

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION

TO

EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

FROM THE

LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

TO 1853

PH.D 1987

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## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations used in Footnotes

I	The Unitarians from the late eighteenth century to 1853	1
II	Unitarians and Education in late eighteenth century England	42
III	The Unitarians and middle-class education from 1800 to 1853	132
IV	The struggle for higher education	220
V	Education for the working-classes	308
VI	Conclusion	443
	Bibliography	453

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

B.A.A.S.	= British Association for the Advancement of Science
B.J.E.S.	= British Journal of Educational Studies
B.L.	= British Library
C.R.	= Christian Reformer
C.U.P.	= Cambridge University Press
C.W.	= Charles Wellbeloved
D.N.B.	= Dictionary of National Biography
D.W.L.	= Dr. Williams's Library
G.W.W.	= George William Wood
H.C.R.	= Ed. Saddler T., Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson
H. of E.	= History of Education
H.P.	= High Pavement
J.K.	= John Kenrick
M.A.	= Manchester Academy
M.C.	= Manchester College
M.C.O.	= Manchester College, Oxford
M.C.Y.	= Manchester College, York
M.I.	= Mechanics' Institutes
M.N.C.	= Manchester New College
M.R.	= Monthly Repository
N.S.	= New Series
O.U.P.	= Oxford University Press
P.R.O.	= Public Record Office
Roll	= Roll of Students, Manchester College, 1786-1867
T.H.S.L.C.	= Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire
T.U.H.S.	= Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society
V.A.S.F.E.	= Vocational Aspect of Secondary and Further Education

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CHAPTER 1

The Unitarians from the late eighteenth century to 1853

Unitarianism derived chiefly from Protestant Dissent of the eighteenth century. In the earlier part of that century Dissenters had comprised just over 6% of the English population, half of them being Presbyterians who were particularly strong in Lancashire.<sup>1</sup> Although through circumstances the Presbyterians had become congregational in structure they were traditionally more committed to a national church than the other chief groups of Dissenters - Quakers, Independents (or Congregationalists) and Baptists. They drew from a wider spectrum of society and had higher ranking and wealthier members than the latter two whose tightly disciplined communities made them less open both in membership and to unorthodox theology. However, they all co-operated to defend their civil rights against the penal laws which still debarred conscientious Dissenters from corporate, civil and military office and from Oxbridge degrees. Even when not enforced, such disabilities hung over the heads of all Dissenters giving them, as one Unitarian bitterly remarked, "the mortification of being born with a brand on our foreheads."<sup>2</sup>

A gradual decline in the number of Dissenters and their influence during the eighteenth century was reversed in the later 18th and early 19th centuries by the spectacular growth of Methodism and the rise of Evangelicalism which affected not only a minority of Anglicans but spread swiftly through the ranks of Calvinist Dissenters, particularly Congregationalists and many Baptists.

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The general description of the evolution of Unitarianism to 1800 is drawn from Bolam C.G., Goring J., Short H.L. and Thomas R., (hereafter referred to as Short H.L.), The English Presbyterians, (1968), especially 219-35; Watts M.R., The Dissenters, (1978), 372-82, 464-90; Wilbur E.M., A History of Unitarianism, (Beacon Press, Boston, 1945), 232-330; Tarrant W.G., The Story and Significance of the Unitarian Movement (Essex Hall Lecture, 1910), 6-60; Webb R.K. "The Unitarian Background" in ed. Smith B., Truth, Liberty and Religion, (1986), 3-30.

<sup>2</sup> M.R. (1821), vol.XVI, 357.

The enthusiastic spiritual emotionalism of the Evangelicals, incorporating a deep belief in the depravity of man and complete trust in Justification by Faith alone, realised only by conversion, formed a code of belief dividing Protestants more than mere sectarianism. A.D. Gilbert has shown that the traditional Anglican parochial system functioned best in the small, compact communities of the arable "lowland" regions chiefly found in southern and eastern England. The power and influence of the Church were lowered by the sharp rise of the clergy as a landowning class, compounded with weaknesses such as the non-residence of the gentry, large parishes and scattered populations. The independence of freeholders and marginal occupational groups in a village, the great problem of new settlements and urban parishes, exacerbated by rapid demographic and industrial changes were other contributory factors. This allowed a way in for dissenting religion which offered a more acceptable value system particularly to artisans, tradesmen and manufacturers, legitimised their desire for improvement and presented a highly satisfying communal focus in a quickly changing, often bewildering world. Methodism rapidly gained ground in the "highland" areas where Anglicanism was traditionally weak whilst evangelical New Dissent spread in the weaker parts of otherwise strong "lowland" Anglican areas.<sup>1</sup>

This "New" Dissent offered a strong challenge to Old Dissent - Quakers, the Old Connexion of General Baptists and Presbyterians - but the latter particularly was transformed by inroads of rationalism. This, bringing scholarly criticism to bear upon the Bible - held by all Dissenters to be the all-sufficient basis of faith - led to a rejection of some long-held Christian beliefs, especially that of the Trinity. First Arianism, that is an assertion of Jesus as subordinate to God the Father, although divine and pre-existent, and then Socinianism, a rejection of Jesus as divine at all, gained ground. Such revolutionary theology was not confined to Presbyterianism or even Dissent, but it made the greatest impact there, particularly through the more liberal Dissenting academies which many of them attended.

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert A.D., Religion and Society in Industrial England, (Longman Paperback 1976), 51-121; Howse E.M., Saints in Politics, (George Allen and Unwin Paperback 1971, passim.)

The growth of the Dissenting academies to educate those denied a degree at Cambridge, or even matriculation at Oxford, because of their conscientious scruples against subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, has been well-told elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The academies were a cross between a modern sixth-form college and a university taking students from about the age of sixteen, which it should be remembered was the age of entry to Oxbridge. Dissenters themselves often compared the academies with the English universities, usually to the detriment of the latter. At the same time, those scholars from the academies intended for the professions, and sometimes for the ministry, went on to universities abroad, especially in Scotland and Leyden, sometimes merely for an examining body for necessary qualifications,<sup>2</sup> but more often to finish their intellectual and liberal education. In turn, the Scottish universities in particular, outstanding in philosophy, history, political economy, science and medicine, influenced the work of the academies.<sup>3</sup>

From the mid 18th century, following the lead of Philip Doddridge's academy at Northampton 1729-51, other academies were teaching entirely in English, developing their curriculum through modern studies and leading students to examine all sides of every issue. This thought-provoking education was extended to laymen as well as intending ministers. Expanding through governing boards rather than individual ownership and helped by various denominational funds, these academies grew in staff, students and learning, offering a dynamic challenge to the traditional, hierarchical and seemingly moribund ancient universities. Chief amongst them was Warrington Academy which, in its 29 years

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E.g. McLachlan H., English Education under the Test Acts, (1931); Parker I., Dissenting Academies in England (1914); Smith J.W. Ashley, The Birth of Modern Education The Contribution of the Dissenting Academies, 1660-1800 (1954).

2

E.g. Aikin L., Memoir of John Aikin, M.D., (1823), vol.I, 64-83.

3

For a modern view of The Scottish Enlightenment see Davie G.E., (1981), Historical Association, General Series 99.

attracted a galaxy of brilliant staff and students, "some of the noblest literati of their day" according to Henry Bright.<sup>1</sup> Very attractive to moderate Presbyterians, Warrington's enthusiastic devotion to liberal enquiry led the tutors into Arianism or Socinianism and many students became founders of Unitarian families and/or Unitarian ministers. Often when ex-Warrington students were appointed to old Presbyterian chapels it resulted in the congregation splitting and many orthodox Presbyterians therefore refused further financial aid to Warrington, already struggling with over-expenditure and problems of discipline. Despite the outstanding, inspiring and innovative work of many tutors in education, science and medicine, therefore, the academy had to close.<sup>2</sup>

One of Warrington's most brilliant tutors was Joseph Priestley who, after leaving it in 1767, became not only an outstanding scientist and leading political thinker but also a creative theologian. In a series of theological treatises he established a Unitarian form of Christianity which denied the Trinity and the Atonement and sought to establish a pure, simple, optimistic religion which upheld the humanity of a perfect Jesus and strove for similar moral perfection. Priestley also posited a materialist philosophy and a belief

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Bright H., "A Historical Sketch of Warrington Academy", Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, (1859), vol.XI,2.

2

Ibid.; Turner W., Warrington Academy, 1757-86, (Warrington Library and Museum Committee, 1957, reprinted from articles in the Monthly Repository, 1813-5); Short H.L., "Warrington Academy", Hibbert Journal, Gallery I, (1957); Fulton J.F., "The Warrington Academy (1757-1786) and its influence upon medicine and science", Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine, (Feb.1933) vol.1, no.2, 50-80; MSS M.C.O. Loudon J., Medical Students at Warrington and Manchester College.

in necessarianism which not all Unitarians accepted (for example, a leading Arian Unitarian, Richard Price did not), but many found exhilarating and an inspiration, perhaps paradoxically so, to an active faith.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Belsham, the head of Daventry Academy, was only the most prominent of the many who turned eagerly from the gloomy Calvinism of the more orthodox academies to a more hopeful faith, clear yet, most importantly, ever open to new truth.<sup>2</sup> Anti-Trinitarianism was illegal and considered blasphemous, yet many of the most progressive and liberal minds of that period of great ferment found welcome relief in it. A former Anglican, Theophilus Lindsey, opened the first recognised Unitarian chapel in Essex Street, London, in 1774, and many Presbyterian and General Baptist chapels gradually, imperceptibly almost, became Unitarian. On the other hand, more conservative members of these turned to orthodox Dissent whilst some outstanding Unitarians, not least Priestley and Belsham, came from Congregational ranks.<sup>3</sup>

Since this movement was, in principle, an open, ever-developing religion, with no subscription to articles of faith, it is difficult to define it accurately. In 1791 Belsham tried unsuccessfully to establish a Socinian definition, but, despite occasional, comparatively slight struggles, between Arians and Socinians,<sup>4</sup> these can really be seen as two wings of Rational Dissent, both of which have been termed Unitarian. In the later 18th century

<sup>1</sup> Lincoln A., Some Political and Social Ideas of English Dissent 1763-1800, (Octagon Books 1971 New York); 101-14, 151-8; Priestley J., Works, III, 146-51, 221, 244-9, 447-540; IV, 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Williams J., Memoirs of the late Revd. Thomas Belsham (1833) 291, 330-3, 373, 379, 390-2; Kenrick J. A Biographical Memoir of the late Rev. Charles Wellbeloved, (1860), 11-2.

<sup>3</sup> Richey R.E., "Did the English Presbyterians become Unitarian?", Church History (1973) vol.xlii, 58-73.

<sup>4</sup> Williams J., op.cit., 577, 689-91; e.g.D.N.B., Vol.63, 39, Bushrod E., The History of Unitarianism in Birmingham ... (M.A. Birmingham, 1954), 2-4, 21, 68, 127-9.

both were educated in the same academies and most Socinians went through an Arian phase. As most correspondents agreed in a long debate on the definition of "Unitarian" in the Monthly Repository of 1815, the term was a generic one including all anti-Trinitarians. As Aspland said "every Socinian is a Unitarian, but every Unitarian is not a Socinian." The Rev. T.M. Hunter later pointed out that opposition to original sin, the total depravity of man, vicarious suffering and external torments were as valid starting points to Unitarianism as the humanity of Christ. Before 1813 many Unitarians avoided taking an appellation which was not only illegal but usually seen as a term of abuse in the outside world. Unitarians also did not call their chapels Unitarian because they, like their educational institutions, were open to all, although others denied the same privilege to them.<sup>1</sup> They were extremely individualistic, a factor which some Unitarians feared made them disunited and consequently ineffective.<sup>2</sup>

Rational Dissent was very much a product of the English Enlightenment. Like other "enlightened" thinkers, Unitarians agreed that man best understood himself and his environment by the application of reason and they denied the doctrine of original sin as a key to man's true nature. Their distinctiveness lay in the fact that they were not secularists. Their interest in nature was informed by an ethical concern and they sought a rational harmony not only between reason and nature but between these and God also. They were progressives but religious ones, delighting in examples of a beneficent providence who turned good out of evil and especially allowed the growth of knowledge. They believed, as Priestley's renowned History of the Corruptions of Christianity of 1782 showed, that they were reforming a corrupted religion - but, although they drew their central inspiration from religious revelation, their focus was "on the coming earthly perfection." Their unique contribution to the Enlightenment,

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M.R. (1815), vol.X,475-9,481-4,584-5,637,745-6; (1830) N.S.4,245-6;D.N.B., vol.9,158.

2

M.R., (1829) N.S.3, 704.

as Martin Fitzpatrick has pointed out, lay in their fusion of religion, philosophy and science, which to them was "a means of insight into the rationality of God's creation." Not only their ensuing active interest in all kinds of science, but also their enthusiastic application of scientific method to all aspects of existence, made them the keenest pursuers of knowledge, supremely confident that only good could result from open, free enquiry. Unlike continental Protestants, Unitarians had no unease about a synthesis of science, philosophy and religion. They believed that a millennial dawn of peace, brotherhood and justice could be won by the (almost reckless) pursuit and propagation of truth. Tolerant and optimistic they sought a new just, moral order in society. It was this enlightened religious quest which informed all their activities.

In their adherence to Enlightenment thinking, which they both drew on and added to, Unitarians had much in common with secular, progressive reformers and could, and did, often co-operate with such. Their deep but simple religious commitment, however, made them a refuge for the liberal and independently-minded who preferred rational ethics to mystery or dogma. However, few went so far. If Unitarians grew most strongly in the Presbyterian chapels, it was Presbyterianism as such which most markedly declined in the late 18th century. Some congregations owed their continuance simply to inertia or the strong family ties resulting from much Unitarian intermarriage.<sup>1</sup>

The fact was that, although some Unitarians saw themselves as heirs to the "catholic" moderate Christianity of 18th century Presbyterianism, hopefully a focus for all Christians in a more rational age, orthodox Dissenters had little room for the radical "infidels" who had risen in their midst. They co-operated uneasily with them and increasingly sought both to clip the power that Unitarians, in the guise of Presbyterians, held in <sup>r</sup>coporate Dissenting bodies, and to check Unitarianism alto<sup>a</sup>gether by wresting from them the many chapels which the orthodox believed rightfully belonged to them. After all, before 1813 Unitarian

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Fitzpatrick M., "Rational Dissent and the Enlightenment", Faith and Freedom, (Summer 1985) vol.38, part 2, no.113,83-101; Short H.L., The English Presbyterians . . . , 235.



chapels could only be called Presbyterian or General Baptist. Some, like the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, and Hanover Square, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, had open trusts where no declaration of belief was necessary. Once doctrinal stand-points were clarified, secessions often took place, leaving the more radical members in possession of the original chapel. Unitarians defended this on the grounds of such chapels neither being bound to any particular doctrine nor forbidding any development of creed. Orthodox Dissenters, in contrast, argued that since open trusts had been established under Toleration Acts which had not included non-trinitarians, the trusts had implied doctrinal orthodoxy on the Trinity.<sup>1</sup> The matter was further complicated by the fact that not all Presbyterian chapels became Unitarian.

From 1816 a test case at Wolverhampton led to a long-drawn out legal dispute which was not finally settled until the 1840s and which deeply embittered relationships between Unitarians and other Dissenters. This conflict was exacerbated by other controversies especially the challenge to the control which Unitarians had acquired over Lady Hewley's Charity, the most important Presbyterian fund in the north of England. This suit dragged on from 1824 and was finally decided against the Unitarians in 1842 but the Dissenters' Chapels Act prevented the full consequences.<sup>2</sup>

The spread of Evangelicalism stimulated the growing divergence of orthodox Dissent and Unitarianism. Old Dissent was slowly influenced by Evangelicalism but remained outside its central tenets. Similarly, the Unitarians' moderate

<sup>1</sup> Davies R.W., Dissent in Politics 1780-1830. The Life of William Smith M.P., (1971), 199-200; Short H.L., op.cit., 245; Turner W., A Short Sketch of the History of Protestant Nonconformity and of the Society assembling in Hanover Square, Newcastle, (1811), 29-33; Connell J.M., "Dickens' Unitarian Minister; Edward Tagart", T.U.H.S. (1944) vol.VIII., no.2,77; M.R. (1830) N.S.4., 245; Williamson J.B., Memorials of John Bruce ... (1903), 151-7.

<sup>2</sup> Short H.L., op.cit., 246-9; Kenrick J., op.cit., 178-94

attitudes to general living were far from the distrust of wordly pleasure usually attributed to Evangelicals and Calvinists. In manners at least, Unitarians were sometimes closer to liberal Anglicans, some of whom they attracted to their schools. A number of leading Unitarians of the late 18th century, for example Lindsey, Disney, Jebb, Palmer, originated from Anglican Latitudinarianism, particularly from Cambridge, a factor which strengthened Unitarianism intellectually but left a purged and narrowed Church.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, dissatisfied Unitarians tended to turn to Anglicanism rather than other forms of Dissent. Notable examples of this were S.T. Coleridge and F.D. Maurice, followed in the 1840's by the newly knighted Benjamin Heywood and others.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the fact that the doctrines of evangelical Anglicans were so antithetical to their own, Unitarians did co-operate with them on some social and educational reforms, for example opposition to duelling, brutal sports, the press-gang and slavery. William Smith, perhaps amazingly, closely involved with the Clapham Sect and William Wilberforce's second in the House of Commons, was only the most prominent Unitarian against slavery.<sup>3</sup> There were some Unitarian slave owners, but most Unitarians, like Samuel Greg, passionately denounced any form of slavish submission anywhere.<sup>4</sup> William Roscoe's

<sup>1</sup> Gascoigne J., "Anglican Latitudinarianism and Political Radicalism in the late Eighteenth Century", History (Feb.1986), vol.71, no.231,22-38; Henriques U., Religious Toleration in England 1787-1833 (1961), 55.

<sup>2</sup> Coleridge S.T., "Biographia Literaria" in ed. Stauffer D.A., The Selected Poetry and Prose of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (Random House Paperback, New York 1951) 160-84, 210-3, 242-63, 425-7; D.N.B., vol.37, 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Le Breton A.L., op.cit., 30-1,316; Howse E.M., op.cit., *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 136; M.R.(1824), vol.XIX, 179-81; ed. Le Breton A.L., op.cit., 97; MSS M.C.O., Greg S., Letters of ... 1820-5, (transcribed by W.S. Coloe 1963), 1.1.1822, 16.5.1823.

parliamentary career was cut short by his open advocacy of abolition in Liverpool.<sup>1</sup>

However, other Dissenters also fought against slavery and Unitarians co-operated with them against civil disabilities and in their inherent opposition to Church Establishment and doctrinal subscription. They attacked vigorously the wealth and privileges of the Church and its failure to use these to benefit the nation at large, particularly in education. General growing criticism of the torpor and abuses of the Church, coupled with fear of the growth of Dissent, pushed the Government into rectifying some long-standing abuses and establishing a parliamentary programme for building new churches in populous towns.<sup>2</sup> Within the Church itself there was a little tentative theological research in the 1820s, and Thomas Arnold proposed a reform of Church organisation. As yet, however, the Church, largely speaking, still seemed corrupt, worldly and degraded.<sup>3</sup>

It was against this lack of spirituality and against state reforms of the Church which to some seemed destructive of the identity of Church and state as traditionally established, that the Oxford Movement developed in the 1830s. This movement, though heartily disliked by more moderate Churchmen and attacked as Romanism by Dissenters, did stimulate greater spirituality and vigour in Anglicanism.<sup>4</sup> It also strengthened the hierarchical, conservative wing of the

<sup>1</sup> Eastell J.K., "A Study of Middle-Class Education in Liverpool between 1780 - 1820", (Liverpool Diploma of Adult Education 1980), 15,61; Chandler G., William Roscoe of Liverpool, (1953), 115-6, 132.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., M.R. (1826) vol.XXI,491; M.R., (1831), N.S.5, 627-35, 824-31; Martineau J.E., James Martineau (1905), 93-4; Reily J., Address delivered to the Brotherly Society ... Jan.30th 1830, (Birmingham 1830), 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 95-9.

<sup>4</sup> Yates N., The Oxford Movement and Anglican Ritualism, "Historical Association", General Series 105, (1983); D.N.B., vol.37, 97-104.

Church and helped exacerbate conflict with Dissenters, especially over control of education. The emergence of Christian Socialism in the 1840s and of the Broad Church Movement from the 1850s were developments with which Unitarians could sympathise far more comfortably (and happily).<sup>1</sup>

Even liberal Anglicans such as Thomas Arnold, however, had little room at all for Unitarianism which was disliked theologically by all orthodox Christians, a dislike which had important repercussions on Unitarian educational ventures.<sup>2</sup> John Reilly Beard bitterly remarked that

from the parlour as well as from the pulpit the Unitarian is excluded. The very greetings of his orthodox brethren are stiff and cold . . . In the minds of the vulgar especially, there is a certain vague horror of a Socinian which makes them regard such a one as the abstract of evil in religion . . .

Tom Paine was once the scarecrow wherewith to frighten the weak; now the Socinian serves the purpose.<sup>3</sup>

Henry Solly found, in the West Country and elsewhere, Unitarians "shunned as infidels or emissaries of the Prince of Darkness."<sup>4</sup>

There were exceptions to such distrust but, nevertheless, persecution of the Unitarians did not end in 1813. This led some Unitarians into a new aggressive stance, marked by the formation of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association of 1825, a combination of three former Unitarian societies, one of which, the Unitarian Fund, had actually sent out missionaries. The chief of

<sup>1</sup> Wigmore-Beddoes D.G., Yesterday's Radicals, (1971), passim

<sup>2</sup> Arnold T., Principles of Church Reform, (3rd ed.1833), 31 E.g. M.R., (1819) vol.XIV, 18-9, 56-8; Parnaby M.R., William Johnson Fox and the Monthly Repository Circle of 1832 to 1836, (Australia National University, Ph.D. 1979) 13, 18-9.

<sup>3</sup> M.R., (1829), N.S.3,696.

<sup>4</sup> Solly H., These Eighty Years, (1893), vol.I,135-6,337,354,388,413-4,vol.II, 11-5,44,62-3.

these, the untiring, dynamic Richard Wright, was, like the Fund's secretary, Robert Aspland, a General Baptist. Such people, and Wesleyans like Joseph Cooke of Lancashire, who became Unitarians, were used to tighter organisation, lay participation and missionary zeal and they provided a new, perhaps needed, vitality to the movement in the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> Aspland, for example, published the Monthly Repository from 1806 to 1826,<sup>2</sup> a wide-ranging forum for Unitarian interests, steadily upholding civil and religious liberty in the most reactionary days. He also founded and edited, 1815-44, the Christian Reformer, aiming at humbler readers than those of the Repository.<sup>3</sup>

Any hint of sectarianism, however, ran counter to the religious liberal "catholicism" stemming from Baxterian Presbyterians of which many Unitarians were proud. Even Belsham, the outspoken champion of Unitarianism in the late 1790s and very influential until his death in 1829, distrusted such self-assertiveness. His favourite theme was that Unitarianism itself rejected controversial issues but accepted all the great outlines on which Christians were agreed and this could be the basis for a comprehensive national church.<sup>4</sup> Such Unitarians who tended, at first at least, to be half-hearted about

<sup>1</sup> Tarrant W.G., op.cit., 61-2.

<sup>2</sup> Mineka F.E., The Dissidence of Dissent The Monthly Repository 1806 - 1838, (University of North Carolina Press, 1944) 102-3, W.J. Fox became editor in 1828 and proprietor in 1831 and the M.R. became even more radical - ibid. 168.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 81-2.

