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ARTICLE

Beresford Hope, the Church of England, and the Elementary Education Act of 1870

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Abstract

Historians have used a number of political, social, and other factors to explain the controversy surrounding elementary education in Victorian Britain. This article underscores the importance of religious motivations. The Act of 1870 – a significant extension of state responsibility – did not end debates about the purpose of education and the pros and cons of government involvement and religious instruction. Prominent among voluntaryists and anti-secularists was A. J. Beresford Hope, whose position offers useful insights into the educational agencies of the Church and the manner in which churchmen responded to new circumstances. This article explains Hope's attitude and uses it to explore some of the causes and consequences of the Act of 1870. What type of schooling best suited the British people? Should it have a basis in something other than religion? How could the Church and its supporters meet the challenges posed by education reform?

Keywords: church schools, elementary education, A. J. Beresford Hope, National Education Union, National Society, secularization, voluntaryism

From 1833 parliamentary grants for elementary education in Britain were distributed through the existing Anglican and Nonconformist voluntary bodies, the National Society and the British and Foreign Schools Society. In 1839 a Committee of the Privy Council on Education was established and in 1856 a new Education Department. By this time a competition had developed between the Church and Nonconformists, with each side trying to influence government policy in its own favor. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 extended state responsibility but did not end controversies surrounding the purpose of education and the pros and cons of government involvement and religious instruction. Defenders of voluntary schooling and enemies of secularization were no less active after 1870 than they had been previously. One of the most prominent was Alexander James Beresford Hope (1820–1887), whose activity offers useful insights into the educational agencies of the Church and the manner in which changing political,

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social, and religious circumstances prompted – along with plenty of defiant rhetoric – uneasy retreat to new lines of defense.

Historians disagree about the Act of 1870 and the rise of state involvement in education. Some think of Britain as abnormal, because foreign governments did more, and did it sooner, and the delay in Britain is blamed on the battle between the Church and Nonconformity. Another view is that policy was determined by Britain's political culture – the belief in small government – and for some commentators this is to be regretted. Others argue that the Act of 1870 was a mistake and that state intervention was unnecessary.[2] Minimizing the 'religious difficulty' and prioritizing instead a traditional suspicion of state power is problematic, because many people disapproved of government involvement for *religious* reasons; and the claim that by 1870 the voluntary system was close to exhaustion and 'even its most ardent advocates' had 'abandoned the cause' can also be questioned, not least with respect to Hope and churchmen of his ilk. The Church's position has sometimes been characterized as stubborn, inflexible, unthinking, and futile. In fact, if it was strident it was also adaptable and nuanced (and, to at least a few scholars, justifiable, and it has also been asserted that the 'religious difficulty' was caused mainly by the extremism of Nonconformists).[3] The notion that by 1870 the Church had almost given way is untenable. Was there really a general agreement that the religious quarrel was 'out of date' and that voluntary effort was inadequate and could do no more?[4] Far from discouraging voluntary denominational education, in some places the Act of 1870 reinforced it. At the end of the nineteenth century there were still twice as many voluntary as state schools.[5] To assume that all this was intentional, however, would be going too far. Education policy making, before and after 1870, exhibits more confusion than coordination and clarity.

Historians will continue to differ on these matters, but what did people at the time think? Hope's perspective repays analysis no less than others that were articulated and acted upon in the Victorian period. By 1870 he was well known as a staunch Anglican of High Church proclivities, very wealthy, a champion of the Gothic revival and member of several cultural and learned societies, a writer, collector, philanthropist, and a respected, if somewhat idiosyncratic, force in the Conservative Party. He sat in the House of Commons for more than 35 years.[6]

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[2] Mary Sturt, *The Education of the People* (London: Routledge, 1967), pp. 3-4, 6, 22-24, 28-30, 66, 250-51, 298-306, 404; Andy Green, *Education and State Formation* (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 208-38; E. G. West, *Education and the Industrial Revolution* (London: Batsford, 1975), pp. 183–208, 245-56; Harold Silver, *Education as History* (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 81–99.

[3] Green, *Education and State Formation*, pp. 231, 235-37, 263, 272, 300, 307; John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen, 1973), pp. 314-15; John Adamson, *English Education, 1789–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 128, 130, 144, 146, 386; S. J. Curtis, *History of Education in Great Britain* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971), pp. 236-38, 241.

[4] Sturt, *Education of the People*, pp. 297-99; J. M. Goldstrom, *Elementary Education, 1780–1900* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972), p. 140. For an early effort at nondenominational compromise, see James Murphy, *The Religious Problem in English Education* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1959). Marjorie Cruikshank, *Church and State in English Education* (London: Macmillan, 1964), demonstrates the abiding grip of the idea that education should have a religious content. Some Nonconformists qualified their opposition to the Act of 1870 with the recognition that henceforth they would not have to concern themselves with *secular* instruction. S. J. D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 220-21. But for churchmen the danger was clear: 'The direct entry of the state into the field of education marked an important stage in the diminution of the national role of the Established Church'. E. R. Norman, *Church and Society in England, 1770–1970* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 208.

[5] Green, *Education and State Formation*, pp. 303-304; Lawson and Silver, *Social History*, pp. 320-21.

Schools to Suit British Society

In parliament Hope contributed regularly to debates on education. One of the clearest statements in the early part of his career came in May 1851, when he opposed a plan for free, compulsory, secular education, paid for by local rates.[7] This proposal, from MP for Oldham W. J. Fox, a radical freethinker who had formerly been a Unitarian minister, was defeated in the Commons by 139 to 49 votes. During the debate Hope upheld 'the absolute necessity … of giving the utmost development to the conscientious sentiments of all religious bodies, consistent with truth and order'. Though secular subjects had to be part of popular education, at the core was religious instruction; and 'purely secular education', the denial of 'a Creator', would be especially damaging if part of a compulsory system. Compulsion would destroy one of the mainstays of British culture, religious toleration. Hope agreed with other MPs that 'it was the duty of Parliament to retrieve the country from the national sin of ignorance', but this had to be done in accordance with 'that good old Anglo-Saxon decentralization principle which had distinguished us from other countries'. Britain's economic policy was organized around free trade, and Hope argued that the same rules should be used for education – liberty and competition – though with a limited role for the state. Government grants should be more generous and easier to obtain. 'Let them levy taxes for education, but let those taxes be applied in numerical relation to the different religious denominations'.[8]

Hope was subsequently dragged into a controversy on the correspondence pages of the *Manchester Guardian* over a scheme for free nondenominational schooling in the municipalities of Manchester and Salford, intended as a model for implementation nation-wide.[9] He also wrote at this time in support of a demand, directed at the government by a High Church group in London, for 'guarantees for the right education of the children of Churchmen'. In 1845, in opposing a proposal for new colleges in Ireland, he had emphatically rejected any system of education with tendencies toward 'ungodness' or 'state-subserviency'.[10]

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[6] He was MP for Maidstone, 1841–52 and 1857–59, for Stoke-upon-Trent, 1865–68, and for Cambridge University, 1868–87.

[7] *John Bull*, May 24, 26, 1851. The Church dominated the voluntary system by this time, with more than 17,000 schools and about 956,000 pupils. The British and Foreign Schools Society had about 1500 schools and 225,000 pupils. Curtis, *History of Education*, p. 208.

