there are a great number of Dissenters, the principle of the Conscience Clause is acted upon by the clergy, but that where they are few and weak, it is not so generally acted upon?—I cannot tell you that it is where they are few and weak that it is not acted upon. For instance, I will give you the case of a town in my own neighbourhood. The school has existed for the last twenty years; I was active in its erection. The Catechism is taught there to all the children, unless there are objections made to it. These objections are very rare, if any. I believe that there may have been a very few made to it. The deed is a Church deed, and there is no Conscience Clause in it. In that town there are seven Dissenting chapels. There was a British school when the Church school was established; but there is no British school now; the school building, I believe, has been sold. There is a Church school. The Dissenters are wealthy, and have abundant means, if they thought it right or convenient, or if they desired, to provide a British school, but they do not do it, and the children, so far as they obtain education, are educated at those Church schools.

Sir Thomas Phillips, in answer (5497, 8) desires “most strongly to bring before the Committee his belief that no practical grievance is felt by Dissenting parents with the conduct of Church schools. Those who proclaim the grievance say that a Conscience Clause would be no remedy for that grievance. It is another state of things they ask the state to establish, viz. a school in which all religious opinions shall be represented in the school and upon the Committee of Management.”

“You ask me whether no grievance exists with respect to Church schools in the exclusion of Dissenters from the management of the school?” My own opinion decidedly is that, “if there be anything in which you want quiet tranquillity, harmonious co-operation, and all absence of bickering, it is a school: and it would be impossible in my judgment (with the strong elements of contrariety which prevail in religious questions) to establish that state of things if you once admitted the members of various religious bodies to the government of a single school.”

In corroboration of this opinion of Sir Thomas Phillips, I

interpolate an incident comprised in the examination of the Rev. J. B. Binns.

“4298. Do you know any cases of a mixed committee of management, composed of Churchmen and Dissenters?—Very few; and of those one or two cases which I do know, one in particular has not worked well; that is in North Wales.

“4299. In what way has it not worked well?—The clergyman was anxious to establish his school on the most liberal possible basis, and therefore he agreed to allow a mixed committee of Dissenters and Churchmen to have the management of the school. When I came there, the first time the school was inspected, I found the whole of the committee assembled, and immediately an argument was commenced, and a dispute arose about the very title of the school on Form 9 of the Government Forms, which was required to be filled up by the managers in the corner, at the top of the first page of that form. It was proposed that it should be called a Church of England school, and one member of the committee immediately rose and said, ‘I object to that title in the case of this school,’ and they would not settle the difference between them; and the clergyman at last came forward and said, ‘Well, I propose one of two things; either that we Church people shall withdraw from the school on condition of your paying back what we have contributed, or we will pay back to you what you have subscribed, and you shall let us have the management of the school.’”

Sir Thomas Phillips reminds the Committee (5475—9) that the Wesleyan School Committee have declared that their community will never consent that the teaching of religion in their schools shall be subject to restriction.

Effectively there is no Conscience Clause in the deeds of Wesleyan Schools, and Sir Thomas Phillips remarks, (5479,) “This shows that the indisposition to dispense with religious teaching is not peculiar to the Church, but that the inconvenience would be felt, and is protested against by another very distinguished and important religious community.” Sir Thomas Phillips might have strengthened his argument by mentioning that the Roman Catholic schools are also free from the anomalous vexation of a Conscience Clause.

Sir Thomas Phillips' advice is "not to attempt to combine the heterogeneous elements of Church and Dissent in the same school." (5499.) That the State should look only to the state of things which now exists, and should assist the building of a school, whether the promoters be Churchmen or Dissenters according to the number of children who it can be shown would receive instruction in the one or the other. (5500—5.) Every word of Sir Thomas Phillips' evidence deserves a careful consideration, and I regret that I cannot avail myself of it more largely in this review of the subjects he so ably discusses.

Having exhibited first the Dissenters' and then the Churchman's view of the education question in Wales, I will now examine the official opinions of the same subject.

Mr. JOSEPH BOWSTEAD is H.M. Inspector for South Wales of "Protestant schools not connected with the Church." (3012.) "It is no part of his duty, and he is expressly forbidden to examine into a report upon the religious teaching of the schools under his inspection." (3095, 6.)

"The Wesleyan is the only denomination which does not unite with the rest in the support of British and Foreign schools when they can get schools of their own." (3198.)

"Their schools are supported entirely by Wesleyans, and they generally teach to those who like to learn it the Wesleyan catechism, but they are open to all, without compulsory teaching of the catechism." (3196.)