<sup>4</sup> Sellers I., Nineteenth Century Nonconformity, (Edward Arnold Paperback 1977) 58-9; Davies R.W., op.cit., 206-7; Williams J., op.cit., 696-706; Wilbur E.M., op.cit., 326, 340-3; Carpenter J., op.cit., 107, 111-2.

proselytising Unitarianism, were the more wealthy, better-educated Unitarians, the cream of both London and provincial Dissent, often like William Smith, from the successful professional and higher commercial families. Richard Wright, however, was the son of a Norfolk farm-labourer and William Johnson Fox, secretary of the Unitarian Association, was the son of a Norwich weaver.<sup>1</sup> Their new organisations specifically went out to the poor, unlike the Unitarian Society of 1791 which had published only learned and complex theological works for the highly-educated whom most Unitarians of that time believed alone could understand their faith. Their use of lay preachers, not necessarily well-educated, was a methodistical practice, abhorrent to some Unitarians but seen as vital by the new Unitarians if they were to prevent Unitarianism from being an elitist middle-class religion only.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarianism did have various groupings developing within itself, a matter not uncommon amongst Dissenters. The newest element of artisan stock were active organisers; they might, like W.J. Fox, look to radical and democratic movements amongst artisans and the lower-middle class, or, like Aspland be liberal rather than radical politically and more conservative theologically. Those drawn from the cultivated, well-educated, progressive, often professional, families of Unitarianism had links with the scientific and intellectual elite of the day, of which, indeed, able Unitarians of all kinds formed a part. Such Unitarians feared that any sectarianism might narrow the broad, tolerant front which they offered to Christianity.

<sup>1</sup> Davies R.W., op.cit., xiv, Short H.L., op.cit., 237; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 168-70, 187-8.

<sup>2</sup> Davies R.W., op.cit., 196-8; Aspland R.B., Memoir of the Life, Works and Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Aspland of Hackney, (1850), 281-2. Note however that the prominent missionary William Vidler, for example, although having had little formal education, had very extensive knowledge and had read most standard English works - see M.R., (1817) vol.XII, 65ff., 125ff., 193ff., 199.

However, these divisions were not clear-cut and most Unitarians were very happily involved in all Unitarian concerns, for example, members of seemingly opposed camps generously supported Manchester College and Hackney Academy respectively.<sup>1</sup> The influx of a new type of membership was bound to cause some tensions initially but benefitted the whole movement as they resolved themselves.<sup>2</sup>

There were doctrinal differences, too, though not of a deeply divisive nature in this period. For the most part English Unitarianism to the 1830s, followed the path laid by Priestley and consolidated by Belsham. Thence, many were influenced by William Ellery Channing, the ablest defender of Unitarianism in America who was, however, influenced by Richard Price more than Priestley. Affected also by Kant and his Harvard studies of the 17th century Cambridge philosophers and Plato, Channing emphasised free-will, the power of human reason, mutual religious toleration, biblical scholarship and ethics rather than theology. His quasi-Platonism did not seek to escape the physical world, however, but rather to use it and master it. His strong beliefs in the essential dignity of man and his aspirations for a perfect union of human and Divine will received stimulus from these sources but were centred in his Unitarian religion. He believed man could perfect his own soul through his affections, moral principle and "capacity of communion with the Infinite Fountain of all goodness, joy, beauty, life."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>  
E.G. See Aspland R.B., op.cit., 112, 197-198, 249, 282-4, 302-6; M.C.Y. Report (1823 M.C.O.), 11, 18-9.

<sup>2</sup>  
E.g. Holt R.V., op.cit., 338-9.

<sup>3</sup>  
Channing W.H., The Life of William Ellery Channing, (Boston American Unitarian Association, 1880), 196-8, 375-7; Howe D.W., The Unitarian Conscience, (Harvard U.P., 1970), 42-3. For the evolution of Channing's thought see an interesting analysis by Delbanco A., William Ellery Channing. (Harvard U.P., 1981), especially 23-4, 28-30, 47-51, 170-2.

Channing's fervent spirituality, high ideal of human nature and glowing enthusiasm began to affect and soften English Unitarianism though not all Unitarians who were influenced by him necessarily abandoned their Priestleian views. He answered a deep and increasingly expressed need in Unitarianism for less emphasis on mere intellectualism and a greater appeal, not to "Methodistical" emotion, but (at least) to the heart and feelings.<sup>1</sup>

J.R. Beard, for example, remained faithful to Priestleian Unitarianism all his life but, whilst preferring Unitarians' ceaseless questioning and debate and clear, accurate thinking to what he called the "all but dormant" intellect of the orthodox, he feared that misapprehensions could arise from a religion that appeared merely negative, often extreme and too intellectual. Although as he said "the only fatal heresy" was that "of a wicked life", Unitarians, in his opinion, paid too little attention to stirring the heart and probing the conscience.<sup>2</sup> Channing, however, whilst reinforcing an emphasis on extreme individualism, moral improvement, active faith, education and good works, already prevalent in Unitarian philosophy, essentially based his religion on reason and conscience.<sup>3</sup> As Dr. McGuffie has pointed out, Channing increasingly preached

less a religion of salvation, emphasising God's forgiveness,  
than of self-realization, emphasising the soul's rising of  
its own free-will to God.<sup>4</sup>

1

E.g. M.R. (1830), N.S.4, 119; (1825) vol. XX, 487; Connell J.M. op.cit., 73, 78; ed. le Breton A.L., op.cit., 20, 44-6, 81-2, 93-6, 104-6.

2

Beard James, Typescript of notes for a life of J.E. Beard, (D.W.L.) 1866; M.R. (1829) N.S.3, 696-703.

3

M.R. (1829), N.S.3, 89-91; (1830), N.S.4, 120; (1831), N.S.5, 763; ed. le Breton A.L., op.cit., 36.

4

McGuffie D.S., "William Ellery Channing's Religion and its Influence", T.U.H.S., (July 1980), vol. XVIII, no. 2, 48.



In common with other Unitarians, Channing insisted that Scripture could be understood only by using reason and historical relativity. Since Priestley Unitarian reading of the Bible had seemingly left only revelation and miracles on which to base their faith. By mid-century an increasing number of, although by no means all, Unitarians, put their reliance on reason and conscience, instead of the Bible as the seat of authority in religion. The reason for this can be attributed to their ever growing biblical and historical criticism, coupled with the influence of Channing and then James Martineau backed by John James Taylor, John Hamilton Thom and Charles Wicksteed, the brilliant "quarternion" of the radical Prospective Review.<sup>1</sup>

Channing's view of progressive Christianity reiterated another Priestleian theme, one promulgated in Germany by Lessing in The Education of the Human Race, which Crabb Robinson translated for the Monthly Repository in 1806 and on which Harriet Martineau wrote in 1830.<sup>2</sup> This view of Christianity as a constantly unfolding religion, understood by Man's developing reason, turned Channing and, indeed, James Martineau, against sectarianism of any kind, and reinforced for many Unitarians both a commitment to an open, developing faith, and fear of confining titles and organisation.<sup>3</sup> W.J. Fox depicted the progression within Unitarianism itself through the leadership of Priestley, "the universal inquirer" Belsham, "the consistent controversialist" and Channing who developed the spiritual vitality, "the moral beauty, power and tendencies, of the truth, which had been sought so actively, and championed so ably."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Delbanco A., op.cit., 93-4; M.R., (1829), N.S.3, 635-8; Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 146-251, 279-80, 289-327, 332-7, 360-8; Sellers I., op.cit., 5-6, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. le Breton A.L., op.cit., 20; M.R. (1806) vol.I, 412-20, 467-73; (1830), N.S.4, 300-6, 367-73, 453-8, 511-17.

<sup>3</sup> Howe D.W., op.cit., 99; Delbanco A., op.cit., 77; Channing W.H., op.cit., 428; Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 449-58; Short H.L., op.cit., 260, 267-9.

<sup>4</sup> M.R., (1930), N.S.4, 250-1.

Fox himself was of a poetical and ardent nature, one of Unitarians' principal preachers in the 1820s and early 1830s, appealing particularly to those looking for a more "romantic", spiritual and "loving" faith. Yet he was very much in the intellectual tradition of Unitarianism also, finding, for example, that orthodox Dissent

does not build up intelligence, does not develop the faculties, does not humanize and raise the entire character, nor shape it for public usefulness; ... does not tend towards the expansion of our nature in the individual.<sup>1</sup>

For Fox and many others Unitarianism did precisely this. The new tendencies served only to reinforce the cult of the rational, perpetually self-improving, inquiring, public-spirited individual which epitomised the Unitarian movement.

Another factor which helped shape the philosophy of Unitarianism was that Unitarians came almost completely from the middle-class to artisan sections of society. Unitarians were a small group drawing most heavily on the merchant "princes", wealthier industrialists and intelligentsia of the commercial and wool manufacturing centres in the south-west of England, the industrial north and midlands, London and East Anglia.<sup>2</sup> At the New Meeting, Birmingham, for example, the congregation of many metal workers saw a gradual increase of more substantial manufacturers and professional people such as solicitors, surgeons and architects - the lower rather than the higher echelons of the professions. This was not a rare development from the later 18th century.<sup>3</sup> Unitarian nonconformity of an open and socially superior type was attractive to liberals, intellectuals and independently-minded people who opposed the traditional establishment in church

<sup>1</sup> Garnett R. and E., The Life of W.J. Fox, (1909) 22-4, 26-7; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 70-2.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson E.P., The Making of the Working-Class, (Pelican Paperback, 1968), 29-31; Gilbert A.D., op.cit., 40-1, E.g. see Bowring J. and L., Autobiographical Recollections of Sir John Bowring, (1877), 388; Solly H., op.cit., vol.I, 2-11, 54-5, 108-9; MSS M.C.O. Presbyterian Chapels, Short Articles 2, 89.

<sup>3</sup> Bushrod E., op.cit., 206-19. See also Webb R.K., op.cit., 15-18.

and state, aristocratic power, the gentry and old middle-class. Thus Unitarians were foremost amongst entrepreneurs of all kinds in a dynamic age. They had adherents of lesser rank although there is less evidence extant on the latter.<sup>1</sup>

Hobsbawm has pointed out that the Industrial Revolution created new blocs of "bourgeois", too large to be absorbed by official society and not wishing to be absorbed except on their own terms, new men from the provinces, "a formidable army, all the more so as they became increasingly conscious of themselves as a class rather than a "middle rank" bridging the gap between the lower and upper orders."<sup>2</sup> In the heat of the debate over dating the term "working-class" it has sometimes been overlooked that the term "middle-class" did not appear until around 1812. Asa Briggs argues that a sense of middle-class unity was developed through the opposition to income-tax and the burdens on capital caused by the Napoleonic Wars and the "respectable" struggle for Parliamentary Reform and against the Corn Laws. In all these Unitarians played a leading part, as Briggs' examples, such as that from the Athenaeum of 1807, edited by John and then Arthur Aikin, prove.<sup>3</sup> As one Unitarian asserted "many of the more active and influential members of society" are Protestant Dissenters - the manufacturers, lawyers, doctors and freeholders, whose "virtues of temperance, frugality, prudence and integrity ... are promoted by religious

<sup>1</sup> Nonconformists generally formed 41% of entrepreneurs c.1760-1830 according to E.E. Hagen although they were only c.7% of the population. Hagen found 66% of entrepreneurs were from yeoman stock. Sylvia Harrop found 66% of manufacturers in N.E. Cheshire were Unitarians - Harrop S., The Place of Education in the Genesis of the Industrial Revolution with particular reference to Stalybridge, Dukinfield and Hyde, (Manchester M.A., 1976), 122-5, 171-83. Hopefully more will be revealed about the poorer Unitarian congregations in R.K. Webb's forthcoming book.

<sup>2</sup> Hobsbawm E.J., The Age of Revolution, (Abacus Paperback 1977), 227-8. See also Thompson E.P., op.cit., especially 9-11, 939.

<sup>3</sup> Briggs A., "Middle-class Consciousness in English Politics, 1780-1846", Past and Present, (April 1956), 65-8.

Nonconformity" which in return assisted their "temporal prosperity."<sup>1</sup>

Non-Unitarians, especially ambitious Whigs like Brougham, looking to middle-class support, echoed such sentiments long before the 1820 eulogies of James Mill.<sup>2</sup>

Many Unitarians, therefore, by their own actions and admission, can be classed as middle-class. This term, however, can lead to difficulties. R.S. Neale, for example, suggests that rather than accept the usual three-class model of social structure of aristocracy, middle-class and working-class in the early 19th century, it is preferable to use a five-class model of upper-class, middle-class, middling-class and two working-classes, each defined according to wealth, ascribed status and authority, social custom and language and amount of dependence on and deference to the classes above them. Neale postulates the model as a dynamic one in that all classes were linked, with mobility between them. This makes the middling-class, that is petit bourgeois, aspiring professional men, other literates and artisans, both the central and the most unstable class, with divergent political and social tendencies struggling within it.<sup>3</sup>

Such an explanation does make it easier to see Unitarians as clearly within the middle and especially the middling-class in this period, and, therefore, to understand the social and political differences within the general unity of the movement. Many artisans would be included in the middling group which would

<sup>1</sup> Davies R.W., op.cit., 213.

<sup>2</sup> Briggs A., op.cit., 69.

<sup>3</sup> Neale R.S., "Class and Class - Consciousness in Early 19th Century England: Three Classes or Five?", Victorian Studies, (Sept.1968) vol.12, 4-5, 23-5.

help explain better the attitude of Unitarians and other educationalists towards them. Nevertheless the artisans would have seen themselves and would have been seen by others as working-class and misunderstandings will arise if this is not remembered.<sup>1</sup> Unitarian ministers also were within this group but many commercial and industrial families were far richer. Neale does include prosperous industrialists like John and William Biggs in his middling-class but not industrial and commercial property owners generally, whom he excludes by implication from the ranks of political reformers.<sup>2</sup> Unitarian and other Dissenting wealthy industrialists and merchants were, of course, disadvantaged on the grounds of their religion and were likely to be non-deferential towards traditional authority on that account.

As Neale points out, where ambitious men improve economically, but retain a low, ascribed status and are geographically concentrated in regions where traditional relationships are strong, it is likely that a quasi-group, generating a non-deferential social class-consciousness, will merge and conflict with traditional authority. Neale argues thence that such was the basis of the class conflict of the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>3</sup> Until the 1830s the new middle-class worked with the working-classes and expected them to follow their lead; afterwards relationships were increasingly embittered.

Eric Hobsbawm, unimpressed by eulogies on middle-class intellect and virtue, emphasises that many of the new middle-class were self-made men, self-confident, contemptuous of "useless aristocrats", dogmatic in their convenient political economy and in their "hard" Protestant Dissent (including Unitarianism). The majority, he says, were self-righteous, hypocritical, unintellectual empiricists, hating bureaucracy, government interference, science and technological education. He concludes bitterly "even today the heart contracts at the sight of the landscape constructed by that generation."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Vincent D., Bread, Knowledge and Freedom, (Methuen Paperback 1981), especially 133-65, 200.

<sup>2</sup> Neale R.S., op.cit., 15, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 12-3, 17-21.

<sup>4</sup> Hobsbawm E.J., op.cit., 228, 230.

Hobsbawm does admit that there were:

intelligent, experimentally minded, and even cultured manufacturers in plenty, ... but it would be an error to suppose that they represented the norm of their class.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it was amongst such cultured people that the Unitarians were to be found, a fact Hobsbawm implicitly acknowledges when, referring to "less barbarous" predecessors, he gives four examples, two of them Unitarians, Wedgwood and Priestley.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Derek Fraser's examples of the urban aristocracy were the cotton lords of Manchester, the merchant princes of Liverpool, the textile kings of Leeds and the metal magnates of Birmingham.<sup>3</sup> All of these included powerful Unitarian families, for example the Rathbones, Gregs, Marshalls and Chamberlains respectively. Many others could be added, wealthy capitalists, yet philanthropic, cultured and usually radical, not only in politics but also in social and educational issues.

The whole of Sylvia Harrop's excellent thesis shows how the cotton masters of Hyde, Staleybridge and Dukinfield were responsible, enlightened leaders of their communities, replacing the old gentry and leaders of society.<sup>4</sup> Sidney Checkland argues that Unitarianism was:

the philosophy of those who constituted the spearhead of the attack on the older system (mercantilism) both in Liverpool and elsewhere

and concludes that the intellectual and moral leadership of the small group of Liverpool rationalists centred around William Roscoe sought to raise the merchant to the level of responsibility that his increasing status in society warranted.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>3</sup> Fraser D., Urban Politics in Victorian England, (Macmillan Paperback, 1979), 15.

<sup>4</sup> Harrop S.A., op.cit., especially 37-9, 150, 234-5.

<sup>5</sup> Checkland S.G., "Economic Attitudes in Liverpool, 1793-1807", Economic History Review, (1952), 2nd Series, vol.5, no.1, 63-75.

Indeed, it seems that because Unitarians were so conscious of the philistinism of many of their class, their ministers especially argued strongly for a wide, liberal and scientific education even for businessmen.<sup>1</sup> Their response to the problem of the new industrial middle-class was specific - Unitarians must be its leaders and enlightened ones at that. As W.J. Fox said in 1832, the middle-class's "hitherto neglected mission" was "to conciliate, blend, harmonize and ultimately identify" the higher and lower classes on either side of them.<sup>2</sup>

For Unitarians to do this, however, they first had to overcome the religious and political disabilities which beset them and, indeed, all Dissenters. In the 1770s to 1790s Dissenters agitated against the Test and Corporation Acts, gradually moving from pleading for mere toleration to demanding full re-establishment of civil rights and stating that religion was not within the jurisdiction of the magistrate, an important ideology of liberty that they extended to all spheres. Under the leadership of Unitarians, especially Price and Priestley, they also argued that all subjects<sup>3</sup> had a natural, inherent right to be appointed to any office for which their abilities fitted them. However, not all Calvinists wanted toleration for Unitarians. When, in 1790, Dissenters at last united in strength, the Established Church also organised itself and upheld the living alliance of Church and state of England with singular success.<sup>4</sup> Reaction against the French Revolution and its ideals militated against radical and liberal ideals, whilst orthodox Dissenters closed ranks against Unitarianism. In the early 19th century a worried, as yet unreformed Anglican Church increasingly harrassed the growing army of Dissent with the disabling Acts. All

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Barnes T., "on the Affinity subsisting between the Arts ...".

Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, Vol. I,  
(1785); 92-89.

<sup>2</sup> M.R., (1832) N.S.6, 153.

<sup>3</sup> They did not actually mean "all" but males only.

<sup>4</sup> Lincoln A., op.cit., 211-69; Richey R.E., "The Origins of British Radicalism. The Changing Rationale for Dissent", Eighteenth Century Studies (1973-4) VII, (2), 179-92.

Dissenters were involved in varying degrees in the long struggle to repeal the latter but Unitarians, who were most disadvantaged, were often both local and national leaders in this controversy. William Smith especially was chairman of the Deputies of the Three Denominations<sup>1</sup> from 1805 to 1832 and their chief advocate in Parliament. From 1787 onwards he "fearlessly" and skillfully fought the Dissenting cause until not only were the Five Mile Act and the Conventicle Act repealed in 1812, but, in 1813, Smith, much assisted by the Unitarian Fund Society, surprisingly achieved the repeal of penalties against anti-Trinitarianism.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians were disappointed, however, to find that the Committee of Deputies was loath to support their resistance to any cases of persecution which still ensued, for example, John Wright's arrest for blasphemy in 1817. Thus some of the younger and more radical Unitarians formed the Non-Con Club in 1817 "to promote the great principles of Truth and Liberty as avowed and acted upon by the enlightened and liberal Nonconformists or Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England." This society, open to all liberal Dissenters, attracted "an amazingly distinguished set of members and friends" but its membership was overwhelmingly Unitarian.<sup>3</sup> The Non-Con Club initiated

<sup>1</sup> That is, the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists who had formed this committee of laymen in 1732 as an offshoot from the General Body of Ministers of the Three Denominations of 1702. Both were dominated by the Presbyterians the most numerous, rich and "respectable" among them at the time and this influence passed naturally to the Unitarians aided by Smith's long chairmanship. - Short H.L., op.cit., 244-5, Sellers I., op.cit., 58; Davies R.W., op.cit., 78-80.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 148-86, 190; D.N.B., vol. 53, 149

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 201-3; Ruston A., "The Non-Con Club and some other Unitarian Clubs 1783-1914", T.U.H.S., (1968) vol. XIV, no. 3, 149-59.



the establishment of the Unitarian Association to protect the civil rights of Unitarians in 1819 which began the proceedings leading to the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts at last in 1828.<sup>1</sup> A tenuous unity of Dissenters, despite divisions on the question of Roman Catholic emancipation, brought welcome pressure to back the skilful, opportune tactics of William Smith, advised by Lord John Russell.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians, unlike some orthodox Dissenters, were prepared to extend religious freedom, the essence of their own faith, to those whom, in doctrinal matters, they were most opposed - Roman Catholics, agnostics and also Jews.<sup>3</sup> They also long, and eventually in 1836, successfully, opposed the marriage law enforcing all people, except Quakers and Jews, to marry in the Established Church. With other Dissenters they resisted Church rates and other disabilities and especially any Anglican control of education.<sup>4</sup>

Opponents attacked Unitarian ideals of religious toleration as undermining the contemporary structure of Church and state and, in truth, Radical Dissenters did seek to change the established order of things in government and society. Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, the outstanding Unitarian political theorists, were particularly concerned for civil liberty, that is the right to religious liberty and education, a liberty they depicted as vital to serve God

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 151; Davies R.W., op.cit., 203.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 216-44; Sellers I., op.cit., 66-8; Hexter J.H., "The Protestant Revival and the Catholic Question in England, 1778-1829", Journal of Modern History, (1936), vol.VIII, 297-319.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 88-9; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 135-8; Ruston A., op.cit., 151; Short K.R.M., "London's General Body of Protestant Ministers: its Disruption in 1836", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, (Oct.1973), vol.XXIV, no.4, 377-9.

<sup>4</sup> Short H.L. op.cit., 238-244; Aspland R.B., op.cit., 412-5; Beard James, op.cit., 1826; Fraser D., op.cit., 31-54; Patterson A.T., Radical Leicester, (1975) 231-2 247-55, 333; MSS Nottingham University, High Pavement, H1M2 27.2. 1825.

and the community best. Political liberty, they argued, could first be secured by opening all offices to talent. It had to be allied to independent judgement which depended on position and particularly education. Their own experience led them to distrust the power or benevolence of the state. Nevertheless, to secure the natural rights of citizens to liberty and the means of attaining virtue, they wanted a free government, freely chosen.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Unitarians supported the American Revolution; they played a leading role in the movement for Parliamentary Reform from the late 1760s to the 1790s and some of them advocated universal manhood, or even universal, suffrage. Unitarians were among the original members of the 1780 Society for Promoting Constitutional Information and prominent in the early moves for constitutional change. All Unitarians researched here were ardent supporters of the French Revolution; they remained so almost on their own. Mrs Barbauld exulted "The minds of men are in movement from the Borysthenes to the Atlantic," whilst even the quiet, retiring Theophilus Lindsey celebrated the anniversary of the French Revolution in 1790 and 1791 at the Revolution Club and welcomed Tom Paine's The Rights of Man.<sup>2</sup> As the French Revolution became more violent the sharp counter-revolution in England turned particularly against Unitarians, numbers of whom were imprisoned for alleged sedition, publicly ostracised, financially ruined, attacked wherever rioting mobs broke out and driven into

<sup>1</sup> Fitzpatrick M., op.cit., 98-9; Lincoln A., op.cit., 101-81; Thomas D.O., "Rational Dissent and the Foundations of Liberalism", Faith and Freedom (Spring 1986), vol.39, Part 1, No.115, 14-23. Richard Price's pamphlet on Civil Liberty at the outbreak of the American Revolution had sold 60,000 copies.

<sup>2</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 90-111, 152; ed. Aikin L., Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, (1825), vol.II 371; Lincoln A., op.cit., 22-51.

voluntary exile.<sup>1</sup> Even in Unitarian ranks, however, confusion grew as the arrest and acquittal of Jeremiah Joyce exemplified. Joyce was publicly feted and given important positions among Unitarians yet never secured a permanent post as a Unitarian minister.<sup>2</sup> Above all, the turn of events in France after Napoleon's climb to power dampened the optimism of many Unitarians. Although, by the early 19th century, however, some, like Belsham, eschewed radical liberalism, others like William Frend and Thomas Wright Hill, whilst upholding the defence of England in the Napoleonic Wars, did not turn against radical principles. Radicalism did not collapse among the English Unitarians as John Seed has suggested. Some Unitarians consistently opposed the war, many were reluctant to celebrate the Jubilee of George III in 1809 and a number helped keep alive the idea of Parliamentary Reform.<sup>3</sup> After the war many Unitarians were prominently active in, although no longer the national leaders of, the Reform Movement, and they continued to bear the brunt of unpopularity for it in the years of a succession of repressive Tory governments. Even the most conservative Unitarians were reformist Whigs, for example, Belsham, who actively worked during the war for Parliamentary Reform and

<sup>1</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 111-21; Prentice A., Historical Sketches (1851), 9-14, 18-21; Thompson E.P., op.cit., 121-3; Ridyard H., A Selection from the Early Letters of the late Rev. William Shepherd, LL.D., (1855), 34, 50-2, 60, 77-82; Rodgers B., Georgian Chronicle (1958) 112-8; Knight F., University Rebel (1971) 119-62.