[8] *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 3rd series, vol. 116 (1851), cols. 1242-98 (for Hope's remarks see 1263-65).

[9] *Manchester Guardian*, August 30, September 3, 1851. On the Manchester and Salford scheme see S. E. Maltby, *Manchester and the Movement for National Elementary Education* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1918), pp. 82-94; Curtis, *History of Education*, pp. 247-48; Lawson and Silver, *Social History*, p. 276; Adamson, *English Education*, pp. 150-51; W. H. G. Armytage, *Four Hundred Years of English Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 119.

[10] See A. J. B. Hope, *Letters on Church Matters* (London, 1852), pp. 38–39, and his *The New Government Scheme of Academical Education for Ireland* (London, 1845), pp. 5-8.

Along with his public pronouncements, Hope's commitments are confirmed by his private correspondence. For example, with his former tutor at Cambridge William Whewell, who had been elected as Master of Trinity College in 1841, Hope discussed 'sound learning and religious instruction', and, in relation to local liberties and the need to defend institutions from 'state encroachment', the right of the Church and its schools to a high degree of self-government.[11] With another correspondent, historian E. A. Freeman, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and enthusiast for art and architecture, Hope discussed education reform and the possibility of shaping opinion by writing for a daily metropolitan newspaper.[12]

Hope took leadership roles in several educational projects associated with the Church. In October 1857, at a meeting of the Canterbury Diocesan Education Society, he spoke on 'church education' – 'I do not mean merely religious education but the bringing up the children of the poorer and middle classes to perform their duty in every relation of life in the fear of God, and at the same time with a view to their own happiness and the happiness of those about them'. To his audience's approval, Hope went on to say that a denominational system of schooling suited Britain best. Differences had to be allowed and 'fair play and no favor' was the rule to be observed, 'each sect obtaining that share of public support which may be gained by its own exertions'. The Society sought primarily to benefit the rural poor, Hope continued, and he rejected the notion that towns were wretched and wicked while all was well in the countryside. Rural districts were crying out for Christianizing and civilizing influences just as the towns were. Hope ended with some specific recommendations. Since children were only in school for a limited period, they had to be taught what was most useful to them, and this included practical skills as well as moral and intellectual training; and in order to extend opportunity Hope thought that the Society might consider ways to accommodate more half-timers and put on classes in the evenings. *The Times* added a comment to its report of Hope's speech, in which it suggested that, though a High Churchman and a Conservative, he was open to new thinking.[13] To some extent *The Times* was correct, but it erred in supposing that Hope was ready to do away with 'traditional bias' altogether. His attachment to the Church, patriarchy, the countryside, and aristocratic power did not diminish. After his Canterbury speech he developed the same themes a few weeks later in an address to the Maidstone Agricultural Association.[14]

February 1858 saw the Commons pass a motion (by 110 to 49 votes) for a Royal Commission on popular education. Opponents, including Hope, were concerned about the problems likely to result as voluntaryists contended with advocates of state action and the religious content of education was assaulted by secularists. Hope described educational activities in America and Prussia and exhorted MPs to stick to what most suited Britain.[15] He knew there was room for improvement in both the quantity and quality of elementary education. He did not wish for a Commission, however, because he worried about its possible recommendations.

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[11] Hope to Whewell, February 16, 1847, and March 17, 1850, Whewell Papers, Trinity College, Cambridge, Add. Ms. A57 f.24, C87 f.66.

[12] Hope to Freeman, October 21, 1852, John Rylands Library, Manchester, E. A. Freeman Papers, GB133, EAF/1/1/48.

[13] *The Times*, October 13, 14, 1857. On Hope's speech see also *Morning Chronicle*, October 14, 1857; *Lloyd's Illustrated Newspaper*, October 18, 1857; *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, October 22, 1857; *Newcastle Journal*, October 24, 1857; *Hereford Journal*, October 28, 1857.

[14] *The Times*, November 24, 1857; *Bury and Norwich Post*, December 1, 1857; *Aberdeen Journal*, December 2, 1857; *Exeter Flying Post*, December 3, 1857; *Stirling Observer*, December 3, 1857.

Despite these misgivings the Commission was appointed, under the chairmanship of the Duke of Newcastle, to look into 'what measures, if any, are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people'. The Newcastle Commission published its report in 1861.[16] One consequence was that the Education Code of 1862 – designed to cut costs – brought in 'payment by results'. Inspectors would test the performance of pupils in required elementary subjects and schools would gain grants accordingly. Hope was uneasy about the impact of this, especially on the 'quiet village schools' connected with the Church, but the Education Code would not have mattered so much had the Church not faced other difficulties at this time. As Hope pointed out, there was wrangling over the marriage laws, the Prayer Book, church rates, ecclesiastical self-government, *Essays and Reviews*, the craze for emotionalism in preaching, and the scandal at St George-in-the-East in London, where a clash between clergymen and congregants of different parties had led to the temporary closure of the church and the departure of the rector. Taken together, all this amounted to a crisis for the Church. But Hope thought he saw a 'conservative consolidation' in progress. On the Education Code specifically, he suggested that the Church could nullify some of its ill effects.[17]

In March 1859 Hope was prompted by Cambridge friends to clarify his position on current affairs in readiness for a bid to become MP for Cambridge University. In his published remarks he stressed the importance of defending the Established Church while respecting the rights of Nonconformists. He viewed education in this light.

> Under the actual condition of England, the only possible or desirable method of advancing general education is by fostering the exertions of communities and individuals. So long as the State continues to aid their endeavors without any meddling interference on its part, the machine will keep in order. But if the element of compulsion or dictation be introduced, we shall see a war of principles arise that will check all practical progress, and aggravate antagonistic feelings beyond the possibility of reconciliation.[18]

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[15] *Parl. Deb.* 148 (1858), 1184-1248 (for Hope's speech see 1212-20); *Manchester Guardian*, February 12, 1858; *Leeds Times*, February 13, 1858; *Sheffield Independent*, February 13, 1858; *Essex Standard*, February 12, 17, 1858; *Blackburn Standard*, February 17, 1858.

[16] G. M. Young and W. D. Handcock (eds.), *English Historical Documents, XII(1), 1833–1874* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 891-97; Green, *Education and State Formation*, pp. 281-83; Curtis, *History of Education*, pp. 249-67; Adamson, *English Education*, pp. 202-234; Sturt, *Education of the People*, pp. 241-57; Goldstrom, *Elementary Education*, pp. 103-104, 122-31; Armytage, *Four Hundred Years*, pp. 124-26; Lawson and Silver, *Social History*, pp. 272, 282-83, 288-92, 328; W. B. Stephens, *Education in Britain, 1750–1914* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 7-8, 79; and see also the differing opinions in A. J. Marcham, 'Recent Interpretation of the Revised Code of Education, 1862', *History of Education* 8.2 (1979), pp. 121-33; Laadan Fletcher, 'A Further Comment on Recent Interpretations of the Revised Code, 1862', *History of Education* 10.1 (1981), pp. 21-31; and A. J. Marcham, 'The Revised Code of Education, 1862: Reinterpretations and Misinterpretations', *History of Education* 10.2 (1981), pp. 81-99.