Mr. Bowstead is asked—

"3102. You have stated that in your opinion no scheme could be invented for securing the harmonious co-operation of Churchmen and Dissenters in the management of schools in Wales. What is your cure for the existing difficulties?—I confess that I should recommend the Government to give up the building grants altogether, and allow the initiative of schools to be taken by parties upon the spot."

"3245. The Dissenters do not consider the Conscience Clause enough for Wales; it entirely excludes all Dissenters from being managers of the schools: they are fond of managing their own affairs, and would like to have a voice in the management of the schools."

“3247. He has no doubt of the feeling of Dissenters upon that point.”

Mr. Bowstead some time since communicated with the leading men of various (Dissenting) denominations, and who were authorities on the subject of education, suggesting to them as a compromise the plan adopted by Lord Dynevor—viz. a Church school, the managers of which might, by election of subscribers, be either Churchmen or Dissenters, but providing that the clergyman, and at least two other Churchmen, be on the committee, . . . and they unanimously rejected any compromise. (3284—6.)

The Rev. J. P. NORRIS, Canon of Bristol, and formerly School Inspector, deposes, (1850,) “That the attempt to impose the “Conscience Clause is seriously hindering the improvement of “schools by Government aid.”

“1864, 5. The Conscience Clause, as it now stands, is impracticable; and if so construed as to exempt the child from “all religious teaching whatever, the consequence would be that “the clergy would withdraw their schools from inspection all “over the country.”

“1870. I would add to my former answer, the chief reason “why a clergyman values his school and is willing to devote so “much of his time, and possibly of his purse, to his school is, “that it is an instrument for doing his ministerial work; that he “finds it a very valuable instrument for fulfilling his ordination “vows, and that if you embarrass him in his Scripture lessons, he “would rather disengage himself from the connection with the “Council Office altogether.

“1871. But would not the embarrassment be unnecessary “if the objecting child, who would be a very rare individual, were “withdrawn?—No, he would not feel clear that that would relieve “him from the embarrassment. The same parent who objected “to the doctrine conveyed in the Scripture lesson might object to “morning prayers, or to grace before meat, or to prayers in the “evening, or even to the method of enforcing the discipline of the “school. The religious element penetrates a school at all points, “and you cannot tear it out without lacerating your school alto- “gether; and the clergy feel that so strongly, that I am sure that “they would not consent to the insertion of the word ‘doctrine,’

“ which might be discovered in the prayers, which might be discovered in the discipline, which might be discovered by a vexatious parent in a hundred ways besides the special Scripture lesson.”

“ 1868. . . . The Conscience Clause, which I myself should gladly accept, and which I believe almost four-fifths of the clergy would accept, would be a Conscience Clause to this effect : that any parent requiring it in writing, might have his child exempted from attendance at Church, or at the Sunday School, or from the Catechism lesson. That, I conceive, would be practical ; I mean that it would raise issues which a court of law could deal with.”

The compromise suggested in the reply to question 1868, seems to me somewhat inconsistent with the opinions expressed just before and just after.

The Catechism lesson contains no doctrine that may not be taught through another medium, and the clergyman who surrenders the Catechism at the parents' bidding, either practises a deception on the parent, or surrenders a portion of his own ministerial charge.

The Rev. W. H. BELLAIRS, a school inspector, is in favour of the general adoption of a Conscience Clause. (2187.) But what that clause should be, does not appear.

Mr. LINGEN (3502) “ thinks it would be a great pity to abandon the building grants. He thinks the building grant is exceedingly valuable. (3505.) He looks upon the Conscience Clause chiefly as a means of extending the building grants, (3510,) which are even more important for the purpose of keeping school promoters in the right path in the matter of building than for the aid they render them.”

Mr. Lingen admits (3475) that “ the unsettled state of the Conscience Clause acts prejudicially upon the spread of education in the rural districts.” 3544. “ If Parliament said once for all that there should be no Conscience Clause, I might regret that very much, but still I think that would be better than a merely unsettled state. I would rather have it decided in the negative than that it should remain merely unsettled.”

Once more I must refer to the Report of 1866. Mr. Bruce is questioning Mr. Lingen.

“3546. You have heard, in the course of this discussion on the Conscience Clause, a great many hypothetical and preliminary objections to the Conscience Clause, have you not?—Yes.

“3547. Has the fulfilment of any of the prophecies of evil, which have been made so largely, ever been brought to your knowledge?—No, I have never known of a single case.

“3548. Have you ever heard of any practical difficulty whatever arising from the Conscience Clause?—Never.

“3549. Have you ever heard of any vexatious interference with the religious teaching in a school?—I never heard of such a case.