<sup>2</sup> Seed J., "Jeremiah Joyce, Unitarianism and the Radical Intelligentsia in the 1790s", T.U.H.S., (April 1981), vol. XVII, no. 3, 97-105.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 97; 103-4; Aikin L., op.cit., vol. I., 248, 254; Knight F., op.cit., 234, 258-67, 285-90; Hill R. and G.B., Life of Sir Rowland Hill, (1880), 19-23; Knight F., Letters to William Frend from the Reynolds Family of Little Paxton and John Hammond of Fenstanton 1793-1814 (1974), 84, 92; le Breton A.L., Memories of Seventy Years, (1883), 33; M.R., (1808), vol. III, 108-9; Holt R.V., op.cit., 122-32; Patterson A.T., op.cit., 102:

deplored Peterloo.<sup>1</sup>

William Smith was a good example of one of the more moderate Whig Unitarians. An M.P. almost continuously from 1784 to 1830, Smith was well in with the Whig elite such as Charles James Fox<sup>2</sup> and James Mackintosh. He was never a democrat or in favour of paid M.P.s or annual Parliaments, but wanted uniform household suffrage and consistently supported Parliamentary Reform. He sometimes differed from his radical constituents in Norwich but these were chiefly led by Unitarians, solidly middle class, "wealthy, well-educated, successful business and professional men." Smith's principal disagreement with such was over the timing of political reform. He did not believe the people were sufficiently educated to share in political government but he did believe them educable and, indeed, saw and fought for education of all kinds as the chief solution to religious and political problems. Smith, therefore, like others, was on the reforming wing of the Whigs, to the left of most of the upper and middle-classes, but to the right both of the radical middle-class, often led also by Unitarians, and of the artisan and working-class radicals.<sup>3</sup>

The Whigs were generally in support of Parliamentary Reform to enfranchise the middle-classes and their alliance with working-class radicals before 1832 was often rather uneasy.<sup>4</sup> More radical Unitarians however, had some sympathy

<sup>1</sup> Knight F., University Rebel ..., 244, 251, 293; Holt R.V., op.cit., 124-25, 129-30; Chandler G., op.cit., 115; Patterson A.T., op.cit., 17.

<sup>2</sup> Fox's death in 1806 was as deeply lamented by Unitarians as his rise to power had been celebrated earlier in the year - M.R. (1806) vol.I, 548-50, 606-7.

<sup>3</sup> Davies R.W., op.cit., 64-70, 92, 133-45, 188-9, 207-8.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Nicholson F. and Oxon E. "The Manuscript of William Shepherd at Manchester College, Oxford, T.U.H.S., (1922) vol.II, 120 but see Davies R.W., op.cit., 201.

for the Blanketeers and the victims of the Derbyshire Treason Trials, for example Matthew Davenport Hill and Joseph Strutt respectively.<sup>1</sup> The Hill family's new school at Hazelwood, Birmingham, became quite a rendezvous for Birmingham's little group of reformers. Edwin Hill joined the local Hampden Club, Matthew Davenport Hill, newly called to the bar, defended the Unitarian Major Cartwright in 1820 against a conspiracy charge. He confessed his strong republican sympathies to Thomas Jefferson in 1825 as Rowland Hill did to his idol, Maria Edgeworth, in 1829. The notorious John Thelwall drew crowds to Hazelwood by his public lectures as well as thrilling the boys by his brilliant conversation.<sup>2</sup> In 1831, the Hill family spared Frederic from school teaching to become a very active member of the important Birmingham Political Union which was linked partly through Unitarian ties to a network of reformers throughout the kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

Generally Unitarians were active agitators, particularly locally, for a wide spectrum of reform. The adherence of even the least radical Whig Unitarians to social and educational reform, for example hospital, medical, asylum, prison

<sup>1</sup> Hill R. and F.D., The Recorder of Birmingham: A Memoir of Matthew Davenport Hill, (1878) 28-9; Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., The Strutts and the Arkwrights 1758-1830, (1958), 189.

<sup>2</sup> R. and G.B. Hill, op.cit., 139-40, 149, 167-8; Hey C.C., The History of Hazelwood School, Birmingham, and its Influence on Educational Developments in the Nineteenth Century, (M.A. Swansea, 1954), 32, 74, 308; Holt R.V., op.cit., 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Hill C., Frederic Hill, (1894), 77, 92-9; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 109-10, 114-5, 130-135; Briggs A., The Age of Improvement, (1959), 247-9, 252-8. See also Beale C.H., Memorials of the Old Meeting House and Burial Ground, Birmingham, (Birmingham 1882) 50 and Gravestone 97.

or school reform, illustrates their stance as part of a Radical to Liberal range of thought throughout this period.<sup>1</sup> All the Unitarians examined in this thesis supported Parliamentary and municipal reform and opposed the Corn Laws. In Parliamentary Reform they were sufficiently prominent for the Duke of Wellington to attribute the 1832 Act to "the shopkeepers, being Dissenters from the Church, many of them Socinians, Atheists..<sup>2</sup> A number of Unitarian M.P.s were subsequently elected to Parliament - half of the Dissenters returned in 1832. Bowring recalled 13 out of 14 Dissenting M.P.s being Unitarian when he was an M.P.<sup>3</sup>

Unitarians also played a leading role in many towns, fighting for municipal reform, either to incorporate unincorporated towns like Manchester and Birmingham, or to reform corrupt or exclusive, self-elected corporations usually monopolized by old established Tory or Anglican families - a struggle for power within the urban middle-classes ably analysed by Derek Fraser. Where Unitarians could achieve a modicum of power before 1836, as on the Manchester police commissioners, the Birmingham Court-Leet and in the rapidly growing towns

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Cappe C., Memoirs of the Life of the late Mrs Catherine Cappe, (1822), 317-8, 341-4, 414-6, 430-1; Kenrick J., op.cit., 137-40, 168; Tiffany F., Life of Dorothea Lynde Dix (1891), 69ff.; Bushrod E., op.cit., 151-2; Bowery M.M., William Turner's Contribution to Educational Developments in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1782-1841, (M.A. Newcastle, 1980), 90, 93, 134-41; Harris G., The Christian Character of the late Revd. William Turner (1850), 18-9, 22-3; M.R., (1831) N.S.5, 139-40.

<sup>2</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 132.

<sup>3</sup> Sellers I., op.cit., 68; Bowring J. and L., op.cit., 16-9, 387 - Bowring was M.P. 1834-7, 1841-9.

they helped create as in north-east Cheshire, they were well-represented and gave energetic service but were unable to effect much because of inadequate powers and finance.<sup>1</sup> Having very actively fought for the Municipal Corporations Act, however, they celebrated the victory by capturing municipal control in many large urban centres, for example, the first 7 mayors of the reformed Town Corporation of Leicester were from the Great Meeting; the first and nine others of the first 28 mayors of Manchester were from Cross Street Chapel; and 23 Unitarian mayors presided over Birmingham from 1841-93.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians, indeed, had a passionate commitment to political and social reform and to individual liberty and justice. This arose from their rationalism which gave them an optimistic belief in the capacity of man ultimately to reach a perfect state in this world. As R.V. Holt has said:

civil and religious liberty to Unitarians is not merely part of a political programme but an expression of their deepest faith.<sup>3</sup>

To many Unitarians, therefore, politics and religion were but two sides of the same coin. Indeed, the Rev. John Relly Beard, himself a staunch and active liberal, felt that the Unitarian Association meetings were more like political than religious gatherings, with endless, ecstatically applauded toasts to liberty around the world.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fraser D., op.cit., 115-9; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 148-9; Holt R.V., op.cit., 221-4, 226-8.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser D., op.cit., 149-50; Thomas A.H., A History of the Great Meeting Leicester and its Congregation, (Leicester 1908), 49; McLachlan, J, "Cross Street Chapel in the Life of Manchester", Memoir and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (Feb.1941), vol.lxxxiv,no.3, 38; Bushrod E., op.cit., 225.

<sup>3</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 69.

<sup>4</sup> M.R., (1829),N.S.3, 703.

Unitarians, particularly those associated with W.J. Fox in the early 1830s, were also open to continental political ideas such as those of Saint-Simon who envisaged continuous secular progress brought about by the efficient, scientific organisation of society by an elite of social engineers, backed by a new public religion of rationalised Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Fox was one of the most popular members of the National Political Union, an invaluable mediator between middle-class and working-class Unionists. He was also familiar with the network of Benthamites through his Unitarian connections, for example, Thomas Southwood Smith and John Bowring.<sup>2</sup> Bowring, son of a principal woollen merchant in Exeter, self-taught in many languages, a successful translator and later much honoured with, among other things, a doctorate and a knighthood, was the right-hand man of Jeremy Bentham from the early 1820s. In 1824, he was joint-editor with Henry Southern, another Unitarian, of the newly-founded Westminster Review, to the first edition of which Fox and Southwood-Smith both contributed. In 1832 he became the executor and publisher of Bentham's manuscripts. His expurgated editions and his biography have earned criticisms, but fearful of publishing all of Bentham's "bold" writings, he knowingly left them with the British Museum so that they "at some future time may be dragged into the light of day."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Southwood Smith helped Bentham write his constitutional code

<sup>1</sup> Stromberg R.N., European Intellectual History Since 1789 (1981), 79, 84; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 213-5; M.R., (1831), N.S.5, 83-8, 181-9, 279-83; Webb R.K., Harriet Martineau.... 180; Bowring J. and L., op.cit., 384-6. But see ed. Saddler T., Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, (1872), vol.II, 114, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 109-14; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 184-6.

<sup>3</sup> Bowring J. and L., op.cit., 3-14, 337, 339; Crimmins J.E., "Bentham's Religious Writings: A Bibliographic Chronology", The Bentham Newsletter, (June 1985) No.9, 28-9.



in 1830, and, at Bentham's wish, hopefully to overcome prejudice against dissection, publicly dissected Bentham's dead body. Smith became a leading crusader for public health in the following thirty years. His Illustrations of Divine Government, tending to show that everything is under the direction of infinite wisdom and goodness, and will terminate in the production of universal purity and happiness was admired by people as diverse as Lord Byron and James Martineau.<sup>1</sup> Other Unitarians in the Benthamite circle included Sarah Austin, the brilliant, beautiful wife of the jurist John Austin, and Edward Strutt, later the first Lord Belper and M.P. for Derby from 1830.<sup>2</sup>

It was not surprising that Unitarians had links with the Benthamites; their own ideas on Parliamentary reform corresponded to those of Bentham who, since 1808, preferred a representative government, elected by secret ballot, as the least fallible of masters since it would be the sum of those best able to judge their own interests and thus would lead to "the greatest happiness of the greatest number", a term which Bentham acknowledged he borrowed from Priestley.<sup>3</sup> There was, after all, a close correlation between many of the

<sup>1</sup> M.R. (1832), N.S. 6, 450-7, 705-13; (1831), N.S. 5, 779-81; Lewes C.L., Dr. Southwood Smith (1898), passim; Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 35, 119-20; Holt R.V., op.cit. 174-5

<sup>2</sup> Mill J.S., Autobiography, (Oxford Paperback 1971), 40-1, 46-7, 63, 72, 117; Ross J. Three Generations of Englishwomen (1888), vol. I 35-6, 45, 68. Strutt was a subscriber to Manchester College from 1821 until the late 1840s at least but he married Amelia Otter, daughter of the Bishop of Chichester in 1837, so he might have become an Anglican - MSS M.C.O. Letter Book ... 1824-80, 113; M.C. Reports 1840, 11; 1847, 27; D.N.B. vol. 55, 63-4.

<sup>3</sup> Halevy E., The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism, (Faber Paperback 1972), 404-33, 491; Bowring J. and L., op.cit., 337.

ideas of Unitarians and Utilitarians. Utilitarianism was severely rationalistic: based on Enlightenment hedonism, it required laws and institutions to be justified according to how much welfare they achieved rather than solely by sentimental or traditional usage. The Utilitarians, therefore, wished to sweep away all abuses and illogicalities and establish a "bright new model built on scientific foundations."<sup>1</sup> Bentham aimed to maximise happiness through utilitarian law, a contrast to Adam Smith's laissez-faire. Through the agency of James Mill the ideas of Bentham and others were fused into and thence diffused from the Utilitarian school. In the 1830s Philosophical Radicals attacked the economic, political and philosophical fallacies which they saw in the landowning, aristocratical, deferrent society of their day and advocated practical reforms based on accurate factual information.<sup>2</sup> Their rational principles and, not least, their assumptions of the proper leadership of the able and enterprising in the middle-class, kept alert by the free discussion of an educated populace, had much in common with ideas already prevalent in Unitarianism.

Furthermore, both Utilitarians and Unitarians derived their psychology and thus their environmental and educational views from Hartley.<sup>3</sup> Thus both believed in a self-improving society and in the perfectibility of man. Thomas Belsham furthered the work of Priestley and Hartley by publishing Elements of the Philosophy of the Mind and of Moral Philosophy ... in 1801, a work esteemed

<sup>1</sup> Stromberg R.N., op.cit., 67.

<sup>2</sup> Halevy E., op.cit., 153-4, 249-478.

<sup>3</sup> See below chap.II for a detailed discussion of Hartley's thought.

greatly by Unitarians and probably James Mill's first introduction to Hartley. Mill has been called the "true heir" to Hartley's philosophy by some historians and John Stuart Mill, though when the latter and other younger Utilitarians studied Hartley, they "raised Priestley's edition to an extravagant price by searching through London to furnish each of us a copy."<sup>1</sup>

Most Utilitarians believed that altruistic feelings developed out of selfishness, a philosophy that was paralleled by Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy of 1785 which propounded a theological utilitarianism in which virtue was defined as "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God and for the sake of everlasting happiness." Paley depicted the design of the moral world as mechanical and expedient like that of the Newtonian physical world. Paley's works were standard texts at the universities, especially Cambridge where he had been pre-eminent in the late 18th century.<sup>2</sup> Unitarians also read Paley but it seems they much preferred his Natural Theology which examined nature to prove the existence of an intelligent, designing God, than a moral philosophy based crudely on self-centred expediency for future heavenly reward.<sup>3</sup> Similarly their own utilitarianism was, as their educational theories, were, parallel to, not derived from, Benthamite philosophy. For Unitarians

<sup>1</sup> Belsham T., Elements of the Philosophy of the Mind and of the Moral Philosophy to which is prefixed a Compendium of Logic, (1801); M.R. (1830), N.S.4, 85; Halevy E., op.cit., 434, 438-9; ed. Mill J.S., Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind by James Mill, (1878), xii-xiii; Hartley D., Observations on Man, (Scholars Facsimile and Reprints, Delmar, New York 1976), xii-xiii; Mill J.S., op.cit., 74.

<sup>2</sup> Halevy E., op.cit., 463-6; Knight F., op.cit., 23-4.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Joyce J., A Full and Complete Analysis of Dr. Paley's Natural Theology... (1807); Joyce J., The Subserviency of Free Enquiry ... (1816), 39; M.R., (1811) vol. VI, 279; Martineau H., History of the Thirty Years Peace, (1851), ccccviii; Howe D.W., op.cit., 64-6, 72-3.

Hartley's Rule of Life was as important as the first part of his work. In this Hartley used associationism to show how hope and fear could lead to the pure, disinterested love of God and of one's neighbour, an added factor of religious faith and Christian precepts which gave a warmer, wider dimension to Unitarians' utilitarianism.<sup>1</sup> Many critics of Utilitarianism including James Martineau when older, disliked a philosophy based exclusively on the "felicific calculus" of pain and pleasures, without spiritual values and seemingly selfish. The Utilitarians did not, in fact, lack moral concern but they certainly lacked emotion and poetic imagination as John Stuart Mill discovered to his cost.<sup>2</sup> Unitarians had their own similar problems as shown, but Lant Carpenter and other leading Unitarian educationalists never forgot the importance of the reciprocal influence in education of both mind and heart which they linked very closely to the development of the moral sense.<sup>3</sup>

The Unitarians, therefore, were close to the Utilitarians but, as a group, were not of them, deriving their radicalism first from their faith. For example, R.K. Webb has exemplified Harriet Martineau as a Unitarian who sympathised with much of Benthamite reformism but was less "rigorous and precise", more utopian and woolly and much more of a radical revolutionary.<sup>4</sup> Parnaby sees the Unitarians' rational religion as the main link between Dissent and "secular Dissenters" or sceptical utilitarians" and extending its appeal.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hartley D., op.cit., Vol.II, 211-358. Compare Belsham T., op.cit., 369-447 and ed. Mill J.S., op.cit., 206-34, 280-326.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau J., Essays, Reviews and Addresses (1890) vol.I, 73; Judges A.V., Pioneers of English Education, (1952), 85-6; ed. Burston W.H., James Mill on Education, (1969), 62-5; Mill J.S. op.cit., 31-4, 80-90.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter L., Principles of Education, (1820), 19-328.

<sup>4</sup> Webb R.K., Harriet Martineau ... 88-90.

<sup>5</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., xiii-xiv.

A measure of this empathy is illustrated by the fact that, although Benthamite writings were not generally known in England until the 1820s, the Monthly Repository gave examples of Bentham's doctrine from 1807.<sup>1</sup> From 1811 to 1826 the following quotation from Bentham's Fragment on Government was used as the title page motto:

To do something to instruct, but more to undeceive, the timid and admiring student; - to excite him to place more confidence in his own strength, and less in the infallibility of great names; - to help him to emancipate his judgement from the shackles of authority; - to teach him to distinguish between shewy language and sound sense; - to shew him that what may tickle the ear or dazzle the imagination, will not always inform the judgement; - to dispose him rather to fast on ignorance than to feed himself with error.<sup>2</sup>

Any association with the Utilitarians, however, hardly won Unitarians any greater popularity. Despite the prevalence of a general utilitarian ethic and some acceptance of Utilitarian political and economic demands, Benthamism itself had few friends. The Westminster Radicals were disliked even by the Whigs, and won no sympathy at all from either Evangelicals or conservative radicals like William Cobbett.<sup>3</sup> Both Utilitarians and Unitarians were attacked as atheistic, politically revolutionary and as too analytical, logical and cold; accusations which, despite Unitarian humanitarianism, their acceptance of the "scientific laws" of political economy, discussed below, often seemed to justify.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.R., (1807), vol. II, 383.

<sup>2</sup> M.R., (1811), vol. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Stromberg R.N. op.cit., 69; Holt R.V., op.cit., 163-4.

<sup>4</sup> Political economy is discussed in chap.V.

The chief opposition to such ideas came from those such as Coleridge who looked to an altogether different philosophy. In the 1790s Coleridge had been an enthusiastic, active Unitarian but, to the sorrow of his Unitarian friends, his Unitarian phase did not survive his visit to Germany in 1798. He turned against materialist philosophy and rational religion although his rationalist streak continued to show in his religious views and his attitudes to science, as they did in the Broad Church which he so heavily influenced and which had so many points of contact with Unitarians.<sup>1</sup> Coleridge's philosophy from 1808 to 1834, although developing and changing, reflected his reaction against the 18th century Enlightenment, its notions of "rights", of an atomistic society and of revolutionising society by political change. He preferred the idea of an organic society, seeing the state as a spiritual entity, led, humanized and unified by a clerisy of the learned, gathered from all denominations, arts and sciences into a National Church.<sup>2</sup>

Coleridge's thinking had been transformed by German philosophy and Romanticism, especially by Kant who argued that the human mind encountered reality neither through the senses nor reason alone but contained organising principles, forms and categories which imposed order on, and gave meaning to, experience. For Kant, God's existence could not be proved from the facts of physical nature. Such knowledge was separate or intuitive, at most glimpsed fleetingly in moments of moral or aesthetic experience. The great appeal of his philosophy, despite many obscurities and contradictions, was his assertion of faith in rationality, human dignity and free will, even though he postulated man's inability to plumb ultimate mysteries. It was easy for his philosophy to

<sup>1</sup> Stephenson H.W., "Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Unitarianism", T.U.H.S. (Oct.1932), vol V Part 2, 165-84; ed. Stauffer D.A., op.cit., 164-89; Wigmore-Beddoes D.G., op.cit., 88-90 *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Holmes R., Coleridge (U.P. Paperback 1982), 64-76; Willey B., Nineteenth Century Studies (Peregrine 1969) 9-58; Knights B., The Idea of the Clerisy in the Nineteenth Century, (1978), 37-69.

become the basis of widely differing systems, and it did so.<sup>1</sup> In England it appeared, superficially and at first, to have a conservative effect, but a definite radicalism was inescapable from the "critical philosophy." The emphasis on the importance and sacredness of the human mind and inner self, and the depiction of the final purpose of all creation as man's full realization as a moral being could not but give a value to the individual as a being almost equivalent to God which cut across hierarchical and traditional ideas. Philosophy became almost equivalent to religion.

It was his interpretation of such aspects of Kantian thought as these which appealed to Channing for whom Kant confirmed the reverence for the essential powers of man which he had derived from Richard Price. Channing's resolve was to awaken in men a consciousness of the "greatness of the soul, and a reverence for the moral element in man as an emanation from the Infinite Being, as God's image, voice, life within us."<sup>2</sup> Before the 1830s, however, English Unitarianism remained in the Hartleian tradition. Coleridge was the main channel in England of the ferment of German philosophy, but the only Unitarians likely to have an unqualified admiration for this were those like F.D. Maurice who were leaving Unitarianism.<sup>3</sup>

Rationalist thought, after all, was opposed to the new "romanticism" which swept Europe. The latter mood, reacting against the neglect of the imagination in the Enlightenment and preferring instantaneous intuitive truth and the mysterious in religion to reason, facts and hedonistic ethic, heralded a deep and important spiritual change declaring itself in a lyrical exuberance and tremendous outburst of creative energy. The romantic stress on inward emotional

<sup>1</sup> Stromberg R.N., op.cit., 28-34; Scruton R., Kant, (U.P. Paperback, 1982), passim.

<sup>2</sup> Channing W.H., op.cit., 274-6, 375.

<sup>3</sup> D.N.B., vol.37, 98.

experience interacted in England with the growth of Evangelicalism and, in the 1830s, with the Oxford Movement.<sup>1</sup>

John Stuart Mill probably best caught the dichotomy of the two great opposing types of mind exemplified in Utilitarianism and Romanticism in his essay on Bentham and Coleridge, seeing improvement in society coming from oscillation between the two extremes.<sup>2</sup> Unitarians, obviously, tended towards the Benthamite extreme, especially before the 1830s. They were, however, much affected by certain German scholarship. Coleridge, in his somewhat misty way, and later Carlyle, were famous for diffusing German thought, but William Taylor and Henry Crabb Robinson, although lesser intellects, had spearheaded the actual introduction of German works into England from the 1790s and 1800s respectively. Taylor was, for thirty years, a much praised translator and prolific reviewer of German works, particularly in Dr. Aikin's Monthly Magazine.<sup>3</sup> While Robinson's efforts to bring German literature before a generally unappreciative English public was praised by Goethe himself.<sup>4</sup>

Unitarians were, at least, generally open to new ideas, and keen to promote modern languages. The Monthly Repository, indeed, completely eclipsed rival religious periodicals in its translations from modern languages, particularly German, Crabb Robinson's translation of Lessing in 1806 beginning a spate of widely-ranging articles by a variety of contributors over the

<sup>1</sup> Stromberg R.N. op.cit., 36-52; Knights B., op.cit., 18-20, 33-4.