[17] A. J. B. Hope, *Two Years of Church Progress* (London, 1862), pp. 3–4.

[18] *Observer*, March 20, 21, 1859; *Lloyd's Illustrated Newspaper*, March 20, 1859; *Morning Chronicle*, March 21, 22, 1859.

In September 1862 Hope spoke again about education when standing for election in the constituency of Stoke-upon-Trent.[19]

In the years before 1870, therefore, Hope's position was robust and straightforward. He favored denominational control, backed by state aid distributed in proportion to the efforts of voluntary bodies. He opposed exclusively secular education and prioritized religious instruction. He advocated not compulsion but decentralization, with minimal government involvement, and he did not consider it urgent to make elementary schooling free of charge. The main point was for pupils to know and respect God, and out of that would come individual and social contentment.[20] There were related assumptions. Good schools produced good character.[21] The education of the young had also to facilitate progress in aesthetic judgment.[22] To instill sound principles in a child was to ensure that in future life that child, armed against error, would be successful.[23]

'Religion Is the Only True Basis'

Hope devoted himself increasingly to the activities of the National Society (established by the Church in 1811 to promote the education of the poor). He addressed its annual meeting of 1861 and in 1863 was elected to its managing committee.[24] He supported a ten-year fundraising drive in the diocese of London, inaugurated in 1863, and wrote to *The Times* to explain that more schoolrooms would be provided and greater use made of all the Church's schools in London. Their hours of operation would be increased. They would serve their communities more effectively, adapting themselves to the different locations and conditions in which they were situated.[25] Later in 1863 he addressed a meeting in Maidstone in aid of the National Society. In the diocese of Canterbury the Society supported 164 elementary schools. Hope said that 'the Society was deserving of their warmest support, not because it advanced education, but because it aided in providing distinctive

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[19] 'Mr Beresford Hope's Address upon the Political Questions of the Day, at Stoke-upon-Trent Town Hall, Tuesday September 9th 1862', British Library, Gen. Ref. 8139 df.17/ 13/ 12-13.

[20] It appears that Hope already knew what the coming challenges for church schooling would be. As Stephen Platten has argued, the main question shifted – from control over education to the very survival of church schools – and the key factor was not so much secularization but the Church's changing relationship with the state. S. G. Platten, 'The Conflict over the Control of Elementary Education, 1870–1902, and its Effect upon the Life and Influence of the Church', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 23.3 (1975), pp. 276–302; N. J. Richards, 'Religious Controversy and the School Boards, 1870–1902', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 18.2 (1970), pp. 180-96.

[21] A. J. B. Hope, *Essays* (London, 1844), p. 90.

[22] A. J. B. Hope, *The Condition and Prospects of Architectural Art* (London, 1863), pp. 23–24.

[23] A. J. B. Hope, *The World's Debt to Art* (London, 1863), pp. 32–33.

[24] *The Times*, June 7, 1861, June 15, 1863.

[25] *The Times*, April 30, May 4, 1863. In one of the pamphlets he published in the early 1860s, Hope was able to commend church schools at greater length. As more children were exposed to church principles, he wrote, there would be educational benefits for the nation and pride in the Church of England would increase, making it safer and more stable. Despite the 'insolence of militant Dissent', most people understood that church schools were useful and necessary. Hope, *Church Progress*, pp. 3, 8, 13, 26.

Church teaching for the children of the poor'.[26] At the Church Congress in Bristol in 1864 he advocated structural changes in church organization in order to maximize resources for important tasks, including education.[27] But the right of parents to withdraw their children from religious instruction to which they objected, the 'conscience clause', was not so palatable.[28] At the annual meeting of the National Society in 1865, Hope took the chair when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Longley, had to leave early. A debate on the 'conscience clause' made plain a disagreement between those who did not wish it to be observed in any school associated with the National Society, and those who advised that flexibility was necessary. The hard-liners prevailed and the meeting passed a resolution against the 'conscience clause'.[29]

With a Conservative government in office from June 1866, friends of church schooling might have hoped to influence policy (though the government did have to be careful, since it lacked a Commons majority). Building grants had been made conditional upon acceptance of the 'conscience clause' and opponents of this – led by Hope; the MP for Buckingham J. G. Hubbard, a wealthy City banker and merchant; and the Archdeacon of Taunton, George Denison – presented a written statement to prime minister Lord Derby laying out their case. Since parliament had agreed in 1833 to fund an education that included religious instruction, and to do so in a manner that respected the equal rights and independence of the denominations, it was clear that the 'conscience clause … destroys the essential character of the Education for which alone grants were originally voted'. Derby agreed that there should be a religious element in all elementary schooling. He added, though, that Nonconformists, as taxpayers, were bound to have an opinion about how tax money was spent, and to be sensitive about schools that received this money but – to their way of thinking – 'excluded' them by teaching church doctrines.[30] For churchmen there were two pressing concerns here: children removed from religion classes might get no religious instruction at all, and those removed from the religious instruction provided in church schools would pass beyond the reach of the Church and its principles. Hope argued that in place of the 'conscience clause' there should be a provision for children removed from schools to receive 'analogous instruction given under the control of the minister at whose ministrations the parents worshipped'. Though this instruction might be non-Anglican, something was better than nothing. The prime minister said he agreed with Hope on one point – that the Church and parliament had to find common ground.[31]

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[26] *Morning Post*, November 19, 1863; *Standard*, November 19, 1863; *John Bull*, November 21, 1863; *Reading Mercury*, November 21, 1863.

[27] *The Times*, October 13, 18, 1864; *Manchester Courier*, October 20, 1864; *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, October 20, 1864; *Newcastle Courant*, October 21, 1864; *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, October 21, 1864.

[28] Many church schools had been informally implementing a 'conscience clause' and for some it was included in their trust deeds. The Committee of the Privy Council prescribed it in 1839 for schools receiving public money, but it was not properly enforced until the 1850s. It was included in the educational provisions of the Factory Act of 1844. The Revised Code of 1862 instructed that all grant-aided schools must apply the 'conscience clause', and it gained clear statutory force with the Act of 1870.

[29] *Morning Post*, May 31, 1865; *Leicester Chronicle*, June 3, 1865; *John Bull*, June 3, 1865.

[30] *The Times*, November 14, 1866; *John Bull*, October 20, November 17, 1866; *Morning Post*, November 14, 1866; *Manchester Courier*, November 14, 1866; *Daily News*, November 14, 1866; *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, November 16, 1866; *Hull Packet*, November 16, 1866; *York Herald*, November 17, 1866; *Westmorland Gazette*, November 17, 1866; *Bucks Herald*, November 17, 1866; *Essex Standard*, November 21, 1866.