“3550. On the other hand, have cases ever been brought to your knowledge officially, which demonstrated the necessity for a Conscience Clause?—I have no doubt that within the last three or four years, there have been from twenty to thirty such cases if they were all collected, of children who have been either turned out of schools or refused admission into them, *for not attending the Sunday Schools, for instance.* They are very few, as compared with the majority, but still there would be found no doubt that number of cases *if they were looked up.*”

This evidence seems to be thought important, and requires a careful scrutiny. The Conscience Clause, according to Mr. Bruce's own definition, is a bond to give a secular education in a Church school. The school managers to whom it is proposed either scruple to bind themselves wholly to exclude religion from the instruction of certain children or they do not. If they scruple they decline the clause and lose their grant—if they do not scruple, they accept the grant; but then it follows as a matter of certainty that between such school managers and their scholars no practical difficulty can occur. If a vessel is empty you cannot differ as to the colour of its contents. If no religion is taught religious *difficulties cannot* arise. What is far more to the purpose than these queries with their inevitable context is the abundant testimony, that whether there be a Conscience Clause or not Dissenters, when they have the power, very rarely object to Church teaching, whether through the Catechism or any other medium. “Practically”—says Mr. Griffith, speaking of a Church school in Wales, *unconnected with the National Society*—“practically an objection (to the Catechism) is *never made.*”

From the admitted acquiescence of Dissenters in the religious training of the Church, even when they had the power of objection, Mr. Bruce draws one conclusion, I another. Mr. Bruce cites it to prove the absence of any danger to the clergy in accepting the clause. I cite it to prove the absence of any pretext for proposing it.

The practical mischief arising from the Conscience Clause, is to be found not in the schools which have accepted it, but in the absence of the schools which, but for the Conscience Clause, would have been built, but now *are not*.

To demonstrate (3550) the necessity of the Conscience Clause, Mr. Lingen informs us that "within the last three or four years twenty or thirty cases might be found, *if they were looked up*, of children excluded from Church schools for *not attending the Sunday School, for instance*." One million and a half of children are annually educated at Church schools, and seven cases annually might be found of children excluded for reasons unspecified, but depending wholly on the personal decision of the school manager, and not upon union with the National Society, which distinctly disclaims binding their discretion. But assuming for the argument that the exclusion of these children was uncharitable and arbitrary, and was not occasioned by the parents' ignorance and prejudice, how is the grievance remedied or abated by the Conscience Clause? The offending school managers are untouched by a proceeding which can only discourage projected schools, and which to revenge the exclusion of thirty children in four years, has in the four years ending with 1865, decreased its building grants, as compared with 1861, by £270,000, equal to the average contribution of the State to a school provision for more than 200,000 children.

Mr. Lingen, (3523, 4,) thinks that it is an advantage to the Church to conduct one school with a Conscience Clause, rather than share the field with the British and Foreign School Society who would take the Dissenters and leave her the Church children. That, I venture to believe, is not the opinion of this meeting. The Church cannot gain by sitting in chains even on the teacher's chair, and we repudiate any gain which involves injustice to Dissenters.

I sum up the substance of the evidence I have reviewed.

1. The Conscience Clause presented to the acceptance of

Church school builders as a condition of a grant is a *bond to give a secular education on demand*.

2. The Conscience Clause being repugnant to Churchmen has greatly obstructed the progress of school building as indicated by the gradual diminution of the Government Building Grants.

3. Dissenters of the labouring class whether in England or Wales entertain generally no dislike to the religious teaching of Church schools.

4. The Conscience Clause alleged by the Education Department to be especially requisite in Wales, is there rejected by Churchmen, and is repudiated as insulting and degrading by the representatives of the leading Nonconformist sects.

5. In the British and Foreign schools of Wales, supported by the Calvinistic Methodists, Baptists, and Independents, the religious instruction is merely nominal.

6. The means for promoting education in Wales recommended alike by Churchmen and Dissenters is to make grants impartially for any school for which an adequate number of scholars can be secured. (The Education Department have published plans of schools for thirty children.)

7. Denominational minorities, inadequate separately to maintain a school, might be assisted to found a school in combination. And now a few words upon the action of the Education Department, and then upon the duty and prospects of Churchmen touching this question.

I confess that the pertinacity with which the Education Department has clung to this obnoxious and unwarrantable clause in spite of remonstrance, evidence, and argument, has filled me with astonishment. They still, as I understand them, advance three pleas, in justification, and those pleas we will briefly examine.

They allege that an official precedent for the Conscience Clause is to be found in the Minutes of 24th September and 3rd December, 1839, and in an annexed form of conveyance for schools not in connection with the National Society or with the British and Foreign School Society, which does contain a Conscience Clause, but with the prefixed notice, "the Committee do not require the adoption of any of these forms."