<sup>2</sup> Mill J.S., On Bentham and Coleridge, (Cambridge U.P. Paperback, 1980), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Holmes R., op.cit., 14-5, 33, 41-2; Bowring J. and L. op.cit., 356; Le Quesne A.L., Carlyle, (U.P. Paperback 1982), 9, 15, 90; ed. Robberds J.W., A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late William Taylor of Norwich, (1843) *passim*; ed. le Breton A.L., op.cit., 414-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Saddler T., op.cit., vol. I, 67-75, 181, 198, 310, 316-21, 407; vol. II, 53, 70-9.



years.<sup>1</sup> Such writers were critics and interested observers of the German scene rather than enthusiastic devotees<sup>2</sup> but many Unitarians, for example Thomas Belsham and Charles Wellbeloved, did find an abiding allurement in German Biblical criticism.<sup>3</sup> J.J. Tayler and John Morell became the enthusiastic although not uncritical, leading reviewers of such research, otherwise largely unpopular in England, in the Monthly Repository in the late 1820s, Tayler being one of the many students of John Kenrick at Manchester College who eagerly studied in Germany in adult life. Tayler later held services in German at Upper Brook Street, Manchester, which many Germans attended.<sup>4</sup>

Thus Unitarians were devouring German Biblical scholarship long before the excitement stirred in England by Mary Ann Evans's translation of Strauss

<sup>1</sup> M.R., For H.C.R.'s articles see (1806) vol.1, 412-20, 467-73; (1808) vol.III, 173-9; (1812), vol.VII, 352-7; (1832) N.S.6, 289-308, 361-71, 460-9, 505-20, 595-603, 681-9, 742-56; (1833) N.S.7, 111-9, 184-95, 271-84. Some other examples (1825) vol.XX, 194, 335-6, 389, 403-4, 538-41; (1826), vol.XXI, 583-5; (1827), N.S.1, 33-48, 62, 128-33, 144, 145, (1828), N.S.2, 154-5; (1830), N.S.4, 300-6, 367-73, 453-8, 511-7, 545-8, 585-9, 729-38, 808-14, 829-43; (1831), N.S.5, 30-4, 97-106, 174-8, 268-72, 289-98, 387-8, 394-6, 444; (1832) N.S.6, 34-42, 86-97, 165-72, 217-33, 734-41, 797-804. Mineka F.E., op.cit., 117.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. M.R., (1825) vol.XX, 194, 389; Belsham T., op.cit., iv.

<sup>3</sup> Wilbur R.M. op.cit., 338-9; Carpenter J.E., The Bible in the Nineteenth Century, (1903), 63-9.

<sup>4</sup> See above note 3 especially M.R. (1832); D.N.B., vol.31, 15; vol.55, 339; ed. Thom J.H., Letters embracing the Life of John James Tayler B.A., (1872), vol.I, 98, 111, 116-69, 181, 183, 185-6, 235, 244-5, 256-8, 316; vol.II, 3, 42; see also e.g. Drummond J. and Upton C.B., James Martineau, (1902), 161, 183-9, 262.

in 1846.<sup>1</sup> They were also affected in various other ways. Edgar Taylor, for example, was drawn to German folk-lore and, in particular, translated Grimm's Fairy Tales for children.<sup>2</sup> W.J. Fox and many of his Monthly Repository Circle eagerly imbibed German literature, language and educational developments in the late 1820s and 1830s.<sup>3</sup> William Rathbone, Joseph Ashton and his nephew, Thomas, and Henry Enfield Roscoe are examples of Unitarians who attended German universities, German advanced scientific studies being a particular draw for many of them.<sup>4</sup>

From the late 18th century to the 1850s, therefore, Unitarians played an important part in the religious, political economic and intellectual life of England. This both reflected and influenced their beliefs and attitudes. They remained small in number - even by 1851 they only totalled about 50,000 - and in many ways they were unpopular. They were highly individualistic and open to new ideas in a period of great change, so they were not always in agreement even amongst themselves. Nevertheless they made a vital contribution to English life and nowhere more than in education, as will be shown.

<sup>1</sup> Murphy H.R., "The Ethical Revolt against Christian Orthodoxy in Early Victorian England", American History Review, (1955), vol.LX,800-17; Haight G., George Eliot, (O.U. Paperback, 1978), 37-9.

<sup>2</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 413.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 151-62,228-9.

<sup>4</sup> MSS Liverpool University, William Rathbone, IX.2 1-56; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 155; Roscoe H.E., The Life and Experiences of ... (1906),44-99. The subject of Unitarians and science is discussed in each ensuing chapter.

Unitarians and Education in Late Eighteenth Century England

The religious and philosophical outlook of the Unitarians and the political and social position in which they were placed helped form a distinctive educational ideal which many Unitarians sought actively to propagate. The clearest exponent of that ideal was Joseph Priestley and his educational work and that of other eighteenth century Unitarians will be examined in this chapter.

England's traditional educational system had many drawbacks in the second half of the eighteenth century. The only two English universities, Oxford and Cambridge, had become rather ossified and self-contained, reflecting in their complacency, traditional studies and comparative inactivity both their clerical dominance and exclusion of Dissenters and their increasing reliance on the governing classes. The public schools had a justified reputation for corruption, dissipation and lawlessness.<sup>1</sup> The grammar schools which, together with public schools and private classes, provided the age-old classical education for boys above the poor were generally suffering from neglect, poverty and competition with private schools offering a more modern curriculum. Although some introduced subjects like arithmetic and accounts in order to give a wider appeal, academic conservatism and conviction tended to ensure that the more academically ambitious the master, the more likely the curriculum was to be rigidly classical. Although R.S. Thompson's reappraisal<sup>2</sup> has modified the usual picture of the narrow, rigid grammar syllabus, even he admits that the statistics prove that the majority of such schools taught classics only and of those old ones who changed most did so towards the elementary three Rs rather than towards any more modern type of curriculum. Many parents in the

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Lawson J. and Silver H., A Social History of Education in England, (Methuen Paperback, 1973), 177-80, 198-202, 209-18.

2

Ibid., 195-8, 202-7; Thompson R.S., "The English Grammar School Curriculum in the Eighteenth Century : a reappraisal", B.J.E.S., (Feb. 1971), vol. XIX, no. 1, 32-9; see also Simon J., "Private classical schools in eighteenth-century England : a critique of Hans.", H. of E., (Sept. 1979), vol. 8, no. 3, 179-91; Hans N., New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century, (1951), passim.

commercial classes, therefore, preferred to send their sons to one of the proliferation of private schools which would offer the more useful mathematical and vocational subjects, whilst some of the aristocracy, squirearchy and clergy preferred private tutors or private classical schools. Farmers and craftsmen also used such schools in their locality because they provided a gentleman's education at a low cost.

The daughters of such families had an even worse deal. Before the industrial revolution most middle-class girls had at least been given a practical education in housewifery, but by this period this was increasingly less fashionable.<sup>1</sup> Aristocratic ladies might have a grounding in modern languages, but for all ranks above the poor the only education apart from morality and manners was very elementary.<sup>2</sup> Apart from everlasting sewing, it consisted at most of showy accomplishments, usually a superficial grounding in English, French, music and drawing designed to catch a husband. Classics, the basis of a "gentleman's" education was banned for a girl in case they harmed her purity of mind. Usually middle-class girls were taught at home by parents, visiting-masters or by ill-paid governesses whose chief qualification was their ladylike demeanour. The many schools for girls offered an education limited both in duration and aims, with only one or two achieving excellence. There was little desire that women should be well-educated for few men of the day considered women capable of an intellectual education or of having any use for one if they were.<sup>3</sup>

For the poor there was no state schooling and charity schools, which had never reached more than a fraction of them were increasingly insufficient at a

<sup>1</sup> Pinchbeck I., Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850, (1930), 28,34-6,304-5,315-6.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Cappe C., Memoirs of ... (1822), 50-6.

<sup>3</sup> Hans N., op.cit., 194-208; Lawson J. and Silver H., op.cit., 207-9.

time when the population was rapidly expanding. Nor were the small private and dame schools equal to filling the gap. On the evidence available it seems that the literacy rate for men was about under two-thirds, and for women, nearly a half, but such figures give little guide to the quality or extent of education available. What is certain is that many children had no, or next to no, education at all. The growth of retail and foreign trade and skilled crafts such as machine-making required more skilled men but, among the ruling elite, the view was still strong that too much literacy for the masses would threaten the established order, whilst many factory owners were too interested in a cheap, subservient labour force to wish the workers education. From the 1780s the Evangelicals, such as Hannah More, took a different view and wished to teach the poor to read the Bible in order "to train up the lower classes in habits of industry and piety" and teach them due deference and subordination yet the more conservative were appalled that they should go so far.<sup>1</sup>

This was the educational system with which Unitarians were confronted. Their outstanding leader, Joseph Priestley, gave them as creative, innovative, and radical a lead in education as he did in theology, politics and science. Priestley came from a Yorkshire Congregationalist family but whilst at Daventry Academy and in his subsequent career as minister, schoolmaster and tutor, he developed his radical religious viewpoint until, soon after he became minister at Mill-Hill, Leeds, in 1767, he became a Socinian. Throughout these years he also developed his ideas on education, especially from 1761-7 when he was tutor in languages and belles-lettres at Warrington Academy. There his wide-ranging lectures, particularly on history and law, furthered a great broadening of the curriculum in an already innovative institution. He included so much in his courses that when he left they had to be divided between three men. It appears that he delivered some lectures on chemistry and one year gave a score of lectures on anatomy. He also established a small school library comprising chiefly books of natural and civil history together with books of travel to be read with the appropriate maps. The establishment of William Eyres' printing

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 235-40.

press in Warrington stimulated many tutors to publish their work, especially as there was a dearth of suitable textbooks in all subjects, whether new or long-established. The publication of Priestley's Rudiments of English Grammar in 1761, marked the beginning of a lifelong series of educational works, many of which were based on his own lectures.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time Priestley became increasingly interested in experimental philosophy in which he was largely self-taught and in which he established an international reputation. By the time he became co-pastor of the New Meeting, Birmingham, he was the leading figure in English pneumatic chemistry, a formidable adversary in the Socinian debate and a fluent publicist of educational reform. He also became a foremost protagonist in the struggle for civil and religious liberties until reaction to the French Revolution resulted in his being regarded as one of the most hated radicals of the day, and drove him, first from Birmingham in 1791, and thence to America, after four years in London where he delivered gratis, at the New College Hackney, his Warrington lectures on history and chemistry.<sup>2</sup>

In education, therefore, Priestley was as much involved with the practice as the theory and this influenced his educational writings. In addition, because of its interdependence with rationalist theology Priestley was interested in rationalist philosophy and particularly in philosophy concerning the working of the human mind which, in turn, was bound to influence education. Thus, like most Dissenting educationalists of the eighteenth century he admired

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., Autobiography of ..., Introduction by Jack Lindsay, (1970), 11-91; Parker I., Dissenting Academies in England, (1914), 113-5; McLachlan H., English Education under the Test Acts, (1931) 215-9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 251; Priestley J., op.cit., 92-133.

John Locke, but even more he absorbed David Hartley's Observations on Man which he reissued in condensed form and which he developed to become the cornerstone of Unitarian educational thought in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup>

In the eighteenth century the broad heading of "philosophy" covered many related scientific disciplines, including psychology. Thus philosophical questions tended to be treated just like those branches of enquiry receiving most contemporary acclaim, namely physics and astronomy. Philosophers dreamt of using Newtonian techniques, observation and experiment to formulate a few basic, wide-reaching general laws which would "transform the present welter of ignorance and idle conjecture into a clear and coherent system of logically inter-related elements." Thus ignorance, superstition, confusion, injustice and unfounded authority would be overthrown whilst a disinterested, courageous and optimistic search after truth would realise Utopia.<sup>2</sup>

No-one typified such thinking more than Priestley who, in turn, depicted David Hartley as having "thrown more useful light upon the theory of the mind than Newton did upon the theory of the natural world."<sup>3</sup> Hartley had developed a full associationist psychology, maintaining that all complex or "intellectual" ideas arise from simple ones, that is "ideas of sensation" which in turn "arise from the impressions made by external objects upon the several parts of our bodies."<sup>4</sup> These sensations, he said, when often repeated give rise to ideas and

<sup>1</sup> Parker I., op.cit., 125; see Priestley J., "Introductory essays to Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind" (1970) reprinted in The Theological and Miscellaneous works of Joseph Priestley (hereafter Works), ed.J.T. Rutt, 25 vols. (1817-31), III, 169-96.

<sup>2</sup> Berlin I., The Age of Enlightenment, (New York, 1956), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense" (1976), Works, III, 25-6.

<sup>4</sup> Hartley D., Observations on Man, (New York 1976), Part I, i-ii.

any series of sensations, if associated with each other sufficiently, often get

such a Power over the corresponding Ideas ... that any one of the sensations when impressed alone, shall be able to excite in the Mind... the Ideas of the rest.<sup>1</sup>

From this Hartley argued that associationism was the basis of man's mental, emotional and moral life, including "Habit, Custom, Example, Education, Authority, Party-prejudice, the Manner of learning ..."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, Hartley postulated a physiological basis to thought: he held that vibrations in the "white medullary substance of the brain, spinal marrow and the nerves proceeding from them", are the basis of all our perceptions and thus all knowledge derives from impressions of external objects upon the senses. His carefully detailed hypothesis was in line with empirically observed facts, although he himself recognised it as useful rather than essential to his associationist psychology.<sup>3</sup> Priestley, although excited by this hypothesis, left out all reference to it in his version, believing that such a difficult and intricate theory would discourage people from recognising the value of Hartley's theory of the human mind.<sup>4</sup> He eagerly concentrated on how all mental affections and operations could be attributed solely to the association of ideas

so that nothing is requisite to make any man whatever he is, but a sentiment principle with this single property (which however admits of great variety) and the influence of such circumstances as he has actually been exposed to.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., iv, 7-72, 416.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., "Introductory Essays ...", Works, III, 169, 176-81.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 182-4.



He welcomed the analysis of complex ideas whereby "our external senses furnish the materials of all the ideas of which we are ever possessed" and illustrated it by the analogy that no-one had believed that white was made up of seven different primary colours until Sir Isaac Newton had proved this by experiment.<sup>1</sup>

Hartley also showed that complex ideas could, through association, be analysed into their simple, component parts and indeed should be, particularly in the case of the "affections and passions" so that

we may learn to cherish and improve good ones, check and root out such as are mischievous and immoral, and how to suit our Manner of Life, in some tolerable Measure, to our intellectual and religious Wants.<sup>2</sup>

His acknowledgement that associations need not necessarily be good ones meant that development could not be left to chance. He thence illustrated that memory, judgement, imagination and even the will were all similarly reducible to external impressions thereafter developed by association, arguments with which Priestley wholeheartedly agreed.<sup>3</sup>

Such a viewpoint led Priestley to go further than Hartley and delightedly accept extreme necessarianism, that is, the theory that everything has a cause traceable to a first cause of God, a chain of cause and effect terminating in the greatest good of the universe.<sup>4</sup> This was strengthened by Hartley's explanation of all vice and virtue arising from the basic law of association and his classification of seven pleasures and pains which if, through association, were developed in ascending order, would lead people to unbounded knowledge, pure

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 189-90.

<sup>2</sup> Hartley D., op.cit., 368,81.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 80-1,371-403; Priestley J., op.cit., 184-8.

<sup>4</sup> Hartley D., op.cit., 371,511-2, Part II, 53-6; Priestley J., "Doctrine of Philosophic Necessity Illustrated," (1782), Works, III,532.

happiness, the love of God and perfect virtue. Part Two of Observations ... gave proofs of natural and revealed religion and a prescriptive morality which Part One had given the means to follow.<sup>1</sup> Man's moral development, therefore, arose from associationism alone and needed due nurture, education and the right environment to flourish, not reliance on innate cause or Divine intervention. Priestley found such conclusions exhilarating : all people were shown to be capable of virtue and he was certain that once they realised the means to achieve it, that is, the law of association, they would use it rather than rely in vain on miraculous assistance.<sup>2</sup>

Priestley therefore saw the law of association to be the basis of education and of life. Since, by Hartley's reasoning, differences between people could be ironed out by exposing them indefinitely "to the same impressions and associations" or by carefully adjusting the latter in a more limited time, tremendous importance was given to environment and circumstance. Priestley gloried in Hartley's assurance that thus humankind was perfectible, even on earth, and that "children may be formed or moulded as we please."<sup>3</sup> Philosophers, he said, must rejoice to know that this "new and extensive" science of the human mind

wears the face of that simplicity in causes, and variety in effects, which we discover in every other part of nature .....<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hartley D., op.cit., I, 83,416-99; Part II 5-337. See also Marsh R., "The Second Part of Hartley's System", Journal of the History of Ideas (1959) vol.XX,264-73.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., op.cit., 521.

<sup>3</sup> Hartley D., op.cit., I,82,Part II,453.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., "Introductory Essays ...", 184.

For my own part I can almost say that I think myself more indebted to this one treatise than to all the books I ever read beside, the Scriptures excepted.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Priestley believed that he had a systematic method of achieving moral, religious and intellectual objectives in education. He saw education as a life-long process, affected by every circumstance and requiring the fullest development of each faculty. Thus a careful education was necessary from birth:

We, in fact seldom see any considerable change in a person's temper and habits after he is grown to man's estate. Nothing short of an entire revolution in his circumstances, and mode of life, can effect it ... Consequently, our happiness or misery for the whole of our existence depends, in a great measure, on the manner in which we begin our progress through it.<sup>2</sup>

Education, to Priestley, meant not just merely intellectual or physical or moral education but all three together, since they were all, through association, interdependent. Neither intellectual nor moral development could, or should, proceed alone, he thought, for real virtue was "the result of reflection, or discipline and much voluntary exertion" and thus was superior to mere innocence or good nature.<sup>3</sup> Before a person could deliberate and direct the will aright instead of merely reacting mechanically to a given situation, a balance of impressions had to be built up, achievable only through extensive intellectual education, "a large stock of ideas, and much experience." Intellectual education was necessary for people to understand and rightly direct

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "An Examination ...", 10.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., "Miscellaneous Observations relating to Education", (1780), 105-6.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "Preface and Dedication to Heads of Lectures on a Course of Experimental Philosophy", (1794), Works, XXV, 389.

their own thoughts and achieve virtue, for the mind destitute of knowledge was like a field, which if no culture were bestowed upon it "the richer it is, the ranker weeds it will produce."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, he was sure that a healthy body was essential to a sound intellectual and moral development although he disapproved of "muscular habits" as not conducive to sensibility of mind.<sup>2</sup> His insistence on healthy activities for children accorded with Hartley's hypothesis that proper mental, and thereby moral development, rested on physical causes.

The implications of this seemed to be that all people should receive the same careful wide education and that parents and teachers especially should both understand the law of association fully and be well-educated themselves. Thus Priestley advocated a far higher education for females than was usual. First, since it was education, not sex, which made us what we were, women were not, as many people assumed, inferior in mental capacity. For example, Priestley praised Rev. Robert Robinson of Cambridge who, getting over a "vulgar and debasing prejudice (that women, being designed for domestic cares, should be taught nothing beyond them)", gave his daughters the same extensive education in classics, modern languages, mathematics and science as his sons.<sup>3</sup>

Second, since morality and virtue were improved by intellectual culture, women had as much right to the latter as men. Priestley deplored the utter subservience and degrading lack of education of Hindu women which made it no wonder that they are in general very ignorant and perhaps underserving of the confidence that is never reposed in them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion" (1782), Works, II,xv.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., Autobiography, 122-3.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "Reflections on Death.." (1790), Works, XV,419.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., "A comparison of the institution of Moses, with those of the Hindoos and other nations", (1799), Works, XVII,230.

Since women had the same moral duties, dispositions and passions as men they required a proper education.

Third, Priestley considered that women needed to be well-educated to be good wives and mothers. The respect husband and wife should have for each other in a happy marriage required that both should have an equal education : the only objection to a man marrying "beneath himself" was in respect of "education and manners and not fortune." If women were well-educated, intellectually and morally, they could have admirable effects on men. They would also be "particularly well-qualified to conduct the education of others." Girls should be educated to maintain themselves respectably and this should include "instructing the world by writing" and, indeed cater for every contingency.<sup>1</sup>

Such remarks were directed towards the middle-classes. Towards the lower classes Priestley was more ambivalent. In spite of the fact that contemporaries saw him as the arch-leveller and regularly burnt him in effigy,<sup>2</sup> Priestley, genuinely concerned about the welfare of the poor as he was, was too imbued with individualistic social and commercial ideas to seek the logical extension of all of his principles. His statements concerning the education of the poor were often contradictory but he did see their lack of education as a great disadvantage. He said that if "by some public provision all the poor should be taught to read and write ... honourable ambition... and... a spirit of industry" would be created, and law and order maintained.<sup>3</sup> He once actually advocated that the state should appoint schools in every district or give advice to each locality on how to establish a school system, for literacy was so important for self-improvement.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, however, he generally argued

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "Reflections ..." 419; .. Observations..., 171, 137-8.

<sup>2</sup> Lincoln A., Some Political and Social Ideas of English Dissent, 1763-1800, (1971), 179.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "Some Considerations on the state of the poor in general", (1787), Works, XXV, 319.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., "Lectures on History and General Policy", (1803), Works, XXIV, 223.

against any form of state control in education, afraid that such control would perpetuate one civil and religious establishment, thus denying parental and civil rights and the variety and freedom necessary to bring education to perfection, producing instead uniformity - "the characteristic of the brute creation."<sup>1</sup> Priestley, therefore, with reservations typical of his class and period, desired an extension of education to all, but particularly to the middle-classes.

The law of association had further implications, suggesting what should be learnt and how. The latter was most clearly exemplified by Priestley in his Warrington Lectures on Oratory and Criticism, published in 1777 to illustrate Hartley's principles. He explained in detail and with much illustration from the English and ancient classics how oratory, that is "the natural faculty of speech improved by art", was a valuable example of the law of association, since recollection, method and style, the first three of oratory's four great objects, depended upon it.<sup>2</sup> The use of association, for example, by use of figures of speech, extensively influenced the formation of imagination, taste and, indeed, all intellectual pleasures. The methods invaluable to a good speaker or writer, therefore, were among those which should be used by a good teacher.<sup>3</sup>

Priestley was aware of the dangers of forming biases or misleading impressions through association, as for example, Thucydides' moving description of the flagrantly unjust invasion of Sicily in the Peloponnesian War.<sup>4</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "An Essay on the First Principles of Government", (1771), Works, XXII, 46-7, 43-4.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., "A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism", (1777), Works, XXIII, 260, 262.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 357-8, 422-458.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 353.

wished, accordingly, to keep our ideas and language clear so he published his Warrington Course of Lectures on the Theory of Language and Universal Grammar, believing it important to have an inquiry into the nature of language, "the means of preserving and bringing into perfection all other arts;... the measure of our intellectual powers...", the greatest distinguishing mark between "rational and merely animal nature", between civilised and barbarous nations and between worthy and less worthy individuals.<sup>1</sup> He deplored the fact that, although the vernacular was now the vehicle for all kinds of knowledge, it was still not taught in the schools, and agreed with Locke that "there can scarce be a greater defect in a gentleman than not to express himself well either in writing or speaking", and this in his own language.<sup>2</sup> Priestley wrote and illustrated his own Rudiments of English Grammar, using English, not the usual Latin terms; adopting the method of question and answer as most convenient and intelligible; and giving profuse, clear examples of the language, drawn from modern, light literature, and from customary speech - "the original and only just standard of any language."<sup>3</sup> Many of the extracts were from the best English authors and poets, thus reflecting and stimulating the new middle-class habit of reading for pleasure, even if, for Priestley at least, such reading should be undertaken for moral rather than aesthetic reasons.<sup>4</sup> He received requests from other tutors for advice<sup>5</sup> and thus spearheaded a growing movement for the serious teaching of English.

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "A Course of Lectures on the Theory of Language and Universal Grammar", Works, XXIII, 125.

<sup>2</sup> Locke J., Some Thoughts on Education, (Heinemann 1964), 209.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "The Rudiments of English Grammar", (1798), Works, XXIII, 3-5.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., "Oratory...", 317.

<sup>5</sup> Parker I., op.cit., 116-7.