Unrest continued and churchmen began to suspect that the Conservative government would not restrict the operation of the 'conscience clause'. Hope went on campaigning through 1867 and 1868. At one meeting, in Tunbridge Wells in January 1868, he condemned as 'un-English' the notion of compulsory and secular education. But he was gradually shifting. Having spoken against secularization, he now admitted that *some* secular schooling might not be inappropriate: 'He contended that in this country there should be free, full, and fair play for all denominations, and if any body of men desired to try mere secular education he saw no reason why they should not have a fair chance also'. Hope stressed the importance of public funding for education, both secular and religious, and again argued that the government ought to increase the aid it gave to the National Society and other educational bodies. On the 'conscience clause', he repeated his claim that 'it fostered indifference and irreligion'.[32] Notwithstanding his forthrightness, it appears that within the National Society there was at this time an eschewing of confrontational methods. The annual meeting of 1868 was reported to be a rather insipid affair, with an 'unusually small' attendance. Hope was elected to serve another term on the managing committee. There had been the prospect of greater excitement, because Archdeacon Denison had given notice of a motion against the 'conscience clause', but in the event this motion was withdrawn and Denison did not attend.[33]

If there was a desire to avoid controversy, it was not accommodated for long. The Liberals under Gladstone took office in December 1868 and proceeded to pass the Elementary Education Act of 1870. New pressure groups emerged, notably the National Education League, which demanded compulsory non-sectarian education free of denominational influences and funded through local rates.[34] The 1870 Act was a compromise designed to 'fill the gaps' left by voluntary effort, and the NEL would continue campaigning for eight years for the adoption of its requirements.[35] Its main rival was the National Educational Union, organized and led by churchmen.

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[31] *John Bull*, November 17, 1866.

[32] *John Bull*, April 6, August 31, October 5, 26, 1867, February 1, 1868; *Daily News*, January 29, 1868; *Standard*, January 29, 1868; *Manchester Guardian*, January 30, 1868; *Leeds Times*, February 1, 1868; *Preston Chronicle*, February 1, 1868.

[33] *The Times*, June 18, 1868; *John Bull*, June 20, 1868.

[34] Stephens, *Education in Britain*, pp. 78-81; Curtis, *History of Education*, pp. 272-75, 277, 281; Adamson, *English Education*, pp. 347-54, 360-62, 386; Sturt, *Education of the People*, pp. 301-302; Goldstrom, *Elementary Education*, pp. 140-42; Armytage, *Four Hundred Years*, pp. 143-48; Green, *Education and State Formation*, pp. 301-303; Lawson and Silver, *Social History*, pp. 294, 314-17; Patricia Auspos, 'Radicalism, Pressure Groups, and Party Politics: From the National Education League to the National Liberal Federation', *Journal of British Studies* 20.1 (1980), pp. 184-204.

[35] Hope would repeatedly state that the NEL was among the principal enemies against which the Church had to 'hold its own'. E.g. A. J. B. Hope, *The Place and Influence in the Church Movement of Church Congresses* (London, 1874), p. 13. The Church had to prove its usefulness and relevance to ward off challenges, and its educational work was vital in this respect. One promising idea for cathedral towns – outlined by Hope in an address to the Church Congress in Stoke-upon-Trent in 1875 – was to set up a school in connection with the cathedral. This would cement links between the Church and local people. A. J. B. Hope, *Worship and Order* (London, 1883), pp. 20–21. See also his *The English Cathedral of the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1861), pp. 259-60.

Hope took a leading role in the quarrels that accompanied the passing of the Act of 1870, both in parliament and in the country. He feared that taxing powers were being extended too quickly.[36] He opposed the Liberal government's effort to turn charities and funds not originally intended for educational purposes into a resource that the government could use for schooling. With other committee members in the National Society he expressed a readiness to cooperate with the government, but without departing from an essential principle: 'Religion is the only true basis on which the education of the people of this country can rest'. He joined a large deputation organized by the NEU that met with Liberal ministers and recommended the extension of education without any interference in religious teaching, though with a provision for conscientious withdrawal from religious lessons where required.[37] In one of his Commons speeches Hope blamed radical firebrands and inflexible Nonconformists for fomenting tension, in stark contrast to churchmen who were now willing to accept the 'conscience clause'. Above all, Hope said, it was of cardinal importance that the state should not seek to sweep away voluntary denominational schooling.[38]

At a public rally in London called by the NEU, Hope declared that church schools and Nonconformist schools must be left to carry on as before. Here was another adjustment on his part: this former enemy of the 'conscience clause' now upheld it in order to ward off something much worse, the quashing of *all* religious teaching in elementary schools. When the Education Bill was delayed in the Commons, Hope promised the government that he and other Conservative MPs 'would afford every assistance to pass a satisfactory measure'.[39] Sections of the Conservative press lauded his stance on denominational schooling, even if it meant voting with the government and passing up opportunities to exploit rifts within the Liberal Party.[40] Hope was one of the representatives of the managing committee of the National Society who met with ministers. The Society resigned itself to the 'conscience clause' and state aid for non-church schools, but maintained that elementary education must include religious content. Hope subsequently told the Commons that each denomination should be permitted to use its own teaching material in its own schools.[41]

While the Act of 1870 allowed denominational schools to continue applying for public money, it also created School Boards, which would be locally elected to set up elementary schools in districts where voluntary provision was inadequate. Board schools would be financed by local rates. They could teach religion, but not of a specific denominational character. Many Liberals and Nonconformists resented the fact that church schools could still obtain grants. They argued that voluntary schools should not be left in the hands of those who paid the least toward them and that schools receiving public money should be subjected to greater public control.[42]

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[36] *The Times*, August 7, 1869; *Parl. Deb.* 198 (1869), 1442-50 (for Hope's remarks see 1444).

[37] *Economist*, June 19, 1869; *The Times*, February 5, March 14, 1870; *Observer*, March 13, 1870; *John Bull*, February 5, March 12, 19, 1870.

[38] *Parl. Deb.* 199 (1870), 1963-2068 (for Hope's remarks see 2021-26).

[39] *The Times*, April 5, 9, 13, 1870; *John Bull*, April 9, 16, 1870; *Parl. Deb.* 200 (1870), 1703-19 (for Hope's remarks see 1709).

[40] E.g. *John Bull*, April 9, 1870.

[41] *The Times*, May 12, June 21, 1870; *John Bull*, May 14, 1870; *Parl. Deb.* 202 (1870), 495-596 (for Hope's remarks see 546-52).

The Act gave voluntary bodies a period in which to make good existing 'gaps' at local level and thereby to render unnecessary the establishment of a School Board. This stimulated more building, especially by the Church and its supporters. Early in October 1870 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Tait, chaired a 'large and influential' meeting of the Diocesan Education Society. This was an impressive gathering of clergymen, nobles, MPs, magistrates, squires, and other local dignitaries. Hope was among the speakers. Though the Act encouraged 'the teaching of simple secular subjects', he said, it could not prevent 'the teaching of a full, sound, broad, and deep summary of the Christian faith, such as is taught by the Church of England', and despite 'many difficulties' one helpful step would be for the diocese to organize its own school inspection. State inspection, included in the grants system, would no longer cover religious instruction, so why not require 'a weekly examination by the clergy'? This would offset the inevitably unhappy consequences of Board schools 'which taught no religion but something which an Act of Parliament had created'. The task was to 'limit the area of the rate-aided schools by having thoroughly efficient Church schools'. Hope proposed the fifth of five resolutions approved at the meeting, for 'an annual religious inspection of all such schools in the diocese as are willing to receive it, to be conducted by paid inspectors, acting under the authority of the Archbishop'. The other resolutions recommended 'an efficient religious education based on the principles of the Church of England', called for 'increased support' for the Society, stressed the need 'to seize the short period during which building grants will continue to be made by the Committee of Council, in order to provide any increased school accommodation which may be called for under the Elementary Education Act', and invited 'special donations' to enable the Society 'to make grants on a more liberal scale than usual'. The readiness of those in attendance to respond with money was hardly in doubt. The sum of £1500 was raised before the meeting closed.[43]

Just days later, at the Church Congress in Southampton, Hope urged clergymen and laymen to combine to ensure a clear and effective régime for religious instruction in elementary schools. In addition, 'the powerful aid of diocesan inspection must be invited to encourage, to strengthen, to harmonize religious teaching from parish to parish'. Hope also spoke of the danger that talented teachers in church schools would be lured away to Board schools by the promise of better pay (from the rates); and on the 'Timetable Conscience Clause' – the section in the Act that limited religious classes to a regular time slot, usually at the beginning or the end of the school day – he condemned 'the wholesale and drill-sergeant-like interference with the special arrangements of each particular school' but added that in church schools it was possible to minimize the damage.