The portion of the Minute of 24th September to which Mr. Lingen refers (3470) runs thus:—

“In every application for aid to the erection of a school-house in England and Wales, it must be stated whether the school is in connection with the National Society or with the British and Foreign School Society; *and if this said school be not in connection with either of those societies, the Committee will not entertain the case unless some special circumstance be exhibited to induce their Lordships to treat the case as special.*”

There the Minute of 24th September ends.

In their resolutions of 3rd December, their Lordships intimate that they will give a *preference* to those exceptional schools “which do not enforce any rule by which the children will be compelled to learn a Catechism or attend a place of divine worship to which their parents on religious grounds object.”

Now the obvious meaning of these Minutes is, that schools applying for grants were required to be in union with the National or British and Foreign School Society, as a guarantee for their religious character. That if not so in union, they were to satisfy their Lordships as to the reason why, and receive a grant if at all accompanied with a Conscience Clause. But what has been the recent action of the Education Department? To Roman Catholic and Wesleyan schools, in union with neither society, they have made free grants; and to Church schools in union with the National Society (as required by the Minute referred to) they offer, not a grant, but a Conscience Clause.

Again, an indirect Parliamentary sanction is challenged in the Endowed Schools Act of 1860, which contains almost literally the Conscience Clause now in debate. (3581.) But what were the circumstances under which that Act was passed? It was alleged that some of the endowed schools were constituted in terms which expressed the founder's intentions to benefit their countrymen at large, and did not specifically declare that they were to be schools for teaching the doctrines of the Church of England. Practically the date of endowments reaching back to a period when but one religion was recognised in England, ought to have settled the proposed change in the negative, but the legislature decided that in the absence of express directions

contrary to what the Act prescribes, these schools should be open to Dissenters who, without constraint in any religious matter, would be admitted to the benefits of the school.

The admission of Dissenters with a Conscience Clause as their title was in the case of the endowed schools granted specifically upon the grounds of *doubt* as to the founder's intentions in the matter of religious instruction. Is there any *doubt* of the intentions of the founders of those elementary Church schools upon which the Privy Council have attempted, but in vain, to force the Conscience Clause? There is, and there can be none, and the conduct of the Education Department in pointing to the Endowed Schools Act (which expressly exempts National Schools from the operation of the Conscience Clause) as a precedent for forcing a Conscience Clause on National Schools, is disingenuous in the extreme.

One more plea I have to examine, and it is this—"That as many excellent clergymen admit Dissenters' children without teaching them religion in the words of the Catechism, or taking them to Church against their parents' will," "there can be no reasonable objection to the Conscience Clause being forced upon every school in England." Now even if the education spontaneously given in what are called liberal schools were identical with the education to which the Conscience Clause gives a title, it would be sufficient to reply that liberality cannot be coerced. But the education spontaneously given in Church schools to Dissenters, and the education which the Conscience Clause would secure to them, are essentially different. The Conscience Clause could secure to the Dissenter nothing but a purely secular education. The education given to Dissenters in Church schools unfettered by the Conscience Clause is, (judging from the evidence before us,) a religious education peculiar only in this, that the Church Catechism, in some few instances, is dispensed with, but generally is so taught as to adapt it to the capacity and position of the child. The clergyman, usually the promoter and supporter of a rural school, may feel restrained by conscience from giving a mere secular education, but his sense of duty and his Christian charity alike dispose him to welcome the children of all his parishioners, and even to indulge on particular points the prejudices of parents, if he can do so

without neutralising the effect of the religious training which it is his desire to bestow.

It is much to be regretted that in this argument for the Conscience Clause, shallow as it is, the Education Department should find allies among the clergy themselves. Some of the clergy may have assented to the Conscience Clause without seeing its true meaning and results, and they deserve our pity; others may have thought it right to give a secular education to Dissenters' children who might otherwise obtain none; and even those who differ from their judgment, may appreciate their motives; but when clergy of the Church of England recommend a compulsory imposition of the Conscience Clause, and ascribe the resistance of their brethren in the ministry to ignorance of the subject, to prejudice, or to a struggle for clerical supremacy, I can but regret their own presumption and lack of charity. We are told that if the State builds or liberally contributes to build our schools, the State has a right to make conditions. Now the Privy Council Grants do not exceed one-fifth of the cost of construction, and this fifth is not a gift of the Privy Council, which has nothing to give; it is a portion of the national taxation voted for the promotion of education through an equitable redistribution; and if those Educational Grants are offered on terms inimical to the conscience and religious liberty of applicants they are maladministered.

Far better would it be to abolish the Building Grants, or even the entire administration of the Education Department, than be subject to this injustice. Churchmen would pay less in taxes, and could apply their money to the work of education without passing it through the hands of the tax-gatherer.