To assist the inculcation of clear knowledge Priestley published his own lecturing methods, comprising revision, copious illustrations and varied examples on prepared outlines and fair or printed copies for the students' use. He advocated reference to the principal authors on both sides of every question and lectures to no more than thirty students, lasting no more than an hour. He welcomed student questions and observations.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Priestley stressed the vital importance of systematic methods.<sup>2</sup> Thus he carefully classified and related the periods and different aspects of history, viewing the changing state of the empires in his own Chart of History, and important lives in his Chart of Biography (for which he was given an Edinburgh LL.D). He was keen on visual aids such as models and on fully showing his students the significance and relevance of their work.<sup>3</sup> He also spent nine lectures in history on its various sources and thirteen commenting on different historians and the many types of records available. Much of this was particularly apt for the post-sixteen year-olds Priestley mostly taught but he stressed that all studies should be adapted to the age and capacity of the learner.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., op.cit., 259.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., "Institutes..." xix.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., Autobiography, 1790; "The Plan of the Course of Lectures on the History of England" in ...Observations..., 272-9; "A Description of a New 'Chart of History' and A Description of a 'Chart of Biography'", Works, XXIV, 477-83, 463-76; "Lectures on History ...", 4-437; "Laws of England" in ...Observations ... 281-333; " ...Theory of Language...", 121-251; " ...Heads of Lectures...", 385-91.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., "Lectures on History...", 25-196.



Priestley also emphasised that  
 most effectual discipline of the mind..experience, [which]  
 should, by all means, be called in to the aid of precept and  
 admonition whenever it can be applied with advantage.<sup>1</sup>

This reliance on empirical knowledge favoured those subjects in which either the subject matter itself or the method of its enquiry was based on experience and inductive reasoning. History was the human science most relevant in this respect and Priestley's introduction of modern history as an academic discipline at Warrington was a revolutionary innovation. He saw a main use of history as "anticipated experience", more correct and complete, if not as striking as personal experience, enabling students to improve their judgement and understanding, lose their prejudices, realise how many things could be improved and learn of the many varieties of human nature.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Priestley the leading chemist of the day, delighted not only in the results of the physical sciences but in the methods of study. At Hackney, for example, he attempted as much experimental philosophy as he could, especially "the whole of what is called Chemistry" which was now exciting so much new research. He kept the interest of the students by teaching a great variety of subject matter, illustrated by as many experiments as possible. He preferred beginners to have only "a large outline of any branch of science" which they could follow up later if they had the opportunity.<sup>3</sup>

Both in subject matter and in methods, therefore, Priestley was deeply influenced by Hartley's new science of the human mind. First and foremost, however, he was a Unitarian minister. Hartley's appeal, indeed, lay in his offering of a non-mystical scientific explanation of human thought and behaviour

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., ...Observations..., 6; see also 2-8.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., "Lectures on History..", 29-32, 222, 417-8; ..Observations..., 264-5

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "..Heads of Lectures..", 385.

which glorified the power of a benevolent Deity and plotted a path for man's perfectibility. Similarly, the study of history seemed to Priestley to give evidence of Divine Providence in human affairs, of the attractiveness of virtue and the progress of mankind, especially with regard to religious understanding, as the study of various sciences seemed to demonstrate the glory of God.<sup>1</sup> These optimistic, somewhat disingenuous beliefs, made him certain that once people were properly educated

The truth of Christianity in general, and that of the great doctrine of it, and of all revelation, the Divine Unity, cannot long remain in doubt.<sup>2</sup>

Priestley placed the physical sciences, Hartleian philosophy and theology in ascending order of importance in the same way as he ranked the law, medicine and the ministry as forms of employment, according to the scope they gave to the intellectual and moral faculties.<sup>3</sup> Certain that Dissenting ministers were "much more carefully educated than the generality of clergymen"<sup>4</sup> Priestley was greatly concerned to reinforce this. Convinced that he and his contemporaries lived on the eve of one of the great revolutions of mankind, comparable to the birth of Christ or to the Reformation, he urged the purification and propagation of the Gospel and the study of the evidence of Christianity so that theologians could take advantage of all the new opportunities arising for the spread of rational, religious truth. To ensure the continuance and flourishing of Dissent he wished laymen also to be ready, thoroughly educated and well-versed in the principles of their own religion.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "Lectures on History...", 422-37, 37-8, 52.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., "The Proper Objects of Education in the Present State of the World", (1791) Works, XV, 431.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "...Observations..." 29-34.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., "A View of the Principles and conduct of Protestant Dissenters.." (1769), Works, XXII, 376.

<sup>5</sup> Priestley J., "...Proper Objects...", 427-8, 432-4, 436.

Thus Priestley wished for more religious education not only in schools and colleges but outside them. Whilst urging open-mindedness and rational belief, he believed it vital to build up early associations with God's power and providence in the minds of children. Aware that parents might not be able to give their children a proper religious education, Priestley exhorted ministers themselves to do this in Sunday classes. He first publicly advised this a decade before the Sunday School Movement was initiated by Robert Raikes. Priestley's preoccupation, however, was with giving young, middle-class Rational Dissenters the principles of natural religion and the evidences and doctrine of revelation in a regular and systematic course.<sup>1</sup> He held such classes for both sexes at Leeds and extended them at Birmingham and Hackney successively, adding two classes for those below eighteen, divided according to age and knowledge of the scriptures. He delighted in teaching the children biblical studies and scriptural geography, using his own Catechism with them, (including a Scriptural Catechism which was full of questions, chiefly historical, which they could answer by reference to the relevant scriptures), as he used his Institutes ... with the over-eighteens. He believed that his congregation in Birmingham had become the most informed society in Christian doctrine in the country with many of the young enabled to teach others and, in fact, doing so.<sup>2</sup>

Priestley therefore helped revive the habit of separate instruction for the young without the dogma which was anathema to Rational Dissenters, but with a stress upon "Christianity itself in any form", that is, God as one being, Christ as a mighty prophet, Christ's resurrection and the final judgement and resurrection of man. This was a simplified, particularly Unitarian, viewpoint he mistakenly thought would satisfy all Christians.<sup>3</sup> He was sure that many

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., ...Observations... 86-9, 91-9; "Institutes...", xix.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., "A Particular Attention to the Instruction of the Young..." (1791), Works, XV, 466, 461; "Institutes..." xxiv-xxx; "A Catechism for Children and Young Persons", (1768) and "A Scriptural Catechism", (1792), Works, XXI, 559-67, 573-5.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "Instruction of the Young...". 472

evils such as tyranny, superstition, persecution and oath-taking, arose from recurrent perversions of religion. He opposed established religion of any kind as denying that freedom of enquiry he and his friends upheld so passionately and deplored the fact that the universities required from their students an absolute subscription to complex articles of faith, which it is impossible they can have studied, and which it is not generally supposed they have even read.<sup>1</sup>

Young minds were thus precluded, he said, from rational enquiry, initiated into insincerity and fettered in their powers. A free system was "the only method of collecting and increasing the wisdom of the nation." Such freedom need not violate law and order, for reason and argument alone could win just rights, a view Priestley maintained throughout the counter-revolution of the 1790s.<sup>2</sup>

Priestley's educational philosophy was also strongly influenced by considering what subjects would be useful to members of the rising, industrial and commercial middle-class in which many Dissenters, including the energetic Unitarians were to be found. In 1791, for example, Priestley, declaring that it was the time of "the new light... now almost everywhere, bursting out in favour of the civil rights of men", exhorted students at Hackney College to help obtain

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "...Proper Objects...", 430.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., Letter to the students of New College, Hackney, (1791, Birmingham City Library), 7-8. See also Priestley J., "A Letter to the Rt. Hon. William Pitt...1787", Works, XIX, 127; "Letters to the Young Men who are in a Course of Education for the Christian Ministry..." and to the "Candidates for Orders in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge", (1787 and 1788), Works, XVIII, 345-71, 468-511.

the flourishing state of science, arts, manufactures and commerce;  
 the extinction of wars..., the abolishing of all useless distinctions...  
 and a general release from all such taxes and burdens of every kind, as  
 the public good does not require. In short to make government as  
 beneficial and as little expensive and burdensome as possible...  
 Let the Liberal Youth be everywhere encouraged to study the nature  
 of government and attend to everything that makes nations secure  
 and happy.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Priestley included in the study of history every aspect of civil  
 government, not omitting the principles of commerce and taxation, although  
 such subjects were still thought illiberal by many because trade and commerce  
 had long been confined to the lower orders of society. He, however, was  
 confident that "the wealth and generosity of merchants" were helping "to change  
 these ideas."<sup>2</sup> His concern was for those who, principally because of religion,  
 and partly because of expense, were denied access to the ancient universities  
 and whose scientific and industrial interests, those very interests which to  
 him should be the basis of a prosperous meritocracy, were scorned by  
 traditionalists. To Priestley the noblest prospect of his Chart of Biography  
 was the last two centuries when at last there were as many names of men of learn-  
 ing and science as there were of statesmen, heroes and politicians.<sup>3</sup>

Priestley believed that even the great modern improvements in arts had  
 arisen from those in science. Although "the arts in return, promote society  
 and humanity, which are so favourable to the progress of science", rational  
 and moral beings should remember that

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "...Proper Objects...", 434.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., "Lectures on History..", 5,22,313-7, 403-15. Aware of the  
 precariousness of their fortunes, he also advised middle-class socions to  
 learn some manual trade - ...Observations.., 138.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "Lectures on History..", 471-5.

excellence in arts that have perceivable limits contracts the faculties and cherishes the meaner and baser passions of our minds; but that true science, being unbounded in its objects, doth as it were, enlarge the soul, extend the faculties and give scope to the most generous affections.<sup>1</sup>

Priestley thus, against widespread traditional views, gave the liberalizing and humanizing role in education to science. He held that it was preposterous now to continue spending the same amount of time on grammar and rhetoric when the "sublime studies of mathematics and philosophy" [that is, science] were available.<sup>2</sup> For him, this was where human understanding reached its best:

grasping at the noblest objects, and increasing its own powers, by acquiring to itself the powers of nature, and directing them to the accomplishment of its own views, whereby the security and happiness of mankind are daily improved.<sup>3</sup>

In Baconian fashion, therefore, Priestley depicted the study of science as leading, as it had already begun to do, to the mastery of the powers of nature, an increase in the well-being of mankind and thence a golden age. Thinking that a serious taste for experimental philosophy should, and could, be acquired quite early, he wished gentlemen, particularly those who did not have to train for a profession, to study sciences, although not their "inferior" common manual aspects. He also wished all students to study more mathematics.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 311: "Observations on Style" (1761), Works, XXIII, 491.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 490.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "The History and Present State of Electricity, with original experiments" (1767), Works, XXV, 345.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., ...Observations..., 14-8, 35 "An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life", 206, 218.

To Priestley a "truly liberal education" was one which combined literary and scientific excellence with a proper moral development and thus formed "great and useful characters in every department of life." He considered it no longer sufficient to have only one type of higher education because it was now realized that many more people than the clergy needed educating if the true sources of wealth, power and happiness in a nation were to be developed.<sup>1</sup> For this reason he, like Locke, put the teaching of modern languages, particularly the vernacular, before the classics, since almost all valuable knowledge was available in the former, although he recognised that ancient languages had much of use in them and were necessary for intending ministers.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, he had reformed the curriculum at Warrington, thinking it too scholastic for those who would not enter the learned professions but who, nevertheless, would fill "the principal stations of active life." His new courses on history and the laws of England were designed to give a relevant, useful and liberal education to such youths, although he wished medical and theological students to study them too, for all who were to have any influence in politics should "be well-instructed in the great and leading principles of wise policy."<sup>3</sup> For such reasons he had also stimulated elocution exercises.<sup>4</sup>

It was, indeed as enlightened leaders that Priestley wished Unitarians to devote their attention to raising both the culture and status of their own class. He had little concern, and less admiration, for the hereditary aristocracy, although he did want to see aristocrats better educated, at least

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "...Proper Objects...", 421; "...Heads of Lectures...", 389; ...Observations...186-8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 41-6; "Theory of Language...", 215; Locke J., op.cit., 196.

<sup>3</sup> ...Observations...xviii, 190, 200, 210-8, 228, 283-9, 291-7.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley J., Autobiography, 88-9.

so that they could cultivate their lands properly and learn to pay their creditors! However, he castigated the immorality of their public schools and the repression of their universities.<sup>1</sup> He preferred middle-class

Dissenting academies which

being formed in a more enlightened age, are more liberal and therefore better calculated to answer the purpose of a truly liberal education. Thus while your universities resemble pools of stagnant water, secured by dams and mounds, and offensive to the neighbourhood, ours are like rivers, which taking their natural course, fertilize a whole country.<sup>2</sup>

The latter were institutions

to which all persons, without distinction, have equal access, and where youth are taught the most liberal principles, both in religion and politics, at much less expense, and with far less risk to their virtue, than where they are taught, (if with respect to these important subjects they are taught anything at all) the most slavish and illiberal ones.<sup>3</sup>

Priestley anticipated that only the rudiments of any subject would be taught, for formal education was a preparation for life-long development and application. He had little appreciation of the aesthetic and fine arts and, whilst recognising the importance in education of travel abroad and experience of the world, feared that if a man's own habits and principles were not fixed first he would be likely to return a coxcomb or an infidel; Priestley's open-mindedness did not extend to foreign morals or modes of religion.<sup>4</sup> What he wanted for the middle-class was a

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., ...Observations..., 111-9, 50-2.

<sup>2</sup> Priestley J., "...Letter to ...Pitt", 128.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley J., "...Proper Objects...", 425.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 422; ...Observations..., 57-63, 146-8.



positive education to enable appreciation of the glory of God and rational religion, promotion of those arts and sciences which would benefit mankind, and the attainment of a proper status within the community. Providing such an education, he said, was more important than leaving a son wealth, more likely to be dissipated than enjoyed. Believing that the time had come when everything was beginning "to be estimated by its real use and value" Priestley envisaged an education which served men not only for their own profit "but for their country and the world" and made them aware that great improvements could only result from "the most peaceable but assiduous endeavours in pursuing the slowest of all processes - that of enlightening the minds of men."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, eventual success was certain:

If fact it is knowledge that finally governs mankind, and power, though ever so refractory, must at length yield to it.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it can be seen that Priestley's involvement in education was an integral part of his major preoccupation in life. A liberal and useful education based on the principles and methods of Hartleian psychology was to serve the interests both of rational religion and of the new industrial and commercial classes. In formal education he was an exciting innovative force in both the subjects and methods he emphasised. He wrote prolifically on all this and thus popularised his ideas at least amongst progressive educationalists. He made different subjects understandable as in his Familiar Introduction to Electricity of 1768 and he made the sources of knowledge more accessible as in his promotion of the libraries of Leeds and Birmingham respectively.<sup>3</sup> He was

<sup>1</sup> Priestley J., "...Oratory...", 255; "...Proper Objects...", 439.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 431.

<sup>3</sup> Rossington H.J., "Our Indebtedness to Priestley", T.U.H.S., (Nov.1933), vol.V, Part 3, 239-40.

certainly not without critics, although even these could admire his range, diversity and clarity. Hazlitt, for example, criticised him for being too hasty in his scholarship and practices yet called him the "Voltaire of the Unitarians", perspicacious and original on a wide variety of topics and clear and easily readable in everything he wrote.<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

In many ways Priestley both exemplified and inspired Unitarians of his generation and beyond, not least in his "Enlightenment" optimism, his faith and his sheer enthusiasm for education.<sup>2</sup> This can be seen by an examination and comparison of the views and work of late eighteenth century Unitarian education-ists, especially, for example, Dr. John Aikin and his sister, Mrs Barbauld, who wrote educational books, many specifically for those below sixteen, a group mentioned less by Priestley. John Aikin had also taught at Warrington for twelve years and Mrs Barbauld, with her husband, ran a very successful school at Palgrave

Priestley was successful in stimulating interest in Hartley's works. These were known at Cambridge but it was chiefly in the progressive academies such as Northampton (where Lant Carpenter was a student) that Hartley was studied and his philosophy eagerly adopted. So close indeed was the relation between Harleian philosophy and Unitarianism at this time that acceptance of the former was often a prime factor in leading to conversion to the latter as seen in the example of Thomas Belsham who taught Hartley at Daventry Academy, 1778 to 1781, so that students could understand the current Unitarian controversy and thus, hopefully resist it. Instead, first the students, and then Belsham

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt W., "The Late Dr. Priestley" (1829), Collected Works of..., (1904), Vol.12, 357-9. Even John Wesley appreciated Priestley's defence of liberties and his scientific discoveries although he criticised him for considering politics only in relation to religion and for applying the principles of philosophy to religion - see Wesley J., Character of Dr. Priestley considered as a Philosopher, Politician and Divine, (1794. This was written on a flysheet and can be found in Birmingham Reference Library).

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Willey B., The Eighteenth Century Background, (1950), 168-204.

who was unable to withstand the logic of his own teaching, became enthusiastic Unitarians. Belsham subsequently became divinity tutor at New College, Hackney, 1789-96, where he consistently taught and propagated Hartley's theory.<sup>1</sup> He gloried in a philosophy through which man learnt to know himself, his nature and intellectual powers and how to direct them

in a steady and unerring course to virtue, to honour, to ultimate, complete, interminable happiness.<sup>2</sup>

Many contemporary Unitarian writers for example, John Aikin, echoed this optimistic note.<sup>3</sup>

Just as acceptance of Hartley's philosophy helped conversion to Unitarianism, so rejection of it turned people away, as happened in the case of William Hazlitt, son of a Unitarian minister, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Hazlitt accepted that associationism was "one of the ways in which ideas are recollected or brought back into the mind" but "not the sole-moving spring in all combinations which take place between our ideas." Man must have

one mind, or spirit... which is the centre in which all his thoughts meet, and the master-spring by which all his actions are governed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield G., Memoirs, (1792), vol.I, 72-5; McLachlan H., op.cit., 168, 156; 251; Belsham T., Memoirs of the late Rev. Theophilus Lindsey (1873), 190-1, 195, 301; McLachlan H., "The Old Hackney College, 1786-96", T.U.H.S., (1925) vol.III, no.3, 195; Williams J. Memoirs of the late Rev. Thomas Belsham (1833), 426-7.

<sup>2</sup> Belsham T., The Importance of Truth. Discourse delivered at the Old Jewry to the supporters of the New College at Hackney, (1790), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Aikin J., Letters from a Father to his Son, (1793), 39-44; Aikin J., and Barbauld A.L., Evenings at Home, (1868), 324.

<sup>4</sup> Hazlitt W., "Remarks on the System of Hartley and Helvetius" (1805), Collected Works (1930), vol.I, 65-66, 73, passim.

Coleridge, despite his earlier enthusiasm, turned completely against a thesis which apparently maintained that our whole life was

divided between the despotism of outward impressions, and that of senseless and passive memory.<sup>1</sup>

No-one who believed in innate ideas could accept Hartley's thesis and to stalwarts of a hierarchical society the emphasis on environmental over hereditary factors could lead to a dangerous reversal of the social order.

Unitarians, however, had no such difficulties. Few of them referred to the theory of vibrations which Priestley had omitted anyway from his edition of Hartley, but many referred to the law of association, the power of circumstance and environment and therefore the need for systematic education. For instance, John Aikin, although not an extreme associationist, drew an analogy between mental and bodily disease showing how bad characters are almost inevitably created out of bad conditions, whether like those of the poverty-stricken area of St. Giles in London or those of the spoilt rich boy, flattered and indulged through a public school, university and grand tour education, nurtured on guns and hounds and allowed to be the uncontrolled master of an estate, and probably thus "a low-minded, brutual, tyrannical debauchee."<sup>2</sup> The only way to effect a change would be totally to alter the habits and by means as equally powerful and as long contrived as the first. Similarly, in biography, Aikin thought nothing so important as to trace "the external circumstances which have contributed to the formation of moral and intellectual character."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Stauffer D.A., "Biographia Literaria", Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge, (New York, 1951), 168, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Aikin J., op.cit., 174-85; "Thoughts on the Formation of Character", ed. Aikin L. Memoir of John Aikin M.D., vol.II, (1823), 364.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 362

Mrs Barbauld argued that the education of circumstances was more influential even than that of parents or teachers, although the first should devote all care to the matter and the second should be well-paid if well-educated.<sup>1</sup> She realised that

every association begets a prejudice ... a very small part only of the opinions of the coolest philosopher are the result of fair reasoning; the rest are formed by education, his temperament, by the age in which he lives, by trains of thought directed to a particular track through some accidental association...<sup>2</sup>

Thus superstition and bad habits could develop and it was necessary for children, whose minds hardly remained blank, to build up early associations with morality and religion so that when young people could and did exercise their right to think for themselves they would have nurtured instincts towards the right path.<sup>3</sup> Such could be done, as Mrs Barbauld attempted in her very popular Hymns in Prose for Children through pleasurable play on the imagination and feelings, an emphasis contrary to the trend of contemporary Unitarianism but, nevertheless, based on the law of association and prefiguring a tendency of nineteenth-century Unitarianism.<sup>4</sup>

In the use of association to inculcate religious habits and piety, Mrs Barbauld was echoed by many others and this stress supported a wholehearted approval of that bracketing of moral and intellectual development which Priestley had advocated. It reflected their religious viewpoint as expressed, for example,

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Aikin L., The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, (1825), vol. II, "Thoughts on Education", 306-317.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., "On Prejudice", 326-7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 323-36

<sup>4</sup> Barbauld A.L., Hymns in Prose for Children, (1818), v. See Rodgers B., Georgian Chronicle (1958), 65-7.

by the Rev. Andrew Kippis, that rational religion was not dependent upon mere piety and virtue but on knowledge and understanding.<sup>1</sup> Only thus, said the Rev. Ralph Harrison, could people have "clear and just" conceptions of God and be able to grow more like Him and perfect their natures, sentiments echoed by others such as Belsham and Gilbert Wakefield.<sup>2</sup> Intellectual education was also expected to stimulate moral behaviour by diverting people from "the pursuit of sensual gratifications" and through "the pursuit of truth, carrying the mind out of itself to large views of nature and providence" (though some agreed with Hartley that philological studies often merely stimulated pride and vanity).<sup>3</sup> John Aikin asserted that those who searched for truth had to have the right disposition in order to find it and "must practice as well as know, in order to be truly wise." Wisdom came only from a combination of learning, benevolence and goodness,<sup>4</sup> points graphically illustrated by his sister in her version of "The Hill of Science..." where a mountain of knowledge, topped by the Temple of Truth, was illuminated by Virtue - "Science may raise you to eminence, but I alone can guide you to felicity."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kippis A., A Sermon preached at the Old Jewry... April 1776, on occasion of a New Academical Institution among Protestant Dissenters for the Education of their Ministers and Youth, 1,11,29-32.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison R., A Sermon ... in Cross St., Manchester, March 26, 1786 on the occasion of the Establishment of an Academy in that town, 10-11; Belsham T., Knowledge the Foundation of Virtue, Sermon..1795, 6-7; Lincoln A., op.cit., 63.

<sup>3</sup> Kenrick T., Sermon at Exeter, 1788. An Inquiry into the best Method of communicating Religious Knowledge to Young Men, 28; ed. Barbauld A.L., The Pleasures of Imagination by Mark Akenside, (1803), 25.

<sup>4</sup> Aikin J. and Barbauld A.L. op.cit., 308-9.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Aikin L., op.cit., 163-70.

The knowledge which stimulated virtue, truly noble minds and "strong elevated" characters, however, was not seen as a cramming of facts, as this would have contradicted associationist and environmental theories. It was to be gathered rather by a careful education through example, a good home and rational and useful intellectual studies.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike Priestley, Arian Unitarians such as Dr. Richard Price, separated matter and spirit, sense and the independent intellect. Nevertheless, they, too, stressed the overriding influence of virtue and knowledge. Thomas Barnes declared:

We deny not the original difference of minds, as they come from the hand of the Creator but we contend that the far deeper and bolder lines of distinction are drawn by early culture.<sup>2</sup>

He proved this by many geographical and historical examples.<sup>3</sup> He and Hugh Worthington could agree with Price that virtue

ought to follow knowledge and ...be directed by it. Virtue without knowledge makes enthusiasts, and knowledge without virtue makes devils, but both united elevates to the top human dignity and perfection.<sup>4</sup>

Thus Unitarians believed in the importance of association and a full education with moral and intellectual development interlinked, in the formation of mind and character. The result, they hoped, would be an enlightened middle-class - humane, tolerant, benevolent, useful, high-minded, pure, self-controlled and with a deep sense of public spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Aikin J. and Barbauld A.L. op.cit., passim.

<sup>2</sup> Barnes T., A Discourse delivered at the Commencement of the Manchester Academy, Sept.14th, 1786, 56.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 56-7.