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[42] *The Times*, July 29, 1870.

[43] *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 5, 1870; *Standard*, October 5, 1870; *John Bull*, October 8, 1870; *Examiner*, October 8, 1870. Inspection had long been a sensitive issue. A compromise had been agreed in the 1840s whereby, for church schools, inspectors would not be appointed without the Church's approval.

> With a time-table which compels the teacher to devote a given time at a given hour to religious teaching and nothing else, the length of the lesson is secured and its importance, compared with other work, guaranteed; while the clergyman will always know when to come down and exercise a wholesome supervision. Besides, as every well-regulated school must at all times have had a time-table for its own use, the injury is, after all, not so great of making that compulsory by law which was already compulsory by common sense.

In Board schools, church principles would be assailed. There, 'the chimera of religious teaching apart from distinctive formularies is to range unchecked, and from some ... religion, even in name, may be banished'. Whatever could be done about this *must* be done, and Hope looked to conscientious teachers and clergymen in Board districts to exert a correcting influence. For himself, he could not stand by and do nothing to resist the spread of 'a creedless system of vague philanthropy, illustrated by detached tales, garbled rather than drawn from Gospel history'.[44]

Meeting New Challenges?

In April 1872 there was an effort to repeal the clause in the Act that provided for the payment of school fees of pupils whose families lacked the necessary means. Nonconformists disliked the clause because, they argued, it meant that ratepayers were contributing toward the dissemination of religious teaching (in voluntary schools) from which they dissented. According to the Liberal MP for Birmingham, George Dixon, one of the leaders of the NEL, resentment against the clause was mounting, but Hope denied this and 'taunted' Dixon 'with having threatened the Government in the name of a small Nonconformist agitating clique'. Other MPs wanted no interference with the Act. They emphasized that it already had a compromise as its basis – the 'conscience clause' – and they preferred to leave the fees question to School Boards, on which churchmen and Nonconformists mixed together and could make appropriate local arrangements. Paying fees in cases of need did not affect a parent's freedom of choice or religious scruples because there was no stipulation about which school the pupils in question should attend. The motion for a Bill to repeal the clause was defeated by 316 to 115 votes. Those in the minority were adamant that the clause was not in line with the spirit of the Act as a whole; that public money should only go toward secular instruction, not religious teaching; that paying fees had led to too much variation across the country when uniformity was needed; and that ratepayers should not have to fund religious teaching with which they did not agree. The debate was notable not only for Hope's clash with Dixon but also for an altercation between him and Edward Miall, the MP for Bradford, founder of the *Nonconformist* newspaper and leader of the campaign for disestablishment of the Church of England. Miall took exception to Hope's remarks about 'political Nonconformists' and their 'disagreeable' inclinations. In Miall's opinion the House had never heard such 'solemnity and bunkum'.

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[44] *The Times*, October 13, 1870; *John Bull*, October 15, 1870; *Southampton Herald*, October 15, 1870; *Bristol Mercury*, October 15, 1870; *Bury and Norwich Post*, October 18, 1870; *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, October 21, 1870.

Hope was undeterred. He continued in these weeks to tell MPs that wholesome religious instruction ought to be available in Board schools.[45]

Quarrels about elementary education did not diminish. Hope and other churchmen sought to defend both voluntary denominational effort and the provision of religious instruction in state-aided schools. Hope presented petitions to parliament in support of these principles, as in March 1873 (on behalf of the parish of All Saints in Cambridge).[46] Optimism seemed to grow with the return of the Conservatives to office in February 1874.[47] The National Education Union extended its campaign. A flood of advertisements appeared in the press in the spring of 1874. Hope was still on the executive committee of the NEU, which had become a well-organized pressure group. It had strongholds in London and Manchester. The membership included 98 peers, 131 MPs, many Anglican clergymen, and more than 400 subscribers in the '£10 and up' category. NEU literature was circulating widely, recommending legislative support for voluntary denominational schooling. There were calls for financial assistance as leaders of the NEU stressed that the body had to be maintained in readiness to meet any eventuality. Voluntary education, 'which has done so much', should be strengthened 'on the grounds of its religious character, its general economy, and efficiency', and the 'extravagant costs' of School Boards had to be checked. The NEU would resist 'any attempts at injurious competition' made by Boards against voluntary schools 'at the expense of the ratepayers'. Instances of such attempts were 'almost daily coming to hand, from all parts of the country', and the NEU would press parliament to intervene. If the Boards became too powerful, and the parliamentary grant was reduced or lost, voluntaryism would be supplanted by 'the costly rate-provided system, with its unsatisfactory and quasi-secular character'. On school attendance, the NEU advocated 'indirect, rather than direct, compulsion' (as in the education clauses of the Factory Acts). The 'aggressive' strategy of the NEL 'to overthrow existing denominational schools and to set up a system of secular education' had of course to be defeated. To fail in this would be to allow 'the subversion of the whole voluntary system … and the confiscation of the schools, built at the cost of so many millions and with so much self-denying labor on the part of friends of religious education'.[48]

The Church's educational responsibility, particularly in rural parishes, was among the topics discussed at the Lay and Clerical Conference at Lambeth Palace in June 1874. The event was chaired by Archbishop Tait and attended by 250 guests, including Hope. As well as providing the best possible education for pupils, it was agreed the Church had also to guide these pupils toward the right choices for their future lives.[49]

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[45] *Manchester Guardian*, April 24, 1872; *The Times*, April 24, June 15, 1872; *Parl. Deb.* 210 (1872), 1714-47 (see especially 1734-38), and 211 (1872), 1744-60 (especially 1746-47, 1752, 1757).

[46] *The Times*, March 4, 1873.

[47] Religious disputes – including that over education – were a major reason for this change of administration. J. P. Parry, 'Religion and the Collapse of Gladstone's First Government, 1870–1874', *Historical Journal* 25.1 (1982), pp. 71-101.

[48] *Standard*, March 20, 1874; *John Bull*, April 18, 1874; *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 18, 1874; *Birmingham Daily Post*, April 18, 1874; *Manchester Courier*, April 18, 1874.

[49] *Morning Post*, June 11, 1874; *John Bull*, June 13, 1874.