We are told by the officials of the Education Department that the Annual Grants should be administered on the same principles as the Building Grants, and that to both the Conscience Clause will be hereafter invariably attached by authority of Parliament if we do not come to terms. In the first proposition I concur, Building Grants and Annual Grants should be made on the same principle—to the second I reply that it is an empty threat; no government and no parliament would desire to paralyze the educational movement which, initiated by the National Society and by the British and Foreign School Society, and until 1860

fairly assisted by the Government Grants, has made such rapid and satisfactory progress. The attempts to force a secular education upon the people of this country have hitherto failed, and the mixed system even in Ireland is gradually but surely ending in a denominational system. It is difficult to understand the inveterate hostility which the Education Department has displayed against the teaching of the Church, and indeed against all dogmatic teaching. If the Catechism, instead of enforcing God's Commandments, and explaining CHRIST'S Sacraments, had inculcated the most immoral and antisocial principles, it could not have been more resolutely branded as unsuitable to a school of English children. To the Welsh people the Catechism is declared to be especially obnoxious, (not by themselves indeed, but) by sectarian leaders and by My Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education: and yet I should have thought that even in Wales it could not injure the rising generation that they should learn in the words of the Catechism to keep their hands from picking and stealing, their tongues from evil speaking, and their bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity. The aggression which we are now considering is but one of many directed against the religious liberties of the country, and in repelling the attack at this one point we are fighting the battle not alone of Churchmen but of Roman Catholics, of Wesleyans, of all, whatever their denomination, who hold a faith and who possess in their religious system the life which faith alone can give. The positions menaced may appear unimportant, but we must be watchful and defend every outwork. For I will not conceal it from you, as I do not conceal it from myself, that a government which should propound a scheme of secular national instruction would meet with a very hearty support from a small but active party which has recently exhibited several notable champions of its principles, and would rejoice to extirpate religious teaching from all the educational institutions of the land. The especial object of their animadversion is dogmatic teaching, or in other words is *Faith*. But I have sufficient confidence in the religious sentiment of the people of this country, and in the fidelity of its enlightened and loyal clergy, to look without a shade of apprehension on the struggle that might occur.

It is proposed that we approach the Prime Minister with a statement of the damage inflicted on popular education by the maladministration of the Building Grants, and with a complaint of the officials of the Education Department, who have pleaded as Advocates in a cause in which they had no clients, and have carried on a vexatious process against religious instruction in the name of plaintiffs who repudiate and disown them. I cannot doubt that our address will be favourably received. Lord Derby is the chief of a Conservative Ministry, and in what is a Conservative Government distinguishable from any other unless in this, that it takes care that in the general assertion of religious rights, the rights of Churchmen be not alone ignored. And be it remembered, that these are rights depending for their exercise not on an infringement of the rights of nonconformists, but on the principles of impartial and equal justice.

And now, Sir, I have done. I have been charged with speaking harshly of those among the clergy who have advocated the Conscience Clause. I trust that I have always spoken truthfully and charitably. Upon those who knowingly and willingly accepted the Conscience Clause I pass no judgment, much as I regret their decision. Of those who, disapproving the Conscience Clause, have succumbed to the temptation of a Grant, I can only think with sorrow and with shame. But the number of these defaulters combined is, I rejoice to think, quite inconsiderable. Of the clergy at large I have said, and this great meeting will by its vote declare if I am right, that they will not banish from their schools the religion which they preach from their pulpits, and that as English Gentlemen and as Christian Priests they will be neither seduced nor terrified to surrender or to compromise the rights of Christian Education.

I beg, sir, to move the resolution with which I prefaced my remarks, and which I now place in your hands.

The Rev. Canon TREVOR then rose and spoke as follows:—
Mr. Dean: In opening these proceedings you reminded us that we have had meetings enough in this city during the last three days to content the most voracious appetite for public discussion. Those of us especially, to whom those meetings have brought the anxiously expected termination of cares and labours sustained with

great and increasing pressure through many preceding months, might now fairly claim to rest and be thankful. Yet this is the second meeting which you have presided over to-day, and encouraged by your example, I am here to renew, and if need be, to increase my humble exertions for the settlement of a question which I am persuaded is not of inferior importance to any one that has occupied the attention either of the Church Congress, or of the supplementary meetings which have been held amongst us.

My honourable friend, who has come from London for the express purpose of repeating here those exertions to which the Church is so largely indebted to him on this question, has favoured us with a clear and comprehensive review of the administration of these grants by the Education Department. He has set before us, necessarily at some length, the evidence taken before the Committee of the House of Commons in the last session of Parliament, and as a question of State policy our whole case might be safely rested on the statement which he has compiled of the decrease in the Government grants, compared with the increase of those of the National Society, since this Conscience Clause began to be imposed. He has shown that while the voluntary contributions of the Church through that Society have increased a hundred per cent., the grants of the State have been gradually diminished by what he justly terms the "repelling power of the Conscience Clause," to no less an extent than ninety per cent. It requires no other argument to prove to a demonstration that this clause has inflicted a very serious injury on the progress of popular education.