<sup>4</sup> Price R., A Discourse on the Love of our Country, Nov.4th 1769 (1790), 15; Barnes T., op.cit., 59,60,68; Worthington H., A Sermon at the...Old Jewry, London, ...1789, 11-2.

As Unitarians agreed with Priestley that it was education, and early education especially, which produced the virtuous man or woman, so they both accepted that all should have a rational education, regardless of sex or rank, and held a much higher conception of womanhood than that which was generally prevalent at this time. Their views were strengthened by key beliefs of Rational Dissent. Their rejection of both original sin and the essential depravity of man - the blame for which was usually shifted onto woman's shoulders - gave them a fresh, more generous view of the humanity and possible perfection of all. Their desire for a more rational, enlightened age made them hope that outdated notions would disappear and, since the scriptures were held to be a historical as well as a divine record, this might include scriptural notions about women.<sup>1</sup> The desire to teach the young of both sexes to understand Rational Dissent and thus perpetuate it was a further assault on female ignorance. This was important because the position of women in this era was not an enviable one from a twentieth-century viewpoint - politically, women had no rights, legally a married woman with a living husband, did not exist, economically, women had become more dependent on men, the agricultural and industrial revolutions removing from the home many of their former functions. In factory areas, working-class women began to go out of the home into disciplined waged work at, at most, half the rate of men. Wealthy women had increasingly less to do but any form of public or professional life was considered unladylike.<sup>2</sup>

In general, as Mary Wollstonecraft discovered when she lived among them at Newington Green from 1784-7 and thence in the Joseph Johnson circle at 72, St. Paul's Churchyard, London, Unitarian men were very respectful towards

<sup>1</sup> Canovan M., "The Irony of History : Priestley's Rational Theology," The Price-Priestley Newsletter, (1980), No.4, 16-25.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Vicinus M. A Widening Sphere, (Methuen Paperback 1980), Holcombe L., "Victorian Wives and Property...", 4-9; Pinchbeck I., op.cit., 28,34-6,304-5, 315-6.



their womenfolk, the women were educated above the norm and shared in the literary and political concerns of the men. Ann Jebb, as "Priscilla", had written newspaper articles advocating Parliamentary Reform as Mrs Barbauld, already famous for her poetry and children's writings, was to do in the 1790s.<sup>1</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft herself, the most outstanding contemporary proponent of womens' rights, has sometimes been claimed as a Unitarian, although there is no clear proof. Nevertheless she attended the services of Richard Price and was undoubtedly influenced by him.<sup>2</sup> The basic premiss of her most famous book, A Vindication of the Rights of Women of 1792, was that God had created all human beings as rational creatures who therefore had a basic right, irrespective of sex, to develop that rationality through a liberal education and thereby realise their potential as moral, active and useful members of the community. She wished to revolutionise the environment and education of females in order to allow them to develop these qualities and capabilities for the happiness and fulfilment of themselves, their families and society, and for the better service of God.<sup>3</sup>

Such ideas had evolved since her Thoughts on the Education of Daughters and her novels Mary and, ten years later, The Wrongs of Women, which, by discarding the sentimental sensibility encouraged by Rousseau, improved on her theme of the necessity for women to have their understanding, taste and

<sup>1</sup> Tomalin C., The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft, (Pelican, 1977), 51-2 94, 99, 101, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Holt R., The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England, (1952), 110, 147; ed. Kinsley J. and Kelly G., Wollstonecraft M., Mary (and) The Wrongs of Women, (O.U.P. Paperback, 1980), 208 (P.11n.3), 211 (P.23 n.2, P.29 n.2) 213 (P.40 n.3), 214 (P.58 n.1), 216 (P.80 n.4), 218 (P.92 n.1), 224 (P.135) n.1) 228 (176 n.1). See also 221 (P.106 n.3 - it is doubtful whether Mary Wollstonecraft saw Unitarianism as a "fanatical" religion).

<sup>3</sup> Wollstonecraft M., Vindication of the Rights of Women, (Pelican 1975), passim.

judgement properly developed. Many of her points (for example that women were so degraded they almost justified their oppression and that uneducated, irresponsible women were "flaws in nature", albeit beautiful, exotic ones) were reminiscent of Unitarians like Priestley and John Aikin.<sup>1</sup> Her educational thesis was well in line with associationist thinking and although generally greeted with ridicule and contempt in her own day, was admired by many leading Unitarians. In 1792 John Holland gave a sympathetic review of The Vindication... in the Unitarian journal The Christian Miscellany, William Roscoe pressed copies of it on the ladies of his circle and William Frend encouraged Mary and Elizabeth Hays, fervent disciples of Mary Wollstonecraft, to write on womens' rights. Mary Hays had become a Unitarian through Robert Robinson, whose extensive education of his daughters Priestley had admired. She was a good novelist and pamphleteer although apparently without charm. The Unitarian radical publisher encouraged her Appeal to the Men of Great Britain on Behalf of the Women in 1798 but the times were not propitious for such a book. Generally women's "rights" were seen as even more novel, ridiculous and subversive than men's. This view was reinforced by Godwin's detailed, unvarnished Memoirs of his wife in 1798, and the posthumous publications of The Wrongs of Women in which adultery and divorce appeared defensible. Both of these helped that long coupling of feminism with immorality.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Kinsley J. and Kelly G., op.cit., passim.

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England, (1934), 172; Tomalin C., op.cit., 142-3, 288; It is worth noting that Quakers who, in many aspects of life, were the group most akin to the Unitarians, were also amongst the first to uphold the equality of the sexes and the better education of women as the examples of the educationalists Mary Anne Galton and Priscilla Wakefield, show. Ed. Hankin C.C., Life of Mary Schimmelpennick, (1858). Her father was Samuel Galton, ex-Warrington and a member of the Lunar Society; Wakefield P., The Juvenile Traveller, (1808). An Introduction to Botany (1816) and many others.

In the eighteenth century, not all Unitarians, however, were necessarily pressing for women's higher education. Mrs Barbauld's friends did want her to establish an academy for young ladies in 1774, a job for which she was well-qualified both by her excellent education<sup>1</sup> and by her considerable intellectual attainments, but she refused, fearing to produce "Precieuses" rather than "good wives or agreeable companions."<sup>2</sup> It was not until the nineteenth century that the influence of Rousseau and her own secluded upbringing receded and she upheld a females right to almost the same education as men apart from professional studies. This included classics (in translation at least), modern languages, English, history, geography and a wide range of sciences.<sup>3</sup> Thus, seeing women as rational, if primarily domestic, creatures, Mrs Barbauld asked for a degree of knowledge which would have seemed revolutionary for most women, and many men, in the 1850s. Her continued wish that women should modestly hide their learning was symptomatic of that desire for conventional respectability which many Unitarians seemed to have whilst otherwise upholding what, to the majority of people, seemed outrageous beliefs in religion, politics and education. However, many Unitarians wished their daughters to be as well-educated as Mrs Barbauld and a number of girls were sent to live with her for a while, including Sally Taylor (better known as Sarah Austin) who, at fourteen, was comparing Pope and Boileau and construing Horace.<sup>4</sup>

John Aikin encouraged his sister's literary efforts and was called "the sincerest friend of the female sex that I have ever known" by his daughter, Lucy Aikin. For both sexes he wanted any education likely to be of permanent advantage or innocent amusement to themselves or cultivated society. He was sure women could excel in any literature or science and dismissed equally

<sup>1</sup> By her father Rev. John Aikin, tutor at Warrington Academy. He had been reluctant to teach her classics at first - ed. Aikin L., op.cit., vol.I,vi-xi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xvi-xvii

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., viii,xx; Barbauld A.L. A Legacy for Young Ladies, (1826), 42-53,73-94, 117-64.

<sup>4</sup> Rodgers B., op.cit., 100-2.

scurrilous, despotic or degenerate notions about them. His very popular educational books, such as Evenings at Home written with Mrs Barbauld, were intended for all children, irrespective of sex, and therefore played a part in widening the perspectives of girls.<sup>1</sup> Aikin preferred to stress the similarities of the two sexes rather than contrast them:

Virtue, wisdom, presence of mind, patience, vigour, capacity,

application are not sexual qualities; they belong to mankind.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, he still envisaged primarily a domestic role for women, although asserting that "the arts of housewifery should be regarded as professional to the woman who intends to become a wife." For the middle-class girl reading (for religion), geography, astronomy, history, "and, in short, everything that makes part of the discourse of rational and well-educated people,..." followed. She must learn to write well and to cast accounts and if she had sufficient leisure and opportunities she should learn French. Dancing was agreeable but music and drawing, the core of the usual female education, were extras, dependent on natural genius, leisure and cost. In a fable on this theme, a shopping expedition included both market-place and booksellers.<sup>3</sup>

The best example of Aikin's philosophy in practice was seen in the excellent education he and his wife gave to his daughter Lucy. Lucy read the best French and Italian authors and the Latin classics and delved deeply into history, biography and natural history. Her own writings included many articles, biographies, Memoirs of the courts of Elizabeth, James I and Charles I, and

<sup>1</sup> Aikin L., Memoir ..., vol I, 168-70; Aikin J., Letters to a Young Lady on a Course of English Poetry, (1807), 82-5, 103-7, 65-8, 140, 297.

<sup>2</sup> Aikin J., Letters from a Father ..., 341.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 338; Aikin J. and Barbauld A.L., op.cit., 37-42, 178-80.

moral didactic poetry, especially Epistles on Women. She was also, as her father appreciated, an eminent conversationalist.<sup>1</sup>

Gilbert Wakefield believed the female intellect to be equal to the male's, if educated aright. He personally superintended the classical and literary education of his daughters.<sup>2</sup> Josiah Wedgwood's daughters shared the same tutors as their brothers. Sukey eventually married Robert Darwin, son of Erasmus Darwin, author of an enlightened tract on education for girls, and was mother of Charles Darwin, author of Origin of the Species.<sup>3</sup> There were a number of Unitarian feminists in the 1790s, such as Coleridge (in his Unitarian phase), William Roscoe and William Frend.<sup>4</sup> In 1794 Rev. William Shepherd and Sir George Phillips M.P. even advocated woman's suffrage.<sup>5</sup> Unitarians did not universally make such revolutionary claims but did advocate a significantly different attitude towards woman in her accustomed situation, unusually seeing wives as friends and partners in intellectual and political interests as well as domestic. John Aikin, although accepting that a sensible wife would fashion her taste, manner and opinions on her husband's, nevertheless advised his son to look for suitable qualities of energy of body and mind in a future wife. No man ever married a fool without severely repenting it, said Aikin, for delicacy and

<sup>1</sup> Ed. le Breton P.H., Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters of the late Lucy Aikin, (1864), xv-xvi, xx, xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Wakefield G., op.cit., vol.I, 177; vol.II, (1804), 172-3.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Herford C.H.; Wedgwood J., The Personal Life of Josiah Wedgwood the Potter, (1915), 345-53; 363; Wedgwood J., Letters of... (publ. E.J. Morton Ltd., Manchester in association with the Wedgwood Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, 1903), vol.II, 1771-80, 433, 547, 555-6.

<sup>4</sup> Tomalin C., op.cit., 142-3.

<sup>5</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 152.

excessive nicety of feelings... is carried beyond all reasonable bounds in modern education...[hardly fitting the] exertions of fortitude or self-command...continually required in the course of female duty...

If nature then has made them so weak in temper and constitution as many suppose, she has not suited means to ends with the foresight we generally discover in her plans.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians, of course, especially stressed the importance of women's education because for rational religion and rational education based on associationist thinking, rational parents were vital. Well-educated mothers would not be "chargeable with the ignorance, the iniquity and the misery of their offspring."<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians generally, as Priestley did, held political and educational views which logically should have been extended to all ranks in society but in practice were somewhat restricted by their individualistic and laissez-faire economic and social attitudes and by their concentration on the rights and status of the middle-class.<sup>3</sup> Unitarian educationalists particularly, however, showed an uncommon sympathy with the poor. John Aikin, for example, believed good government contained a "levelling principle" to mitigate the extremes of poverty and wealth in society and relieve oppression, and could never accept "that the necessary condition of a majority of the human race is a decidedly

<sup>1</sup> Aikin J., op.cit., 336, 338-40.

<sup>2</sup> Kippis A., op.cit., 22.

<sup>3</sup> Other middle-class intellectuals were similar. Even Godwin's real attack was on aristocratic privilege. His appeal was to the literary and intellectual elite. He saw the majority of people as "mere parrots" who did not know what they wanted. See Godwin W., Enquiry concerning Political Justice, (Pelican 1976), 260.

wretched one."<sup>1</sup> Usually mild and diffident, he boiled with indignation at the degrading workhouse system in Norwich.<sup>2</sup> He wished to raise the self-respect and status of the poor and help remove their "gross ignorance, bad morals and pernicious habits" - a foretaste of nineteenth century sentiments.<sup>3</sup> He recognised the poor as having the same rights as the rich and the same needs for recreation and comforts.<sup>4</sup> Many stories in Evenings at Home illustrated his recognition of the necessary evils suffered by the poor but, like Maria Edgeworth, he seemed more eager to teach the rich and middle-classes benevolence than to work out any long-term economic solution for the poor.<sup>5</sup>

Mrs Barbauld expressed in poetry her indignation at religion being used as "an engine of government against the poor", advising the latter:

Nor deem the Lord above like Lords below;

...Prepare to meet a Father undismayed,

Nor fear the God whom priests and Kings have made.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aikin J., Letters from a Father..., 208,212,215. Some Unitarians went further, Thomas Cooper for example, a great admirer of Priestley hated the manufacturing system which converted so many of the people "into mere machines, ignorant, debauched and brutal, that the surplus value of their labour of 12 or 14 hours a day, may go into the pockets and supply the luxuries of rich commercial and manufacturing capitalists." Thompson E.P., The Making of the English Working Class, (Pelican 1968), 379.

<sup>2</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 126-7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 121; Aikin J., op.cit., 218. He castigated the rich in the same way - ibid., 293.

<sup>4</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 127.

<sup>5</sup> Aikin J. and Barbauld A.L., op.cit., 74-9,279,311-8; Lang M., "Maria Edgeworth's 'The Parent's Assistant' (1796) ; document of social education", H. of E. (Feb.1978), vol.7, no.1, 31-2.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. Aikin L., op.cit., vol.I, 193.

Other Unitarians agreed especially in educational matters. The Rev. Timothy Kenrick welcomed the prospect of a "NATION OF READERS."<sup>1</sup> Andrew Kippis protested against those who would keep the lower classes ignorant, for the latter were equal in nature, in their bodily and mental powers and before God. Talented poor children had often been the "most enlightened, active and useful citizens."<sup>2</sup> Kippis, however, like Thomas Barnes, Hugh Worthington and Ralph Harrison, whilst not excluding anyone from knowledge, affirmed that a more "liberal and extensive erudition" was expected from the "more superior stations in life".<sup>3</sup> Belsham went further and, whilst stressing that to educate the poor would make them wise and virtuous, obedient and law-abiding, thought it absurd to give them a wide education which would induce

habits and inclinations above their proper rank in life, and would disqualify them for the duties of that sphere in which Providence hath appointed them to move.<sup>4</sup>

Unitarians, therefore, although more radical than most middle-class contemporaries in wanting education for the poor, could be found uttering seemingly very commonplace sentiments. Mrs Barbauld and William Turner, for example, welcomed the spread of Sunday schools because they would help the

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick T., op.cit., 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Kippis A., op.cit., 14-5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 16; Barnes T., op.cit., 58; Worthington H., op.cit., 49; Harrison R., op.cit., 9.

<sup>4</sup> Belsham T., The Importance of giving a Proper Education to the Children of the Poor. Sermon (1791), 9-14.



populace to gain a "modest deference and chastened demeanour ... instead of ... sullen and untamed licentiousness" and "increasing profligacy."<sup>1</sup> Yet Turner argued that the aims of teaching the "habits of decency and order" to increase the "sober and industrious members" of society so that the nation would become more opulent and the Poor Rates would diminish, were "inferior considerations." He had no time for the tyranny and pride of those who opposed Sunday schools because they raised the poor out of their ranks. He wanted all mankind to be "rational and religious creatures; respectable and useful in this world, and qualified for the enjoyments of a better." The welfare of the country could not be promoted "by the depression and ignorance of the greater part." It was no advantage for the poor to be born in a free, enlightened Protestant state if they lacked the means to benefit intellectually and morally from that.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Turner thoroughly approved of the Sunday school movement inspired by Robert Raikes in the 1780s<sup>3</sup>. He instigated at Hanover Square, Newcastle, the first Sunday school in the north-east of England and, through his widely disseminated sermon of 1786, Sunday Schools Recommended, influenced many others to establish Sunday schools in that area, but Anglican fear of sedition and atheism in the 1790s destroyed his hope of a non-denominational approach. His Abstract of the History of the Bible, written to teach the elements of reading

<sup>1</sup> Barbauld A.L., Remarks on Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Inquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public or Social Worship, (1829), 33; Turner W., Sunday Schools Recommended .. (1786). 44.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 27-37.

<sup>3</sup> There had been individual moves to form Sunday Schools for poor children previously. For example Catherine Cappe (nee Harrison) established one at Bedale in Yorkshire in the late 1760s. She found it difficult to secure help from other young people and was considered rather odd by the inhabitants. See Cappe C., op.cit., 120-2.

and to build up scriptural knowledge through its questions and answers at the end of each section, went through many editions and increased in size, information and in scriptural geography. At Hanover Square spelling cards were also used; parents or friends had to ensure the child's attendance, clean appearance, immediate return home and care of books. The first 46 scholars, mostly illiterate on entry, were soon reading and in nine weeks 25 of them repeated their catechism before a large congregation, a feat possibly stimulated by their reward of a Bible with their name inscribed in gold letters.<sup>1</sup> Such religious education was praised by Turner and the many employers of children who patronised the schools, as cheap and not interfering with the childrens' employment on which, they said, the parents depended.<sup>2</sup>

In ensuing years the schools suffered from irregular attendance, but as one of the visitors pointed out

the most uncultivated boys are the fittest objects of this charity, the evil therefore must be remedied by the vigilance of the patrons and not by dismissing the irregular scholars.<sup>3</sup>

Although Turner would give only a simple religious education in Sunday schools, other Unitarians, such as T.H. Robinson in Mosley Street, Manchester, deliberately provided normal school subjects.<sup>4</sup> In Walsall, where again the

<sup>1</sup> Bowery M.M., William Turner's Contribution to Educational Developments in Newcastle upon Tyne (1782-1841). (M.A. Newcastle, 1980), 65-8; Harris G., The Christian Character ... of the Late Rev. William Turner..., (1859), 12-3; Turner W., op.cit., 29, 44-8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 21-4; Bowery M.M., op.cit., 70-1.

<sup>3</sup> Sunday School Report of the Weekly Visitors, 1789-1845, (Church of the Divine Unity, Newcastle upon Tyne), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Turner W., op.cit., 30; Burney L. Cross Street Chapel Schools, Manchester, 1734-1942, (1977), 18.

Unitarians seem to have been the first to have established Sunday schools, the Old Meeting taught the three R's and Bible knowledge. This school was revitalised by the new minister, Thomas Bowen, in 1794, and inspired others in Walsall. Unitarians also founded early Sunday schools at many places in the Midlands and the North.<sup>2</sup> The ones at the Old and New Meetings in Birmingham, for example, established in 1787 and 1788 respectively, quickly grew and were very popular. They were attractive because of the great stress on secular education, the democratic organisation, including pupil participation and the success of the Brotherly Society, established jointly in 1796 by the two Meetings to train teachers from amongst the boy pupils, thus extending the latter's education both intellectually and morally. A highly popular addition to the weekly classes in the three R's, drawing, geography, natural, civil and sacred history and morals, was the establishment of a benefit scheme whereby, by subscribing ½d to 2d a week, any wages lost through sickness by the boys and teachers in the schools, were covered.<sup>3</sup>

This society itself had grown out of the older Sunday Society of 1789 which taught useful subjects to those boys who could now read, established a library chiefly of scientific books, gave occasional gratuitous lectures on science and

<sup>1</sup> Sell A.F.P., "The Social and Literary Contribution of Three Unitarian Ministers in Nineteenth-Century Walsall, T.U.H.S., (Oct. 1973), vol. XV, no. 3, 80.

<sup>2</sup> Woodall R.D., Midland Unitarianism and its story, 1662-1962, (1962 Sutton Coldfield), 20; Holt R.V., op.cit., 250-1; Kenrick J., A Biographical Memoir of the late Rev. Charles Wellbeloved, (1860), 37.

<sup>3</sup> Bushrod E., The History of Unitarianism in Birmingham from the middle of the Eighteenth Century of 1893, (M.A. Birmingham, 1954), 175. Frost M.B., The Development of Provided Schooling for Working-Class Children in Birmingham, (M. Litt, Birmingham 1978), 144-7; Luckcock J., Moral Culture, (1817), Narrative of Old and New Meeting Sunday Schools Established in Birmingham, 266-70.

mechanics to factory workers and also ran a debating society. James Luckcock, one of the first members, was called by the Society after his death in 1835 "the Father of Sunday School Instruction in Birmingham." William Matthews recalled that Thomas Wright Hill was President when Hartley's theory of the mind was discussed and Thomas Clark, another member, used to give scientific lectures at his own home to artisans, some of them foundry workers and so aptly termed the "cast-iron philosophers."<sup>1</sup> Matthews himself left the Church and became a member after hearing Priestley whom he found, to his astonishment, to be

the most unassuming, candid man I ever knew;...

placid, modest and courteous, pouring out, with the simplicity of a child, the great stores of his most capacious mind to a considerable number of young persons of both sexes, whom, with the familiarity and kindness of a friend, he encouraged to ask him questions, either during the lecture or after it, if he advanced anything which wanted explanation, or struck them in a light different from his own.<sup>2</sup>

Lectures given in the 1790s were free and open to both sexes and all denominations. Through Thomas and Samuel Carpenter (brothers of Lant) an Artizans Library was established which, through both generous donations from the wealthy and weekly subscriptions from the members, grew into a valuable library, made public in 1799.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Remarks upon the character of the late Mr. James Luckcock printed from the Minutes of the Brotherly Society for the Use of Members, (Birmingham 1835) 3; Matthews W., A Sketch of the Principal Means which have been employed to ameliorate the Intellectual and Moral Condition of the Working-Classes in Birmingham, (1830), 6-9, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 9-11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 14-8.

In Bath, James Losh from Newcastle became well-known for establishing Sunday schools whilst there for his health.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Joshua Toulmin was an ardent supporter of Sunday schools, in the south-west of England certain that thousands of forlorn and neglected children "like the outcasts of the species" could be taught the great practical truths of religion and hopefully would become "more enlightened, more orderly and more virtuous." Humanity, civil policy and religion, he said, begged support for the scheme.<sup>2</sup>

Some Unitarian Chapels, for example in Leicester, Nottingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Dudley and Newcastle, ran Charity schools.<sup>3</sup> Catherine Cappe reformed the management of the Grey-Coat School in York.<sup>4</sup> In Birmingham, the Old and New Meetings co-operated successfully to run a charity school which lasted from 1760 until beyond 1870. Their avowed aims were not dissimilar from those of charity schools run by other religious organisations: very poor children were taught to read and write and understand the "common arithmetic sufficient for service," and the truths and duties of "natural and revealed religion" and were employed in useful work in order to be competently trained for apprenticeship or domestic service without being lifted "above their station." On the other hand, great care was taken of the physical health of the children and they were given six hours a day when, once meals or family worship were over, they were free to play, a better option than many working-class children had

<sup>1</sup> Grandfather Turner Fiftieth Year in Newcastle upon Tyne. Report on the Dinner ...21.12.1831.

<sup>2</sup> Toulmin J., The Rise, Progress and Effects of Sunday Schools, considered in A Sermon Preached at Taunton, (March 28th 1789), 17-27.

<sup>3</sup> Venable F.J.W., Education in Leicester, 1780-1816, (M.Ed. Leicester, 1968), 12; MSS Nottingham University, Hugh W., The High Pavement Day Schools and Mrs Fishers Bequest, (1889), 7,8; Burney L., op.cit., 5; Holt A., Walking Together (1938), 167; M.R., (1827) N.S.1, 69; The Inquirer, (27.2.1937), 99; Turner W., A Short Sketch...Hanover Square, Newcastle, (1811), 27.