Arrangements for placing voluntary schools under the control of School Boards presented more than a few difficulties, and the National Society had concerns about how its own schools would be affected. In June 1874 Hope joined a deputation to the responsible government ministers the Duke of Richmond, Lord President of the Council, and Viscount Sandon, Vice-President of the Committee on Education. How would transferred schools be used? Would the intentions of their original founders be respected, and any related trusts protected? Whatever was taught in the schools during the week, would the buildings be available on Sundays for religious activities? Richmond and Sandon promised to consider these points. Richmond was irritated, though, by accusations about lack of consultation, and he reminded the representatives of the National Society that although its wishes would be taken into account, the procedure for transfers was laid down in the Act of 1870. The deputation took the view that the Society's schools should not be handed over unless there was a guarantee about what would be taught there; and if trusts were involved they should not be violated. Over the years, the National Society and its subscribers had given huge sums to these schools. It would be a 'moral wrong', declared Hope, if this was ignored, and it would be even worse if nondenominational education was brought into the schools against the express wishes of their founders. These schools had been established on the understanding that they would be conducted according to church principles. Transfer, said Hope, should not mean that they were put to other purposes. Richmond assured him that all necessary information would be collected before decisions were made about National Society schools.[50]

A year later the National Society sent another deputation to meet with Richmond and Sandon. It was a larger body this time, led by Archbishop Tait, and it included senior clerics and several nobles and MPs, Hope among them. The deputation's main concern was to demonstrate that voluntary schools were facing unfair competition from Board schools. Some of them would soon be unable to maintain themselves. This was a problem that affected not only the National Society but all religious groups wanting to provide education shaped by their own distinctive principles. Boards were setting up schools supported through a general levy on ratepayers, giving them virtually unlimited resources, but voluntary schools had to rely on their own supporters. The deputation condemned this 'pecuniary inequality' and urged the government to allow for a fair and equitable coexistence of state and voluntary schooling. Richmond, while ready to look into the matter, committed the government to nothing and pointed out that this was a complicated question with strong arguments on both sides.[51]

In February 1876, as Sandon put together a new Education Bill, churchmen made another effort to protect voluntary schools. As before, Hope was part of a deputation that met with Richmond and Sandon. Led by Archbishop Tait, the deputation included several peers and MPs as well as eight bishops and a number of other Anglican clergymen. It presented a paper detailing the recent expansion of church schooling. The Church was serving more pupils than Board schools and Nonconformist schools combined. Church bodies were now spending more than

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[50] *Manchester Guardian*, June 24, 1874; *The Times*, June 24, 1874; *John Bull*, June 27, 1874.

[51] *The Times*, July 9, 1875; *Morning Post*, July 9, 1875.

£3 million a year on schooling – considerably more than all other religious bodies combined. But in order to continue serving the people the Church required changes in government policy. Hope and his colleagues asked that voluntary schools be shielded from the 'pecuniary pressure' imposed by the levy of the education rate upon their supporters and by competition from Board schools ('such relief might be afforded by allowing a voluntary subscriber to a public elementary school to claim that his subscription, wholly or in part, should be accounted as a payment of his education rate'). The deputation also wanted greater public expenditure on elementary schooling; the annual grant earned by voluntary schools under 'payment by results' not to be limited to half the income of the school; 'the extension of compulsory attendance with proper safeguards', and in places without a School Board power given to existing authorities to enforce attendance; the dissolution of Boards where they were unnecessary; more control over the 'number and extent' of schools erected or enlarged by Boards; and local polls to decide the question of forming a Board to be held once every three years instead of annually. Before these points could be discussed, newspaper reporters were asked to leave the meeting (at Richmond's insistence and against the deputation's wishes). Subsequent exchanges remained private, but the Liberal *Manchester Guardian* nevertheless remarked that the Conservative government was likely to be swayed by church opinion.[52]

In this period the National Society evinced a divided character, mixing strength and confidence with pessimism and grievance. Hope was one of the hundreds who attended the annual meeting in June 1875. Judging by the number of pupils in inspected schools over the preceding year, the Church as an educator was doing well. For some, the mood was celebratory. School Boards had been fully functioning for two years, but more than 90 per cent of pupils in inspected schools attended voluntary schools – mostly the Church's schools. For other speakers, though, dark clouds were looming: 'unfair competition' from Board schools would soon bring a statistical shift.[53] At the 1876 annual meeting, Hope was among the speakers. Discussion turned to possible amendments to Sandon's Bill, which, it was said, did not adequately provide for religious instruction in all elementary schools, 'for which there is a general desire in the country'. Might not all schools receiving public money be obliged to have pupils read the Bible, with simple comments offered by instructors as needed? Should schools that did not teach or even recognize Christianity receive any public funding at all? Members of the National Society recognized the need to defend voluntary schooling. But were the means available? 'The general opinion seemed to be in favor of the entire removal of the restrictions which at present prevent voluntary schools from earning the full amount of the grants.'[54] An advertisement placed by the National Society in *The Times* emphasized its urgent need for subscriptions and donations.[55]

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[52] *Manchester Guardian*, February 18, 1876; *The Times*, February 18, 1876.

[53] *Standard*, June 10, 1875; *Morning Post*, June 10, 1875; *York Herald*, June 10, 1875; *Liverpool Mercury*, June 10, 1875; *John Bull*, June 12, 1875.

[54] *Daily News*, June 21, 1876; *Standard*, June 21, 1876; *Manchester Guardian*, June 22, 1876; *Manchester Courier*, June 22, 1876; *Morning Post*, June 22, 1876.

[55] *The Times*, June 20, 1876.

When the National Society held a conference on religious education, chaired by the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, Charles Ellicott, speakers agreed that although Sandon's Bill respected the main principles of the Act of 1870, it had to demonstrate more clearly that the role of the state was to *supplement* the voluntary system, not replace it, and as it stood it would not solve problems presented by the way the Act operated in practice. With regard to attendance, Hope pointed to a recent division in the Commons and said that a majority of MPs favored only indirect compulsion. The conference approved a series of resolutions concerning extra assistance for poorer schools; the method of determining the income of schools; the subdivision of districts when necessary for educational purposes; and the need to persuade the government that superfluous School Boards should be dissolved, that elementary schools should be exempted from local rates, and that arrangements should be made for adequate religious instruction in all elementary schools.[56]

As Sandon's Bill made its way through the Commons, Hope recommended changes in the wording of certain clauses. He discussed examinations, pass rates, and the award of testimonials of proficiency, and to combat non-attendance he offered ideas about local investigation and legal penalties. Some MPs pointed to the frequent changes of residence of many children, often because of circumstances over which they had no control. Hope thought that parents ought to be required to show proof of change of residence. He was grateful when Sandon suggested that school certificates might be granted for 350 days of attendance after the age of five in not more than two schools per year for five years; and for each pupil gaining the certificate the school fees would be paid.[57] Later the government accepted an amendment about the payment of fees for children of poor parents. Poor Law Guardians were to be made responsible. As Sandon admitted, 'there could be no doubt that Parliament did not intend that a parent should be obliged to send his child to a Board school, if he objected to such school, simply because he was poor'. Yet Sandon's preference was to leave the matter alone, for he feared the reopening of old wounds. Hope favored the amendment regardless: it was a 'clearly equitable' move that deserved the backing of Conservative MPs.[58] There was an outcry from Nonconformists. John Bright, radical, Quaker, MP for Birmingham, and former minister under Gladstone, complained that children of Nonconformists would be forced into church schools. According to one journal, Sandon's Bill was reactionary, tyrannical, and unjust. 'Nothing so crushing to Dissenters has ever been passed in our time. It is useless denying the fact – religious liberty is to be sacrificed on behalf of the Establishment'.[59]

The Education Act of 1876 brought in new rules on attendance (though exemptions were allowed). Attendance committees were set up in areas where there was no School Board. Opponents of denominational schooling expected it to be boosted by this. The Act also made more money available to church schools if matching amounts were gained from other sources. Nonconformists were offended, but church schools in poorer districts could not take advantage because they were already struggling to raise money.