In moving this proposition, my honourable friend has treated the question as a statesman and member of Parliament. It will be my business to approach it from the parish clergyman's point of view. I shall throw aside the details of Parliamentary reports and evidence, and endeavour to grapple with the very heart of the evil which alarms us. My first business must be to clear away some of that cloud of ambiguity in which the Education Department, if not intentionally, at least most culpably, has succeeded in involving it. My honourable friend has indeed shown that the legal construction of the clause is no longer in question; it is at last admitted by the Education Department itself that it

creates a title to a merely secular education, in the teeth of the repeated and unequivocal declarations of Parliament that national aid should be extended only to such education as comprehends instruction in religion. That much ambiguity however still remains is shown by the extraordinary scene lately witnessed in the House of Lords. Certainly that question cannot be clear either to Parliament or the country, upon which the Archbishop of Canterbury, after interrogating the Lords President of the Council, expressed a modified approval which further correspondence and explanations induced his Grace publicly to retract.

The difficulty we have to contend with is this—that when we object to the wording of the Clause, we are told the words are not imperative, and if we will only accept the principle the terms may be settled to our satisfaction afterwards. But when we ask what the principle is, we are assured that it is the same which the bulk of the clergy (including myself) have already adopted in admitting the children of Dissenters to our schools without a Conscience Clause. How is it then that we who are favourable to such admissions are found cordially agreed with my friend Archdeacon Denison, who objects to them, in resisting this Conscience Clause? Either we do not know what our principles are, or this clause is an insidious attempt to entrap us into something very different from our principles.

Mr. Lingen tells us that the Clause is intended in the first place “to guard the religious instruction of Church of England schools in its entirety from all interference.” Very kind of Mr. Lingen certainly! And the Church ought to be very much obliged to him for his protection; the more so because the Church neither solicited, nor believes in his competency to bestow it. The Church had already provided for her religious instruction in the terms of union with the National Society, and the Crown had afforded her the protection she desired in the Charter granted to that Society. But it is exactly these terms and this Charter which Mr. Lingen seeks to abrogate in order to make way for his Conscience Clause. Is it not manifest that this clause is at all events a very suspicious boon to the Church? Secondly; Mr. Lingen explains that his clause is intended to “provide for the instruction of the children of Dissenting parents” in the schools of the Church. Here we have

the true and exclusive object of the whole thing. It is confirmed by Mr. Bruce, who defines the clause as intended to give certain securities to Dissenters in the schools, founded by the money of the Church and conducted mainly, in most cases exclusively, by the parish clergyman. I accept this definition; and I say that it imposes an intolerable grievance on the Church and the clergy. What other charitable or religious trust is ever subjected to such conditions? In what other trust of any kind are the founders required to introduce a clause to foster and promote, in their own house, the very object which they have associated to banish and drive away? Suppose I am a parish doctor instead of a parish clergyman, that I conduct a dispensary instead of a school, and that my practice is so beneficial to the population that Government proposes to grant pecuniary aid to extend it,—would any one ever dream of asking me to take in a patient demanding a medical treatment which I conscientiously condemn and reject? A child is brought to me with a broken leg, and I want to set the fracture and administer febrifuges; but the father says, “I am a conscientious homœopathist; I forbid your touching my child’s limb; I conscientiously object to your potions and bandages; I insist upon your treating him only with the little globules in which I repose my confidence.” Should I not be entitled to say in return, “My good man, I have no faith in your globules; I am convinced they are more calculated to kill than to cure; if you want that sort of thing, go where it is practised, but do not be so unreasonable as to expect me to pursue a treatment opposed to all my study and convictions, and which in my view is destructive of the life which I am bound to save.” Now, sir, this is precisely our case—but with one important distinction: that whereas an allopathist may, for aught I know, practise homœopathy without sin, a priest of the Church of England is bound by his ordination vows, not to give securities to dissent, but “with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines,” and “to teach the people committed to his care and charge, with all diligence, to keep and observe the doctrine and sacraments and discipline of CHRIST as this Church hath received the same.”