<sup>4</sup> Cappe C., op.cit., 219, 226, 232, 304.

elsewhere. Corporal punishment was disliked and was never used on the girls, although some alternative punishments might well have seemed worse to offenders, for example, in 1788 one had to wear a yellow jacket with LIAR written on the back for a week.<sup>1</sup>

In some respects, therefore, Unitarians were all too clearly members of the eighteenth-century middle-classes. Nevertheless, they did not withhold, rather did they positively wish to extend, education to the working-classes, and Unitarian industrialists like the Gregs, who taught their apprentices the three R's and music, established schools for their workers.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst examining eighteenth century Unitarian educational ideas, it is worth pausing briefly to look at the reaction of Unitarians to the most influential radical philosopher of the day, Jean Jacques Rousseau. Many Unitarians were much affected by Rousseau's La Nouvelle Heloise (1761) and Emile (1762) which concentrated on a very individualistic education for middle-class children within the home or by a tutor. Unitarians could concur with those ideas of Rousseau derived from Locke, those principles which fitted in with the rest of their own philosophies, that is, the importance both of each individual child and of childhood as a distinct period of life in itself; the emphasis on things not words, on learning by experience not maxims and precepts, on thinking for oneself not relying on others, and on concentrating on useful rather than ornamental education. Above all they could agree wholeheartedly with the desire to break with traditional customs and curriculum in education for they believed the latter to be not only unnecessary but even harmful. They saw the need to present an enlightened, humane, useful education, relevant to contemporary needs, to enable the middle-class to lead and regenerate society and especially rid it

<sup>1</sup> Bushrod E., op.cit., 155-7, 164, 167, 172.

<sup>2</sup> Rose M.B., The Gregs of Styal, (The National Trust 1978), 24;

of the selfish values of the rich and idle.<sup>1</sup> However, they completely repudiated Rousseau's theme of leaving a child to nature for the first twelve years, because of their belief in the great importance of the law of association, and, therefore, their wish for a systematic, carefully supervised education. They wanted children to ask questions and be answered intelligently and saw no practical educational or moral advantage in having children isolated from their peer groups and attended to by one accomplished man of letters.<sup>2</sup> Equally, they utterly opposed Rousseau's sentimental but denigrating and debasing view of females and their intellect.<sup>3</sup>

Like Priestley, other Unitarians sought an appropriate education to reflect their own liberal religion and their position as Dissenters and members of a new middle-class rising in wealth and economic power, caught up in the new industry, technology and medicine and eager both to become part of an international community of science and "citizens", indeed enlightened leaders of the realm. Religious education was their priority, although without creeds or dogma. Even their catechism dealt only with those articles of belief which they believed were common to all Christians.

Nevertheless, as shown, their emphasis on the law of association and desire for the young to understand the meaning of Rational Dissent, led Unitarians to begin religious education early. William Turner, for example, encouraged parental religious education of children and followed Priestley both in reviving

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Boyd W., The Minor Writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, (Columbia University, New York, 1962), passim; Rousseau J.J., Emile, (Dent Paperback 1974), passim.

<sup>2</sup> Kippis A., op.cit., 26; ed. Aikin L., ..Works...Barbault, 315; Harrison R., op.cit., 19-20 - Harrison implicitly rejected Rousseau's idea of man having to learn all the simplest arts of life himself when he stressed the necessity of teaching the fruits of science research so that further improvements could take place.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft forcibly denounced Rousseau's ideas on female education - see op.cit., 177-91, 108.

the custom of catechising the younger members of the congregation and in having classes in religious education for the different age groups among them, the upper two of which would learn scriptural history and geography. To young men and women he gave a course of lectures on the "Evidence and Doctrines of Natural and Revealed Religion" and on the "Corruption, Reformation and present state of Christianity." He established a flourishing congregational library in which Priestley's Institutes... was a very popular book.<sup>1</sup>

Other ministers like the Revs. Hugh Worthington and Timothy Kenrick were similarly concerned that the young should be enabled to maintain a firm and pure faith against attack and realise the necessity of candour, moderation, tolerance and moral obligations, including commercial ones.<sup>2</sup> This decidedly Dissenting view of religion, however open-minded in intention, would, in conjunction with intellectual studies, hopefully keep men, in particular, moral and virtuous and ensure that future ministers would have congregations who could follow their discourses. Thus such studies were taught in the liberal academies open to laymen.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Unitarians did not force Unitarian beliefs and they grounded their religion on a firm commitment to rationalism, abhorring superstition or extreme asceticism which waited only on death, as of the La Trappe monks in the west country of whom William Shepherd commented

such ignorance, such stupidity, such degradation of  
human nature I never witnessed<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Turner W., op.cit., 33-5; An Address to the Members...Hanover Square, Newcastle, (Church of Divine Unity 1792), 7-13; Bowery M.M., op.cit., 62; Catalogue of valuable books in William Turner's library and Record of the Library, Hanover Square, 1808-9, (Church of the Divine Unity, Newcastle).

<sup>2</sup> Worthington H., op.cit., 34-43, 58-9; Kenrick T., op.cit., 5-24.

<sup>3</sup> McLachlan H., ..Test Acts.. 157, 211, 259.

<sup>4</sup> Ridyard H., A Selection from the Early Letters of the late Rev. William Shepherd, (1855) 83-4.



With regard to classics, usually the staple diet of male education beyond an elementary level, Unitarians shared Priestley's attitude of valuing them but only as part of the curriculum. Mrs Barbauld thought that the French Revolution would inspire a revolution in education

and particularly be the ruin of classical learning, the importance of which must be lessening every day; while other sciences, particularly that of politics and government must rise in value, afford an immediate introduction to active life, and be necessary in some degree to everybody. All the kindred studies of the cloister must sink, and we shall live no longer on the lean relics of antiquity.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Mrs Barbauld's own writings were peppered with classical allusions and were, indeed, more reminiscent of the classical eighteenth century than the new Romantic movement. She accepted that the foundations of the best in literature lay in the classics, that the latter had intrinsic value, gave much entertainment, were the origin of ideas, the source of history and much effective comment on morals and manners. Thus she was certain that no cultivated person could read or converse without some knowledge of classical mythology and literature.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs Barbauld's own father had been an eminent classical scholar and many of his Warrington students, for example Dr. Thomas Percival, Ralph Harrison, Thomas Barnes, Pendlebury and John Houghton and John Aikin (whose first

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Aikin L., op.cit., vol.II, 158.

<sup>2</sup> Barbauld A.L., A Legacy... 73-94.

published work was a very successful translation of Tacitus) evinced the love of classics they had imbibed from him.<sup>1</sup> John Aikin delighted in modern Latin authors and also made a selection for schoolboys of the more entertaining parts of Pliny but desisted when he became disgusted by Pliny's "errors and old woman's fables."<sup>2</sup>

Philology was also useful in order to understand the Bible better: even so, John Aikin, for example, criticised those who confined education to breeding clergymen and schoolmasters and he thought Latin verses and the study of Greek dialects of little use to most men.<sup>3</sup> He realised that since honours and emoluments accrued through classics at university they were bound to be enshrined there but he preferred an "unshackled" plan of education and studies "best fitted to enlarge [the] mind, and store it with the most essentially valuable products of human knowledge." Furthermore, he disputed the common view that modern people could not equal ancient literature and arts as contrary to the fact that man is "peculiarly characterised as an improvable being both as an individual and as a species..." Besides, since "language and modes of thinking have a close connexion with each other" and advance together, modern languages were more important than dead ones and modern studies would advance practical science and medicine.<sup>4</sup> For Aikin there was to be no "sabre-tooth curriculum."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wakefield G., op.cit., vol.I, 206; Brockbank E.M., The Hon. Medical Staff of the Manchester Infirmary 1752-1830, Medical Series No.1, (University of Manchester 1904), 83-6; Baker Sir T., Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel (1884), 45; Barnes T., "A Plan for the Improvement and Extension of Liberal Education in Manchester", (1783), Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, vol.II,19; Aikin L., Memoir..., vol.I,22-3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 27-8,44,98,116.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; Aikin L., op.cit., 59.

<sup>4</sup> Aikin J., Letters from a Father... 4-6,18,27-48.

<sup>5</sup> See Benjamin H., "The Sabre-Tooth Curriculum", ed.Hooper K., The Curriculum Context, Design and Development, (1971),7-15.

Aikin, like Priestley, was also only too aware of the depravity and brutality of ancient civilisation which he illustrated in Evenings at Home.<sup>1</sup> Thus the best Latin classics were only part of his daughter Lucy's education. The same was true of the Barbaulds' school at Palgrave.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Unitarians were not likely to heed Gilbert Wakefield who came into Unitarianism from Anglicanism and a Cambridge education and taught classics at both Warrington and Hackney. He deplored the wide curriculum which crowded classics into about 25% of the lecture sessions and 50% of the preparation time.<sup>3</sup> Classics were not generally given the prominence in the Dissenting Academies of post 1780 that they received in grammar schools and universities. The ancient languages were seen as necessary for theological students although for them Chaldean and Syriac were often included also and the sheer multiplicity of subjects meant it unlikely that eminent classicists on the scale the universities turned out, would be produced. At Manchester New College, in 1795, the classical tutor himself, William Stevenson,<sup>4</sup> wrote a pamphlet entitled Remarks on the very inferior utility of classical learning.<sup>5</sup> At the more orthodox academies classics were emphasised more although this lessened with the growth of Evangelicalism. The appointment of the disputatious Wakefield at Hackney was deliberately to improve classical teaching but Wakefield's failure to extend classics led first to Kippis's resignation, then his own. Even so, John Pope,

<sup>1</sup> Aikin J. and Barbauld A.L., op.cit., 116-8, 266-8.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. le Breton P.H., op.cit., xix; Rogers B., op.cit., 75.

<sup>3</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 346-65; Wakefield G., op.cit., 354-75; Steinhof H.A., New College, Hackney - A Dissenting Academy, 1786-96., (M.A. Leicester, 1978), 93.

<sup>4</sup> The father of Elizabeth Gaskell.

<sup>5</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 159, 168, 204, 210, 233, 240, 242, 256-7; Gerin W., Elizabeth Gaskell, (1976), 3-4.

his successor, had real, if less brilliant, classical scholarship.<sup>1</sup>

It was not that classics were not valued as a basic subject, but most Unitarians did not share Wakefield's view that all should be directed to this end. It is interesting to note that George Cadogan Morgan, the other tutor at Hackney who had received a traditional education, was also passionately fond of the classics, but, encouraged by his uncle Richard Price, he developed interests in mathematics and natural sciences and eventually believed that

Men of science must preside in our schools; and the elements of geometry must become the first grammar that is taught.<sup>2</sup>

The debate over the merits and demerits of classical education was long agonised over by Joseph Wedgwood when deciding his boys' education. Since grammar could be learnt from one's own language and classical knowledge from "our excellent translations"<sup>3</sup> Wedgwood feared that for future businessmen to spend much time on classics to appear more polished in society could be a case of "diamonds" being "too dearly purchased." Nevertheless, Wedgwood did have his sons taught Latin and John even learnt Greek. Appropriately enough none of his sons remained in business.<sup>4</sup>

Wedgwood himself, of course, made much use of classical art in his pottery. In his children's education, however, he showed more confidence in them all, both boys and girls, learning French.<sup>5</sup> Italian was enjoyed by a number of

<sup>1</sup> McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement ..., 119-20.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas D.O., "George Cadogan Morgan (1754-98)", The Price-Priestley Newsletter, (1979), No.3, 54-5.

<sup>3</sup> This was how W. Wood taught his pupils - Wellbeloved C., Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the late Rev. W. Wood, F.L.S., (1809), 74.

<sup>4</sup> Wedgwood J.W., Letters of... vol.II, 542,549-50,562.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 561

leading Unitarians, especially William Roscoe, pioneer of its study in England, whose books The Life of Lorenzo de Medici and Leo X, established for him a European reputation.<sup>1</sup> He stimulated his friend, William Shepherd, to write his Life of Poggio Bracciolini.<sup>2</sup> In the academies which Unitarians largely attended, Hackney offered the option of French and modern languages, Warrington, French and Italian and although it has been stated that there were no modern languages taught at Manchester Academy, such were certainly intended in 1786 and studied at least from 1801 to 1802.<sup>3</sup>

It was an education in their own language that Unitarians stressed. Mrs Barbauld, a well-known poet, gave twice weekly lessons in English composition at Palgrave which were much extolled by one of her ex-pupils, William Taylor.<sup>4</sup> Both she and John Aikin edited or introduced English poetry and prose for adults but the latter especially was interested in introducing young people to poetry as did his daughter Lucy.<sup>5</sup> Also, perceiving an "easy alliance" between

<sup>1</sup> Chandler G., William Roscoe of Liverpool, (1953), xxxiii, 88, 93-4, 97. Roscoe's self-taught Italian pronunciation was unintelligible to Italians, however. His own English dialect was termed that of a "barbarian." In the 1870s a chair of modern history and a lectureship in Italian was founded in his memory at Liverpool University. See Roscoe H.E., The Life and Experiences of..., (1906), 2, 8, 167.

<sup>2</sup> Rogers B., op.cit., 227.

<sup>3</sup> McLachlan H., ...Test Acts, 157, 211, 219; Prospectus Manchester Academy, Feb. 22nd, 1786, (M.C.O.) 2; Steinhof H.A., op.cit., 88; Smith J.W.A., The Birth of Modern Education, The Contribution of Dissenting Academies, (1954), 170; Ditchfield G.M. "The Early History of Manchester College", Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, (1972), vol. 123, 92.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Robberds J.W., A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late William Taylor of Norwich, (1843), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Aikin L., ..Works...Barbauld, xxxvii, xxxix-xlii, xlix-li; Aikin J., Letters to a Young Lady...; ed. Aikin L., Poetry for Children, (1825; 1st ed. 1801).

experimental and natural sciences and literature, Aikin often blended them in his books, as in his prescient Essay on the Application of Natural History to Poetry in 1777, and his own philosophy drew from the discoveries and creations of both.<sup>1</sup>

A number of Unitarians wrote books to help the teaching of English grammar and literature or used Priestley's works, as Kippis did at Hoxton Academy.<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Thomas Bowen, master of an academy in Walsall, brought out a much published English grammar;<sup>3</sup> William Enfield's successful The Speaker of 1774 included 171 passages of English verse and prose, mostly eighteenth century with five passages of Milton and 38 of Shakespeare. Enfield, tutor in belles-lettres at Warrington, 1770-86, justified the study of English literature as forming the character, manners, judgement and taste, as traditionalists justified classical studies.<sup>4</sup>

Enfield also referred to music, painting and sculpture, subjects often disregarded by Unitarians in this period. There were some notable exceptions, however, like the Rev. Ralph Harrison, an expert musician, Edmund Aikin, founder of the London Architecture Society and Josiah Wedgwood who so superbly fused industry, science and art. Wedgwood patronised the sculptors Flaxman and Roubillac and Joseph Wright of Derby who romanticised science and industry in art.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aikin J., Essay on the Application of Natural History to Poetry, (1777). It is interesting to note that Dorothy and William Wordsworth bought Withering's An Arrangement of British Plants according to ... the Linnaen System, (1796), in 1801 - Wordsworth D., Journals of... (O.U.P. Paperback 1971), 16 n.2.

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 123.

<sup>3</sup> Sell A.P.F., op.cit., 81.

<sup>4</sup> Enfield W., The Speaker, (1808), xliii, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> McLachlan H., "Cross Street Chapel in the Life of Manchester," Memoirs of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, (1939-41), vol.84, 30; Aikin L., Memoir..., 267-72; Nicholson B., Wright of Derby, The Masters 22 (1966).

The self-educated William Roscoe, not only founded the Liverpool Society for the Encouragement of the Arts of Painting and Design, but also sought to make his city the "Venice of the North." He was sufficiently successful for Professor R. Muir to praise him and his group for partially redeeming, despite great unpopularity, the contemporary sordidness of Liverpool. They constituted, he said, the "glory of Liverpool" by striving

to diffuse throughout the money-grabbing community in which they found themselves, something of their own delight in the civilizing power of letters and the arts...<sup>1</sup>

Roscoe also built up an outstanding personal collection of prints and of Italian paintings which were dispersed throughout the country after his bankruptcy in 1820.<sup>2</sup>

Some Unitarians had a very deep interest in history, in Roscoe's case particularly in Renaissance history, a similar period of humanist endeavour, radical change and great achievement and this, in Italy at least, by the mercantile class. Mrs Barbauld extolled history as the new humanities subject, proof of the influence of the environment and full of moral lessons.<sup>3</sup> John Aikin tried to offer accurate, brief, lucid and interesting history when he wrote (and then abridged for schools) Annals of the Reign of George III.<sup>4</sup> In 1796, Aikin began his ten volume General Biography which, as Priestley would have desired, was chiefly devoted to scientists, inventors, philosophers and reformers rather than generals, rulers and politicians. As Aikin said:

<sup>1</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 273-4. See also M.R. (1833) N.S.7, 670-5.

<sup>2</sup> Chandler G., op.cit., 97-107.

<sup>3</sup> Barbauld A.L., A Legacy... 117-64.

<sup>4</sup> Aikin J., Annals of the Reign of George III, (1821), v-vii.

How much higher, as an intelligent being, does a Brindley rank,  
directing the complex machinery of a canal, which he himself has  
invented, than an Alexander at the head of his army...<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in Evenings at Home the true heroes were shown to be people like  
John Howard, the great prison reformer, not warlike pests and brutes as John  
Aikin saw them, such as Louis XIV and Achilles, and the truly great, those  
who became so by their own powers and self-control, not by birth or conquest.<sup>2</sup>  
Aikin's children imbibed the same rational, humane outlook through the way  
their father involved his whole family in his work, debating each claim to be  
in his General Biography. According to his daughter, Aikin

did not desire even from his own children a blind and prejudiced  
adherence to his opinions... This was indeed philosophy teaching  
by example.<sup>3</sup>

Richmall Mangnall wrote a highly popular Historical and Miscellaneous  
Questions for the Use of young people, 1798, as a guide to history, hoping to  
awaken curiosity in history, biography, astronomy and mythology. The book went  
through five editions in seven years, so obviously served a need, although it  
did lay itself open to misuse by dull teachers.<sup>4</sup> The Rev. Wood's systematic  
three-year course at his school for girls strictly attended to clarity, accuracy,  
causation and character.<sup>5</sup> History was taught at Warrington, Hackney, Exeter and

<sup>1</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 194.

<sup>2</sup> Aikin-J. and Barbauld A.L., op.cit., 266-8, 255-8, 293-6.

<sup>3</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 201-2. Other Unitarians were involved in similar works.  
Kippis was famous for his Biographia Britannia (1788-93). He was assisted  
by the Rev. Joseph Towers who had edited the first seven volumes of the  
British Biography - McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement..., 254.

<sup>4</sup> Mangnall R., Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the Use of Young People,  
(1822), *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Wellbeloved C., op.cit., 72-3.



Manchester Academies, with commercial law, too, at the last.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs Barbauld and John Aikin believed geography and chronology to be collateral studies to history, the latter publishing in 1803, Geographical Delineations... to show young people how much of each country was made by either nature or man.<sup>2</sup> He also wrote a well-researched England Delineated for young people, including natural and political history, agriculture and commerce. He encouraged the use of maps and the linking of geographic and important historical facts.<sup>3</sup> All this was in accordance with his usual aim of wishing to spread "birds-eye views of various departments of knowledge" early before the young to assist later accurate arrangement of detail.<sup>4</sup>

The Rev. William Wood also based much of his geographical teaching on work with maps and not only dealt with the nature of the soil, plants and natural features of the land, but linked these facts to the political and civil (including religious and cultural) division of society.<sup>5</sup> Such teaching was unusual in the days before geography was recognised as an academic subject. The Rev. Thomas Bowen was also interested in geography, although his Geographical Exercises for the use of schools was not published until 1813. He invented a machine for describing the lines of longitude and latitude in maps, referred to in Rees's Cyclopaedia.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> McLachlan H., ...Test Acts, 215, 217-8, 248, 251, 233, 257. See also Lincoln A., op.cit., 89-91.

<sup>2</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 244.

<sup>3</sup> Aikin J., England Delineated (1790), iii-viii; this was very successful and in 1818 Aikin's son Arthur revived it as England Described.

<sup>4</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 119.

<sup>5</sup> Wellbeloved C., op.cit., 75-7.

<sup>6</sup> Sell A.F.P., op.cit., 81.

The interest of Unitarian educationalists in modern history and contemporary affairs was shown not only by their educational efforts but by their active participation. Mrs Barbauld's statement that history had many lessons for those whose "actions may one day become the objects of it" was very pertinent.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians generally were also prominent among that comparatively small, but exceedingly important, group who saw the key to the future in the new scientific discoveries, an interest partly inherited from 17th century Puritanism with its desire to master Nature, both to show God's glory and to "relieve man's estate" and freshly stimulated by actual advances in science and technology in the industrial and intellectual milieu in which many Unitarians moved. Like Priestley, many other Unitarian ministers, for example, the Revs. William Turner and Thomas Barnes, showed a perhaps surprising involvement in science. The Rev. William Wood, who succeeded Priestley at Leeds, was an original member of the Linnaean Society, ran the department of natural history for Arthur Aikin's Annual Review in the early 19th century, contributed many articles on botany for Rees's Cyclopaedia and taught much practical natural history.<sup>2</sup> John Aikin, like so many of those in the forefront of scientific and social reform in this era, was a qualified doctor.<sup>3</sup> He lectured at Warrington on chemistry and anatomy, wrote books for his students and introduced a pre-medical course which extended further Warrington's important

<sup>1</sup> Barbauld A.L., op.cit., 135.

<sup>2</sup> Wellbeloved C., op.cit., 79-81, 98-103.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Percival was a similar example.

contribution to scientific education in England.<sup>1</sup> He spread his deep interest in scientific and practical subjects throughout his own circle and published a Calendar of Nature on animal and vegetable life for ten to fourteen year olds, a compendium of natural science and poetry so successful that in 1788, his son, Arthur, enlarged it for older readers into The Natural History of the Year.<sup>2</sup>

Aikin's desire to communicate a taste for useful knowledge was illustrated by the various scientific dialogues in Evenings at Home, in one of which he acknowledged the gradual dawning of evolutionary theories of this time, emanating from men like Erasmus Darwin, a friend of Unitarians such as Priestley and Wedgwood.<sup>3</sup> The latter, in his search for suitable clays for his pottery, became a keen geologist, as did many canal engineers and builders, and their studies stimulated many important discoveries in science.<sup>4</sup>

Aikin's emphasis was on the necessity for people to understand their own environment, to know "things not words." Further dialogues in Evenings at Home were on such topics as animals, metals, gravity, paper-making, manufactures and even teamaking to give an illustration of chemistry understandable to children.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fulton J.F., "The Warrington Academy (1757-1786) and its influence upon medicine and science," Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine (Feb.1933) Vol.I, No.2, 50-80. Aikin's Thoughts on Hospitals anticipated a number of points his friend John Howard later made in his State of Prisons. Aikin compiled the medical part of Howard's account of the Lazarettos of Europe. He wrote on childbirth and his Biographical Memoirs of Medicine in Great Britain of 1780 was the first attempt at a biographical dictionary of English physicians. He was a Fellow of the Linnaean Society and a Licentiate of the College of Physicians although, as a Dissenter, he could not be a fellow. When he signed a paper against this he was debarred from using the College's library. See Rogers B., op.cit., 54-5,91-2,121.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Aikin L., op.cit., 37-40,60.

<sup>3</sup> Aikin J. and Barbauld A.L., op.cit., 6-11,29-34,149-53,206-9,236-48,258-63, 290-3,238.

<sup>4</sup> Schofield R.E., The Lunar Society of Birmingham, (1963), 95-6.

<sup>5</sup> Aikin J. and Barbauld A.L., op.cit., 87-91.