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[56] *John Bull*, July 1, 1876. The division mentioned by Hope occurred on June 19 when an amendment to Sandon's Bill, to enforce attendance at school, was defeated by 309 to 163 votes. *Parl. Deb.* 230 (1876), 15-101.

[57] *Observer*, July 30, 1876; *Manchester Guardian*, July 31, 1876. The debate can be followed in *Parl. Deb.* 230 (1876), 1528-51, 1890-1911, 231 (1876), 60-72.

[58] *John Bull*, August 5, 1876; *Parl. Deb.* 231 (1876), 469-96 (for Hope's comments see 478).

[59] *Friendly Companion and Illustrated Instructor*, September 1, 1876.

Between 1811 and 1870, the National Society had spent about £15 million. From 1870 to 1893 it would spend another £7 million on nearly 6000 new schools. This was a remarkable effort, but costs per pupil were constantly rising, and church schools could get government grants but not rate aid, which was only for Board schools. As the grants criteria changed, church schools found it difficult to compete. By 1885 Board schools were generally better funded and charged lower fees than voluntary schools. Meanwhile the religious content of education was rapidly undermined. Board schools had to be neutral, or if they wished they could dispense with religious instruction altogether, and the timetable rule meant that religion – no longer central – was becoming a mere appendage to other lessons.[60]

A Time for Rearguard Actions

Liberals and Nonconformists condemned the Act of 1876. Friends of church schooling saw things differently, and continued to celebrate any successes they could, but as time passed they became more troubled about the prospects for church schools in the changing educational environment. There were many efforts to retrieve the situation, not least in London. In the spring of 1877 a new committee led by Bishop John Jackson was formed to operate in the London School Board District. Its primary aim was to raise money to assist elementary schools connected with the Church to cover their maintenance and staffing costs. The committee solicited donations and took out loans, and it set an ambitious target: a capital sum of £50,000, with an annual income of £2000.[61] As well as the Bishop of London, the main clerical supporters of this initiative were the Bishop of Rochester Thomas Claughton, the Archdeacon of Middlesex James Hessey, the Canon of St Paul's Robert Gregory, and the Canon of Rochester and Dean of Greenwich John Cale Miller. That church schooling could be a unifying cause is indicated by the fact that these men represented a mix of affiliations. Jackson was Low Church in sympathy; he disliked ritualism but believed that efforts to suppress it would be counterproductive. Miller was of the Evangelical party. Claughton had High Church leanings, and Gregory was an outspoken High Churchman and defender of ritualism. The chief participants from the laity were Hope and Sir Richard Wilbraham of Rode Hall, Cheshire, who had served in the Crimean War and in 1881 would be appointed colonel of the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).

Hope was still involved, too, with the Canterbury Diocesan Education Society. He was among the speakers at its meeting in Tunbridge Wells in February 1878. Chaired by Archbishop Tait, this meeting heard reports about the progress made by church schools and there were calls for extra exertion, to provide more school inspectors and protect religious instruction. At the Ely Diocesan Conference held in Cambridge in October 1879, and chaired by Bishop James Woodford, Hope carried the following resolution: 'That this Conference desires to express its deep conviction that every effort should be made to keep religious and secular instruction combined in the education of the young of all classes at schools, public and private, and in the universities'.[62]

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[60] Curtis, *History of Education*, pp. 281-82; Adamson, *English Education*, pp. 358-59, 363.

[61] *John Bull*, March 10, 1877.

Efforts were under way to formulate a new Education Code. In July 1879 the Commons debated a proposal that science should have equal status with grammar, geography, and history. A number of MPs expressed doubts, pointing to the cost of implementation, the impact on teachers' workloads, the problem of assessing pupils' competence in science, and the need to ensure that teachers were properly qualified. Though there was general agreement that science was important, the proposal was defeated by 80 to 48 votes. MPs agreed to look at the matter again in due course. Hope opposed the change. He thought it would place too much pressure on pupils and teachers and necessitate more examinations when there were already too many. 'The great evil in our educational movement', he said, 'was a confusion of means and ends'. Teachers at the elementary level had to be 'not only capable, but willing, readily and cheerfully, to discharge the useful, though, perhaps, humble, service of training the children of the laboring classes satisfactorily to perform their duties in life'. To require such teachers to study the sciences might cause them to forget their true calling. Some would become less effective in the essentials – the 'three R's' – and some would use their higher learning to 'despise those rudimentary branches of education'. As for examinations, they had to signify 'a true standard of competitive merit'.[63]

Education Codes introduced in the 1870s and 1880s altered the proportion of grant money attached to attainment in subjects other than the 'three R's', and grants were reorganized. For some subjects the examination was not of individual pupils but of a whole class. Churchmen protested that each new step made demands on voluntary resources that could not be met.

The Conservative government fell in 1880. Gladstone was prime minister again from April 1880 to June 1885. Attendance at school became compulsory in 1880 (and most fees would be phased out after 1891). Late in 1881 a large deputation of clergymen, nobles, MPs, and other leaders of the National Society, including Hope, went to meet the Lord President of the Council and the Vice-President of the Committee on Education, Earl Spencer and A. J. Mundella. Hope and his colleagues explained that while the National Society was not opposed to reforms that were likely to improve efficiency, it believed its schools to be already efficient. Furthermore, if the government interfered with voluntary schooling, an endeavor that freed taxpayers from a massive financial burden, it would discourage this voluntary effort in future. More than 55 per cent of pupils in elementary education attended schools connected with the Church. Did this not give the deputation an insight and an interest that ministers ought to respect? The government should not require schools or teachers to do more without providing the necessary resources, and it should not place financial pressure upon voluntary schools while limiting public and private contributions through 'payment by results' or some other damaging formula. In reply, Spencer assured the deputation that consultations would continue and that the government aimed only to promote improvement, not to make it more difficult for schools to obtain grants.[64]

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[62] *Sheffield Independent*, February 7, 1878; *Liverpool Mercury*, February 7, 1878; *Belfast Newsletter*, February 7, 1878; *John Bull*, February 9, 1878, October 25, 1879.

[63] *Parl. Deb.* 248 (1879), 1639-54 (especially 1644-45); *The Times*, July 31, 1879; *John Bull*, August 2, 1879; *Punch*, August 9, 1879.