It matters nothing to my argument, sir, on what description of schools this Conscience Clause is imposed. The liberty

which I claim for my own conscience, and the conscience of Church teachers generally, I freely concede to the ministers and teachers of all other denominations. That was the principle and the practice of the Parliamentary plan, before the Committee of Council hampered it with this clause. Take away the Conscience Clause, and there will again be liberty of conscience to all. In point of fact, however, the clause is intended as a restraint only on the teaching of the Church. This I will show you in a moment; but first let me expose the delusion that it does not affect all our schools, but only some of them. The pretence at present is that it applies only to places where the population is insufficient for more than one school. In point of fact, this was not the case with Llanelly, where the clause was first imposed. In point of principle such a distinction is not possible, and is not intended, to be maintained; it is only the thin end of the wedge. If the principle be a sound one, it will and ought to prevail in all grants, annual as well as building. This was openly declared by Lord Granville before the Committee of the House of Commons, and I entirely agree with his lordship in that proposition. If the principle be, as I contend, bad and vicious, then it ought not to be suffered in any one school. No Churchman has a right to be indifferent because the evil has not yet reached himself.

And now let us observe, sir, a little closer the practical bearing of this clause on the different forms of religion amongst us: these may all be reduced to three classes. There is one form of religion which reads the Holy Scriptures in strict subjection to the teaching of the Church, and recognises no Church but that which owns the supremacy of the See of Rome. The members of this faith believe that no religious instruction can be imparted, and they refuse to attempt any, except in connection with their own doctrine, worship, and sacraments. That is one form of religion in England, and the Committee of Council respect it. They say, "Yours is a religion which we must acknowledge in its integrity, though it is not our own. No Protestant shall be entitled to send his child into your schools, saying, 'Teach me this child the Christian religion, but leave out that little tenet about the supremacy of the Church of Rome.'" The Roman Catholic teacher may answer, "If you come here, you

will submit yourself to the Roman Catholic teaching and religion." Sir, there is no Conscience Clause for Roman Catholic schools.

A second class holds that the true way to salvation is to read the Holy Scriptures in reliance on one's own conscience and private judgment, aided by the light which the HOLY SPIRIT is always willing to impart to the sincere inquirer. This also is admitted to be a religion. It is not the Established religion of the land, but it is the faith of a large and influential portion of our fellow-subjects, of whom I desire to speak always with the esteem and respect which is due to their undoubted piety. The Government does not professedly favour this form of religion more than the other, but it is justly bound to protect it from disturbance in its own schools. Accordingly, there is no Conscience Clause for schools founded on this principle. In the British and Foreign schools, where it is taught and exemplified through all the instruction of the day, no child is permitted to retire from the Bible class, or to except to the authority or interpretations of the teacher. No man can go into these schools and say, "I want the benefit of your teaching for my child, but I do not want him to be taught that, by reading the Holy Scriptures, and by praying to GOD, without any other help or direction, he can find his way to heaven." There is no Conscience Clause for schools founded upon the sole and exclusive right of private judgment.

Next comes the third view of religion; a view which insists upon the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures, vindicates the right of private judgment, and maintains the necessity of absolute submission to the teachings of the HOLY GHOST; but which at the same time combines with that belief a fixed conviction that GOD has established in the world a visible Church, that He has provided an Apostolic succession for its direction, and set apart a particular order of men, in whose hands He has placed the ministrations of the Holy Sacraments, and other means of grace. Now I want to know, sir, why this is not a religion as much entitled to the respect and forbearance of the State as any other? Why are its professors to be treated in a different way from those of the other two? There is one distinction that I know of—that this happens to be the religion of

the Established Church of the country ; that which the State and Parliament declare to be the true religion, which possesses the churches of the land, and whose clergy are invested with public endowments and other recognised and valuable privileges. These are but indifferent reasons for according less favour to its distinctive teaching in its own schools than to all other forms of belief. Yet it is precisely this religion, sir, that my Lords of the Privy Council cannot away with. They can tolerate the Roman Catholic system and the Nonconformist system in their integrity, but when we come to the Church system, my Lords discover that there can be no necessity for teaching little children theological mysteries and propositions of Church government. Why do they not say that to the Roman Catholic school managers, and the managers of British and Foreign schools? Because neither would listen to them for a moment; neither would surrender one tittle of their religious teaching to purchase the grants of the State. And shall the Church of England be the only body to commit this treason against her principles?

Whether or not it be necessary to teach little children articles of belief which want the *imprimatur* of Downing Street, I shall not stop to argue; but this I say, sir, that the Church of England requires all godfathers and godmothers to see that the Catechism, to which the objection chiefly applies, be taught to every baptized child in its opening years, and that her clergy are bound to teach this same Catechism to every person, before he be presented to the Bishop for Confirmation, and admitted to the full privilege of communion. To aid the clergy in this work among the children of the poor is the main object of a National school; and to hinder them by giving security to dissent is the main and sole object of the Conscience Clause. My Lords are not satisfied with the largest concessions a clergyman can make, consistently with his views of religious duty; they want to tie up his hands, and the hands of his successors to the end of time, by a clause in the trust deed, which shall render him liable, as Lord Granville is careful to explain, to a suit in chancery, if he venture to say to all the children in his school what he is bound and sworn to say to all the men, women, and children in his church. Sir, that is the Conscience Clause. It

is a clause which respects all the consciences of the kingdom except the conscience of the Established Church.