The struggle went on. In March 1883 there was a two-day meeting of the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences, in Westminster. Hope attended and joined in discussion of various topics including religious instruction and church schools. It remained extremely difficult to supervise and reconcile the state and voluntary sectors, and almost impossible to reduce tension between their respective advocates. Church groups became impatient, notably the English Church Union. Originally founded in 1859 as the Church of England Protection Society (it changed its name a year later), it stood for ritualism, Anglo-Catholic traditions, and the right of the Church to govern itself. By the time of its 24th anniversary meeting, in June 1883, the ECU was growing in influence. It had more than 21,000 members. It was not reluctant to make demands and the meeting of June 1883, attended by Hope, resolved that Board schools 'should not supplant, but supplement, so far as it is possible for them to do it – that is to say, with respect to secular education only – denominational schools, and that any legislation or any administration of the law which ignores this principle is faulty, and ought to be amended'. In the following month Hope was elected as a lay member of the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences, and in a session at the Canterbury Diocesan Conference at Lambeth Palace he joined in a passionate debate about religious education during which it was predicted that if current trends in government policy were not corrected, Christianity in Britain would be almost dead by the end of the century.[65]

Aside from his public engagement with these matters, as a local squire and employer Hope practiced what he preached. In the area of Kent close to his estate at Bedgebury Park, for instance, he helped to finance several educational initiatives, including elementary schools. By November 1874, when he addressed a meeting in Goudhurst, these efforts were coming to fruition.[66] Hope also backed a scheme in the deanery of Paddington. Headed by the Vicar of Paddington, James Moorhouse, and operating from a lecture hall in Westbourne Terrace, a short walk from Hope's London villa in Connaught Place, a group of clergymen and laymen set up a fund to extend church schooling.[67] At the Church Congress of October 1877, held in Croydon, Archbishop Tait paid tribute to Hope, referring to his efforts over the years to serve the Church, not least in the field of elementary education.[68] Hope believed strongly that pupils should be taught the right things in the right way. Though he sometimes complained that this was not happening, he was ready to join in celebrations of academic achievement, as in November 1882 when he chaired an awards ceremony in London.[69] Having tried to extend the usual curriculum in elementary schools to include instruction in drawing, he arranged for this to be a subject for consideration at the Social Science Congress held in Birmingham in September 1884. Speakers addressed Hope's suggested theme: 'How can a love and appreciation of art be best developed among the masses of the people?'[70] Hope had come to the conclusion that elementary schools had a role to play in this development.

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[64] *The Times*, December 1, 1881; *Standard*, December 1, 1881; *Morning Post*, December 1, 1881.

[65] *Standard*, March 14, 1883; *Daily News*, March 14, 1883; *The Times*, June 8, July 18, 1883; *John Bull*, March 17, June 9, 1883; *Morning Post*, June 8, 1883. The defense of denominational schooling obviously concerned non-Anglicans too. While the Church had many more schools and pupils than the Roman Catholics, the latter had broadly the same educational goals. Eric Tenbus has discussed these goals in '"We Fight for the Cause of God": English Catholics, the Education of the Poor, and the Transformation of Catholic Identity in Victorian Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 46.4 (2007), pp. 861-83, and 'Defending the Faith through Education: The Catholic Case for Parental and Civil Rights in Victorian Britain', *History of Education Quarterly* 48.3 (2008), pp. 432-51.

[66] *Morning Post*, November 20, 1874; *Standard*, November 20, 1874; *The Times*, November 21, 1874; *Hastings and St Leonard's Observer*, November 21, 1874.

[67] *John Bull*, July 29, 1876; *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, August 19, 1876.

On the crucial matters, however, the tide had turned against Hope and those churchmen who thought as he did. Their defense of the Church's rights in and contribution to elementary education helped to preserve voluntary denominational schooling after 1870, but they could not do all that they considered necessary. After Hope's death there were important reverses including the defeat of the Education Bill of 1896, which was designed to help voluntary schools with public money.[71] To the *Observer*, this defeat illustrated the declining power of 'Children of the Church' in parliament. No longer could they call upon great champions of the past – like Hope, a man of 'travailing eloquence' – to protect the position of the Church in an age of reform.[72]

Historians relate the Act of 1870 to the extension of political participation and to Britain's economic growth. Another trend has been to emphasize the popular desire for education – elementary schooling as a demand from below – and to show that learning was wanted for its own sake, not because it had political or economic advantages.[73] Hope occasionally made comments along these lines, but mostly he regarded education as the means to learn more about God. He also thought of elementary schooling as early training in social duties, practical skills, and aesthetic appreciation. Hope had to negotiate and compromise in order to defend the Church's interests, especially on the 'conscience clause' and secularization; but if politics is the art of the possible, in 1870 Hope and his allies showed a mastery of this art. They were even willing to work with a Liberal government at a time when the party was becoming solidified and sensitivity to political and religious divisions was growing. By promoting an alternative to voluntary denominational education and subjecting church schools in particular to greater pressures than before, the Act of 1870 would be – from the Church's perspective – a disturbing preview to what followed. Nevertheless, using Hope as a case study we can at least learn more about the Church-centered view and how it was sustained.[74]

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[68] *The Times*, October 13, 1877; *Standard*, October 13, 1877; *Morning Post*, October 15, 1877.

[69] *The Times*, November 11, 1882; *Englishwoman's Review*, November 15, 1882.

[70] *The Times*, September 2, 24, 1884; *Birmingham Daily Post*, June 18, September 19, 1884; *Standard*, September 19, 22, 1884.

[71] N. D. Dalglish, 'Planning the Education Bill of 1896', *History of Education* 16.2 (1987), pp. 91–104; J. E. B. Munson, 'The Unionist Coalition and Education, 1895–1902', *Historical Journal* 20.3 (1977), pp. 607-45; Sturt, *Education of the People*, pp. 394-98.

[72] *Observer*, June 28, 1896.

[73] E.g. Ellis Wasson, *A History of Modern Britain* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 164; A. J. Marcham, 'Educating our Masters: Political Parties and Elementary Education, 1867 to 1870', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 21.2 (1973), pp. 180-91; Philip Gardner, 'Literacy, Learning, and Education', in Chris Williams (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 354-55, 357; Robert Anderson, 'Learning: Education, Class, and Culture', in Martin Hewitt (ed.), *The Victorian World* (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 495-97.

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[74] Into the next century, some of the ideas Hope had expressed about church schooling were still being employed: e.g. David Parker, '"Stand Therefore!" Bishop Michael Bolton Furse, the Diocese of St Albans, and the Church Schools Controversy, 1919–1939', *History of Education Quarterly* 39.2 (1999), pp. 161-92; R. J. K. Freathy, 'Ecclesiastical and Religious Factors which Preserved Christian and Traditional Forms of Education for Citizenship in English Schools, 1934–1944', *Oxford Review of Education* 33.3 (2007), pp. 367-77; and on the unending controversy about the availability of public money for church schools see Priscilla Chadwick, 'The Anglican Perspective on Church Schools', *Oxford Review of Education* 27.4 (2001), pp. 475-87. Though there were important rearguard actions, church power was waning. The Education Act of 1902 marked a turning point because, though voluntary schools survived, there would now be clearer secular control over a more unified national system. Local Education Authorities replaced School Boards and covered the whole country, and voluntary schools could get rate aid only if they admitted LEA representatives to their governing bodies. The idea that education should have a religious content no longer featured much in government policy.

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