To make the injustice more conspicuous, we have the very same form of religion with our own on the other side of the Tweed, and there it is respected by the Government, as Roman Catholics and Nonconformists are in England. There is no Conscience Clause for the schools of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. How are we to account for this intolerance of a religion, simply because it is Established, except on the godless notion, of which it is so hard to disabuse some statesmen, that an Established Church is the creature of the State; that it is bound to accept its inspirations from the occupants of Downing Street, and insist upon no dogma the surrender of which may bring political capital to the leader of the House of Commons? Sir, this may be the doctrine of some modern statesmen, whether Whig or Tory; but sure I am that it is not the condition of the union of Church and State in the British Constitution. It is not a doctrine which you or I, or any of this numerous meeting, will listen to for a moment. If this be indeed the condition of State aid, we shall all be ready to say with the Apostle, "Thy money perish with thee, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter."

But I deny, sir, that the principle of the Conscience Clause ever entered into the terms, on which these grants have been sanctioned by Parliament. I assert that it was distinctly repudiated by both Houses of Parliament and the universal voice of the country, when the Committee of Council was first established in 1839. Lord John Russell carried the Vote at that time by a majority of only two, after solemnly pledging himself to respect the principles and practice of the National Society; and now we are asked to surrender the Charter of that very Society as incompatible with the Conscience Clause. Parliament has never sanctioned any other principle in this country than the denominational one for which we contend. The Conscience Clause is an off-shoot of the Comprehensive scheme which was unanimously rejected when proposed by Lord John Russell in 1839. It is an innovation on the system of public education as administered in this country from that time till about six years ago. It is the chief impediment to the growth and spread of

the system at this hour. The dissenters have no love for it, and the Church can never return to effectual co-operation with the State till it has been swept out of our way for ever.

I will add but one illustration more, and then relieve this numerous meeting from the fatigue of listening, when so many are unable to find seats. We all know the melancholy questions which are now rife amongst us, respecting the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. Suppose a poor man to be the victim of this deadly heresy, and resolved to bring up his child in the same desperate delusion; if he takes him to a Roman Catholic school, and says, "Teach him what you please, only do not tell him that the Bible is the word of God," he will be repelled with abhorrence. His demand will find no better favour in the British and Foreign schools, in the schools of the Scottish Episcopal Church, or in any National school which has not admitted the Conscience Clause into its trust deed. All these maintain and teach to every child without let or stint, the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures and the supernatural origin of the Gospel which God gave by His Son. But let the unbelieving parent come to a school where the Conscience Clause has been admitted, and this monstrous, unchristian demand must be complied with to the letter. He may say, (as I have heard a heathen Rajah say,) "Your Bible is a very good book, and I wish my child to read it, but I will not have him told that it is the word of God, because I conscientiously believe it to be the word of man. Teach him the Ten Commandments, and if you wish, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer; I will not object even to the Catechism, but I insist that not a word be said to him on the doctrine of Inspiration—on a supernatural revelation from God to man." Sir, there is only one class of school in Christendom where this demand could be entertained, and that is, the Church of England school which is held in the iron grasp of the Conscience Clause. It has signed the bond and must pay the penalty, though the life blood of Christianity should be drawn from its heart in the process.

And now, sir, I have done. We have been told to teach the Bible without the mysteries of inspiration and redemption; that is, to build our house on the sand instead of the rock. Sir, I rather think that they who reared this noble roof above our heads,

laboured upon another principle;—they thought little of the clustered pillar, the storied window, or the springing arch, till they had made sure of the foundation on which they were to stand and endure for centuries. Hence it is that we in our distant generation inherit and rejoice in their glorious productions. I hope the time will never come when the Church of England will consent to rest her moral structure on any less certain foundation. Depend upon it, if we yield the Creeds and Formularies of the Church to the plausible theories of a shallow age, though the fabric should seem fair and imposing for awhile, the time will come, and that perhaps very shortly, when the rain shall descend and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon that house, and great will be the fall of it. Sir, I second with all my heart and soul the proposition of my honourable friend.

The motion having been put from the Chair, an amendment was moved by the Rev. T. MYERS, and seconded by the Rev. ARTHUR GARFIT, which after some remarks from Archdeacon DENISON, was negatived by consent, and the motion of Mr. HUBBARD was carried with *one* dissentient voice.