He noted, too, that great discoveries in art and science arrived at perfection gradually through successive improvers.<sup>1</sup> His impressive blend of literary and scientific interests caused J.F. Fulton to call him an outstanding example of a "scholar-physician", an excellent example of "the broad scholarship, tolerance and humanity" characteristic of 18th century Nonconformity.<sup>2</sup>

Such attitudes both partly stemmed from and, in turn, influenced the academies Unitarians attended. Nicholas Hans has shown that, although Dissenters accepted "propagatio fidei per scientia" as a motive for educational reform, their academies were actually slower to promote science for utilitarian and intellectual reasons than secular bodies in the first half of the eighteenth century, when Dissenting academies existed principally to educate ministers of religion. However, by the second half, through a mixture of religious, economic and genuinely scientific motives, the prominent Dissenting academies, especially those where Unitarianism flourished, accepted science on the curriculum wholeheartedly, unlike Oxbridge where, despite some stimulating university professors, modern science was not fostered as part of the basic course.<sup>3</sup> There was built up at Warrington excellent scientific apparatus which was passed on to Hackney, while excellent teachers such as Priestley, John Aikin and George Walker helped establish a brilliant reputation.<sup>4</sup> From both these academies came a stream of men who did much to extend scientific education in

<sup>1</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 194-5.

<sup>2</sup> Fulton J.F., op.cit., 66.

<sup>3</sup> Hans N., op.cit., 54-63. McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement..., 73; Musson A.E. and Robinson E., Science and Technology in the Industrial Revolution (1969), 166-78.

<sup>4</sup> McLachlan H., ...Test Acts, 219-20, 228-9; Record of Unitarian Worthies, (1876), 239-40.

England: for example, from Warrington, Thomas Percival,<sup>1</sup> Thomas Barnes and William Turner; from Hackney, Arthur Aikin, chemistry lecturer and writer, editor of the Annual Review (1802-6), a founder and later honorary secretary of the Geological Society, secretary of the Society of Arts 1817-39; and also from Hackney John Corrie, F.R.S. President of the Birmingham Philosophical Society, 1812-39, Vice-President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.<sup>2</sup> At Manchester Academy the Quaker John Dalton was tutor in mathematics and natural philosophy in the years he began publishing his renowned scientific discoveries (1793-1800).<sup>3</sup> His fortunate students also had access to the meetings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society.

It was societies such as the latter which played a large part on the dissemination of new scientific knowledge. Many Unitarians were Fellows of the Royal Society, Priestley and Wedgwood being very active for example. It seems, however, that significant developments, especially in applied science, took place elsewhere in the late eighteenth century. Some specialised societies were established like the Linnaean Society to which John Aikin belonged from 1795. The first industrial revolution has been shown to be far more scientific than was formerly supposed<sup>4</sup> and Unitarians were prominent amongst those few who were concerned to join science to industrial practice. The foci for the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas Percival F.R.S., wrote on medical matters, (his Medical Ethics of 1803 especially was very influential in England and America), drew up a code of laws for the Manchester Infirmary; was with Barnes and Thomas Henry a leading campaigner for the new Fever Hospital, established a local Board of Health, began popular discussion of the bad conditions in cotton mills and promulgated the use of cod-liver oil - Brockbank E.M., op.cit., 83-103.

<sup>2</sup> Rogers B., op.cit., 156-60, 173-8, 190-1; Carpenter R.L., Memoir of the Rev. Lant Carpenter, LL.D., (1842), 86-7, 414.

<sup>3</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 259-62.

<sup>4</sup> Musson A.E. and Robinson E., op.cit., 31-7, 78, 81, 85, *passim*.

application of science to industry passed to the province and especially to those provincial cities with strong links between nonconformity, science and industry. Here more general societies on the European model were copied. These societies were open to all men, irrespective of religion - a topic usually like politics, banned at meetings - and drew men from many different professions.

One of the most important of late eighteenth century societies was the Lunar Society of Birmingham which, from the late 1750s, and especially from 1765 to 1791, met monthly, if possible, on the Sunday, or later Monday, nearest the full moon. Eighteenth century Birmingham was a thriving non-corporated town, attractive to Dissenters, and with many small craftsmen. One of its fast-expanding industrial concerns was that of Matthew Boulton and it was from his contacts, especially his physician, Dr. Small, that the Lunar Society imperceptibly grew. From 1781 to 1791, however, the most brilliant years of the Society, Priestley was its dominant influence. This society was an informal group comprising only fourteen members<sup>1</sup> throughout its duration. They shared not only a sustained interest in science, pure and applied, but also in education, some outstandingly so. The 1780s were years of major successes by many of the group with important publications, for example, by Darwin, Day and Priestley and the design of Watt's rotative steam engine. The group instigated science lectures in Birmingham and a science section in the library which Priestley had developed. In the reactionary 1790s the Society's reputation sank, yet it had been a most remarkable group of diverse men who enthusiastically co-operated, often successfully, to solve scientific, commercial, industrial and educational problems and constituted an advance guard of a new industrial society.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That is: Matthew Boulton, James Watt, John Whitehurst, Dr. Small, Captain James Keir, Josiah Wedgwood, Erasmus Darwin, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Thomas Day, Dr. William Withering, Joseph Priestley, Dr. Jonathan Stoke, Robert Johnson and Samuel Galton.

<sup>2</sup> Schofield R.E., op.cit., *passim*.

An offshoot of the Lunar Society was the Derby Philosophical Society, led by Erasmus Darwin, of which Wedgwood was also a member. It gave scientific lectures and its large library showed every effort of keeping abreast of contemporary research, especially in chemistry.<sup>1</sup>

Similar societies were established in other provincial towns in which Unitarians played an important role. The Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society of 1783-6, for example, although founded by an Anglican, had in fact developed from the informal contacts Priestley had made whilst minister in Leeds, 1767-73. Two leading members were friends of Priestley - the Rev. William Woods and Joseph Dawson, minister of Idle Chapel near Leeds who played a leading role in establishing and exploiting the Low Moor ironworks and, in 1799, became President of the Yorkshire and Derbyshire Ironmasters Association.<sup>2</sup> Priestley also inspired a Literary and Philosophical Society in London, of which John Aikin became secretary.<sup>3</sup> In Leicester the cultured Unitarian worsted spinner and hosier, John Coltman,<sup>4</sup> founder of Leicester's first Book Society, joined with others, including Robert Brewin, a relative of Priestley's, to establish a Literary and Philosophical Society.<sup>5</sup> In York, the Unitarian minister, Newcome Cappe, established a Literary Club from 1771 to 1791.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Musson A.E. and Robinson E., op.cit., 190-8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 158-9.

<sup>3</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 163.

<sup>4</sup> He became a Baptist after his daughter Mary Ann started attending the Baptist chapel of Robert Hall in 1807. See Beale C.H., Catherine Hutton and her friends, (1899), 93, 233.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 64; Musson A.E. and Robinson E., op.cit., 163-4.

<sup>6</sup> D.N.B., vol.9,24.

In Liverpool in 1793 an informal literary society, was formed principally of Unitarians, including Roscoe, Shepherd, Dr. Currie and the Rev. John Yates, but the times were too reactionary to allow it to continue meeting safely.<sup>1</sup>

The chief literary and philosophical societies, however, were in Manchester and Newcastle. The Manchester Society was formally established in 1781, aiming to follow the example of the various European learned societies which greatly diffused knowledge, stimulated many discoveries and published much useful and valuable information.<sup>2</sup> The three founder members were Dr. Thomas Percival, the Rev. Thomas Barnes and the apothecary Thomas Henry, all members of Cross Street Chapel where the first meetings were held and, like many other members, former students of Warrington whose literary and scientific culture they sought to continue. As Barnes summed up, their wish was to connect "LIBERAL SCIENCE AND COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY."<sup>3</sup> Over half of the original members were, like Percival, medical men, but many others were businessmen and manufacturers.<sup>4</sup> The first secretaries were Barnes and Henry and the first librarian was Thomas Robinson, another member from Cross Street.

<sup>1</sup> Chandler G., op.cit., 87.

<sup>2</sup> Memoirs of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, (1785) vol.I vi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; Barnes T., "A Plan for the Improvement and Extension of Liberal Education in Manchester", vol.II, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholson F., "The Literary and Philosophical Society 1781-1851" Memoirs and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, (1923-4), vol.68, Part I, no.9, 98-108.



Many members of the Literary and Philosophical Society were involved with the establishment of the Manchester Academy in 1786, although the Society itself maintained its independence from any religious opinion. In 1783 the Society also supported the College of Arts and Science, engineered by Barnes and Henry. This College aimed to provide a public repository for chemical and medical knowledge and organised lectures and to give evening classes to young men, aged 14 to 18, destined for some respectable line of trade.<sup>1</sup> The prospectus spoke of providing "a course of LIBERAL INSTRUCTION" both compatible with and furthering the "highest interests" of commerce and preparatory to systematic university studies. It wanted to

unite Philosophy with Art, the moral and intellectual culture of the mind, with the pursuits of fortune, and to superadd the noblest powers of enjoyment to the acquisition of wealth.<sup>2</sup>

Both Barnes and Henry worried about the impact of commercial and manufacturing developments on man's moral development and wished to secure through a liberal education not only that future industrialists should understand the scientific principles of their industrial processes, but also that wealth would be produced for the good and not the detriment of the individual and of society. In a series of papers from 1781 to 1783 to the Society, they sought to overcome the strong prejudice against future tradesmen indulging in a liberal education, arguing that the advantages of culture and intellectual enlightenment should belong to the manufacturer and tradesman no less than the "gentleman." Such need not only not distract from business but should improve it by preventing

<sup>1</sup> Barnes T., "On the Affinity subsisting between the Arts with a plan for promoting and extending Manufactures, by encouraging those Arts on which Manufacture principally depend." Memoirs L. and P., vol.I, 85.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester Public Library, Prospectus of the College of Arts and Sciences, (1783), I.

debasement relaxations, energising the mind and giving the knowledge which made great industrial achievement possible.<sup>1</sup> To Barnes, intelligent, cultured business-men in the Wedgwood mould would bring honour to Manchester and would contradict the disgraceful idea that a spirit of merchandize is incompatible with liberal sentiment, and that it only tends to contract and vulgarize the mind.<sup>2</sup>

As Barnes and Henry had recommended, the college offered a variety of courses on science, fine arts and anatomy, with Barnes himself lecturing on manufactures and commerce, commercial law, ethics and moral philosophy. Henry lectured on chemistry, including "a course on the Arts of Bleaching, Dyeing and Calico-Printing" which was very successful and made available to skilled operatives in the trade. The other lecturers were highly qualified<sup>3</sup> and from 1786 it was hoped that the College and Manchester Academy would work together, with the Literary and Philosophical Society, so closely involved with both, supplying a third supporting factor. Yet, despite two successful winters of lectures<sup>4</sup>, the College did not overcome the distrust of local businessmen and industrialists and had closed by 1788. However, a similar radical educational experiment, but one with a more systematic course, begun at Newcastle upon Tyne in 1802 by William Turner, had far greater success.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henry T., "On the Advantages of Literature and Philosophy in general and especially on the consistency of Literature and Philosophy with Commercial Pursuits," Memoirs L. and P., vol.I, 7,14,27-8,passim; Barnes T., "On the Affinity..." vol.I, 73-84; passim; "A Plan..." vol.II, 25, passim.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>3</sup> Musson A.E. and Robinson E., op.cit., 93. The other lecturers were John Banks, Charles White F.R.S. and Dr. Thomas White.

<sup>4</sup> See Barnes T., "A Discourse...", op.cit., 67.

<sup>5</sup> Turner W., A General Introductory Discourse on the Objects, Advantages and Intended Plan of the New Institution for Public Lectures in Natural Philosophy in Newcastle upon Tyne, (1802), 13,19-21.

Turner was the founding member of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society of 1793 and remained its inspiration and dominant member for many years. Arguing from the Manchester model he listed the moral and scientific advantages of such a society, particularly in a developing mining and trading area. Scientific investigation, he said, could engender local improvements of many kinds and stimulate historical, literary and aesthetic interests.<sup>1</sup> These arguments excellently represented both the aims and activities of such societies and the actual type of topics discussed at Newcastle. Monthly meetings, with half an hour's "literary intelligence" and the reading of a paper, were established, Turner delivering many of the latter, mostly on science and particularly in the years 1793 to 1809. Not all the aims were fulfilled but the society did provide a forum, the only local one, for a wide range of matters of local interest. It also built up an excellent library and a collection of specimens which later became a museum.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in both Manchester and Newcastle were begun important societies which provided a forum for the discussion and dissemination of new culture and knowledge in fast-growing industrial areas whilst being prime educational institutions in themselves. Both of them established libraries for members.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Unitarians played an important part in the exciting new development of establishing public libraries, for example in Manchester, Walsall, Whitby, York, Leeds and Birmingham, although they might find their own books unwelcome as Priestley later did at Birmingham.<sup>4</sup> Josiah Wedgwood was one of the first

<sup>1</sup> Watson R.S., The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, (1793-1896), (1897), 35-41. Turner became senior secretary for 44 years and there were 3 other Unitarians on the Committee of 15 - Bowery M.M. op.cit., 155.

<sup>2</sup> Watson R.S., op.cit., 43-4, 140-65, 174-7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 47-51; Musson A.E. and Robinson E., op.cit., 113.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.; Sell A.F.P., op.cit., 81; McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement..., 118; Kenrick J., op.cit., 81; Priestley J., "An Address to the Subscribers of the Birmingham Library", (1787), Works XIX, 584-7; Holt R.V., op.cit., 271.

employers to institute a free library for his workmen<sup>1</sup> but the concern to open up avenues of education by way of societies and libraries concerned primarily the middle-classes. Matthew Arnold was not the first to worry about the latter's lack of culture, although in the late 18th century Rational Dissenters did so from an awareness both of opportunities denied the Dissenters and of a great wealth of new knowledge which if they grasped it would give the latter the key to a new world.

One way to do this was by the new monthly and quarterly journals which were to play a significant part in the wider education of the middle-classes in the nineteenth century. The Unitarians helped develop these, for example Priestley edited the Theological Review, Joseph Johnson, the more widely-ranging The Analytical Review and John Aikin, the excellent The Monthly Magazine.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians also sought to disseminate their philosophy and interests through children's books, being, indeed, amongst the first to write specifically for children. Mrs Barbauld and John Aikin brought out a wide range of books to suit different ages from infants onwards, employing dialogue, drama, fable and poetry as well as straightforward stories to capture the readers interest.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs Barbauld ignored the criticisms of eminent men that she was thus wasting her considerable talents, for as Lucy Aikin said of her and John Aikin

how can genius, knowledge, and virtue be occupied with greater  
certainty of producing good than in pouring their treasures upon  
the mind of youth?<sup>4</sup>

Charles Lamb disliked their didacticism but the many editions proved the popularity of these works.<sup>5</sup> Other Unitarians who wrote for children included

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 165-77.

<sup>3</sup> Above passim.

<sup>4</sup> Aikin L., Memoirs..., 157. See also ibid., 43; Barbauld A.L., Lessons for Children 4 vols.(1818-1820), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Rogers B., op.cit., 123.

Thomas Percival and William Roscoe, the latter's The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast, last republished in 1973, being not at all didactic and immensely popular.<sup>1</sup>

These authors, together with Maria Edgeworth, Thomas Day and the Quaker Priscilla Wakefield, were the best contemporary writers for children and helped disseminate early rational Middle-class views. These radical beliefs were also reflected in the educational practices of Unitarians which will now be examined.

Some Unitarians, in common with many of the middle and upper classes of their day, educated their children at home. John and Martha Aikin educated their two youngest - Edmund, the short-lived architect and Lucy, the only girl - themselves.<sup>2</sup> Josiah Wedgwood's children, both daughters and sons, were largely educated at home by excellent tutors in languages, chemistry, accounts, drawing and other subjects, their father anxiously supervising and organising them and ensuring they all had plenty of healthy exercise. Wedgwood's children spent short periods at school but John alone attended a Dissenting academy - Warrington - for one year; Joss and Tom attended Edinburgh University.<sup>3</sup> Wedgwood upheld home education as giving better moral and individual development.<sup>4</sup> He, of course, could also offer daily contact with leading scientists and thinkers of the day.

Some Unitarians, like the Rev. William Hazlitt, added their own tuition to their children's schooling.<sup>5</sup> Many ran schools themselves, as Mrs Barbauld and

<sup>1</sup> Brockbank E.M., op.cit., 85; Roscoe W., The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast (1973). A Version by A. Aldridge, W. Plomer and R. Fitter.

<sup>2</sup> Aikin L., op.cit., 158,267.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Hereford C.H., op.cit., 309-10, 346-50; Wedgwood J., op.cit., vol.II, 433,547,548,555-6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 548-9.

<sup>5</sup> Birrell A. William Hazlitt, (1902), 19.

her husband did at Palgrave in Sussex. Indeed the success of this school was furthered both by her fame and by her active participation, eminent men such as William Taylor, Dr. Sayers and Lord Chief Justice Denman (who went on to William Enfield's successful school at Norwich) remembering her lessons with gratitude. This school was taken over by Nathaniel Phillips from 1785 to 1796 and mathematics, ethics, history, natural and experimental philosophy were all part of the curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

It was quite customary for Unitarian ministers to run schools of their own. Like other clergy, particularly Dissenters, their salaries were so low, even below £40 a year, as often to make school-keeping a necessity, especially with the depreciation of money during the French Wars. There were many wealthy congregations but they tended to have two ministers on the one salary so the individual ministers were hardly any better off. According to McLachlan, although many Dissenters ran schools, it was the Presbyterians who chiefly ran schools for the upper and middle classes which compared with the grammar schools and extended beyond them.<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Maurice's school near Lowestoft, for example, although having a "leaning to republican theories of government" was too expensive for the property-less. William Taylor said it offered that variety of subjects suitable for merchants and businessmen.<sup>3</sup> Unitarian parents feared the influence of the orthodox religion of the grammar schools and, although some Unitarians sent their sons to grammar schools, for example in Norwich<sup>4</sup>, most preferred a broader education for their children. Similarly most Unitarians disliked the public schools, Barnes, for example, not even conceding that they taught self-government, the only government he perceived at

<sup>1</sup>

Ed. Aikin L., *..Works... Barbauld*, xxiv-xxvii; *M.R.* (1825), vol.XX,484; Robberds J.W., *op.cit.*, vol.I, 7-9; le Breton A.L. *Memories of Seventy Years*, (1883), 121-3,148. McLachlan H., *op.cit.*, 120-1. Denman's daughters attended a Unitarian school; another pupil of Enfield was Maltby, later Bishop of Durham - Roscoe H.E., *op.cit.*, 12; *D.N.B.*, vol.17, 369-70.

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan H., *op.cit.*, 100-1.

<sup>3</sup> Robberds J.W., *op.cit.*, 234-5.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Tayler J.J., *Memoir of J.G. Robberds*, (1855),4.

such places being servile obedience to the strongest. He believed the best practical plan for many was to attend private schools sufficiently large to enable both emulation and individual attention.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians ran many such schools. On principle none were established as "Unitarian", although they might be run and largely attended by the latter. Some, for example Ralph Harrison's school in Manchester, 1774 to 1786, attracted the patronage of liberal Anglicans of rank.<sup>2</sup> Many of these schools were very successful, for example the Rev. William Turner's school, 1785 to 1802 in Newcastle. This appears, to some extent, to have been a preparatory school for boys aged about twelve to sixteen. Over half the pupils were local and there were a few boarders. It is known that classics were taught and, with Turner's interest in science, it would seem likely scientific subjects, too. Certainly when Turner reopened his school by request in 1813, his pupils were able to attend his own science lectures at the New Institution. The fathers of many of his pupils were professional men, especially doctors.<sup>3</sup> The boys' boarding school of the Rev. William Shepherd, at Gateacre, near Liverpool, from 1791, earned such great repute that Shepherd had to extend the premises within a few years. Apparently he was a severe disciplinarian but a very likeable teacher, spending much time playing football with the boys. His pupils must have received a working acquaintance with radical politics since in 1795 the infamous Jeremiah Joyce visited them only six months after his acquittal and, in 1798, an assistant master, Thomas Lloyd, an excellent linguist in both

<sup>1</sup> Barnes T., "A Brief Comparison of some of the principal arguments in favour of public and private education," Memoirs of Manchester L. and P., vol.II 1-15.

<sup>2</sup> Baker Sir T., op.cit., 45n.; Hans N., op.cit., 60-1, cites many Unitarian schools when he discusses how Dissenting academies and schools became undenominational in the late 18th century.

<sup>3</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 105-15. Henry Holland, a relative of Turner's and later physician to Queen Victoria attended for four years - D.N.B., vol.27,145.

ancient and modern languages, was fined and imprisoned for two years for sedition. Unitarian pupils of the school who became prominent included Benjamin Gaskell M.P., Charles Crompton, William Duckworth, Master in Chancery and Richard Vaughan Yates, the Liverpool philanthropist.<sup>1</sup>

Shepherd himself, an able if boisterous pupil, had attended the school at Bolton-le-Moors of his uncle, the Rev. Philip Holland, as had Unitarians such as Thomas Barnes, William Turner and the three sons of Josiah Wedgwood and many pupils came from long distances despite the enormous difficulties of travel. Classics, chemistry, physics and English were taught, as might be expected from a founder of Warrington. Holland believed in learning through much practice and many examples from clear principles and rules, as did the Rev. William Wood at Leeds and his friend the Rev. Charles Wellbeloved at York. Wellbeloved, a kind disciplinarian, aiming at bringing out the intelligence of his pupils, had a very successful school from 1794.<sup>2</sup> Wood, a cheerful, affectionate teacher, taught girls principally because he wished to educate those whose early and powerful influence over the infant mind renders it in the highest degree desirable that they should be well-furnished with useful knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

His three year course included history, geography, natural philosophy and the evidences of natural and revealed religion. He found it difficult to find suitable books for young people and generally seems to have used leading 18th century authorities together with Joyce's Scientific Dialogues when they came out, to reinforce his own methods, remarks, principles and lively enthusiasm.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ridyard H., op.cit., 45-6, 60-2; Roscoe H.E., op.cit., 12-3; Inquirer, (7.8.1847), 510; McLachlan H., op.cit., 126-7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 111-12; Ridyard H., op.cit., 16-7, 101; Kenrick J., op.cit., 58-9.

<sup>3</sup> Wellbeloved C., op.cit., 68-9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 69-82.



Richmall Mangnall's school at Crofton Hall, with about seventy boarders, became the leading girl's school in Yorkshire. Many of these teachers, like Thomas Bowen at Walsall, through their own writing personally met the deep need for school textbooks.<sup>1</sup>

It seems, therefore, that where the curriculum of schools run by Unitarians is known, as at the Rev. Thomas Watson's at Whitby, it included the variety of "modern" subjects desired by educationalists such as Priestley and Aikin. There are exceptions, for example Joseph Bretland's classical school in Exeter, the Pendlebury Houghtons at Norwich and John Ludd Fenner's school at Devizes, renowned most, before its decline at Taunton into a petty day school, for its offering of upper-class accomplishments. The latter school, however, with its fagging and bullying, was untypical of Unitarian schools.<sup>2</sup>

More typical Unitarian schools offering a wide classical, modern and scientific curriculum, like the successful ones of John Corrie in Birmingham, Samuel Catlow in Mansfield, J.P. Estlin in Bristol, William Field's in Warwick and many others, are described in H. McLachlan's The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England. It seems that many of these schools were small but produced many eminent men not necessarily all Dissenters, and especially in the law, medicine, science and the arts.<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that many details are

<sup>1</sup> Ramsden G.M. A Record of the Fay Family of Bury, Lancashire.. (Gift to M.C.O. 1979), 52-3; Sell A.F.P., op.cit., 81.

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 118, 123-4; D.N.B., vol. 6, 274-5; ed. Saddler T., Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, (1872), 6; Wright C. "Crabb Robinson's School-days", T.U.H.S., (Oct. 1975) vol. 16, no. 1, 1-12; D.W.L., 24.81 (9), Letters to John Kenrick, Belsham to his sister, 10.4.1779.

<sup>3</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 128, 108-9, 122-4 and 101-40.

often lacking, that some of the schools were short-lived or pupils attended for only a short time, it can be gauged therefore, that, largely speaking, Unitarian educationalists carried out their ideal.

Such an education was continued in the liberal Dissenting academies such as Daventry, Northampton, Hackney, Manchester and the third academy at Exeter where there was an emphasis on free thought in all matters. A broad curriculum was desired for ministers as well as laymen for, as John Kentish recalled, Christ himself had likened "every scribe which is instructed" to a Jewish householder able to bring out treasures old and new for his guests.<sup>1</sup> There were orthodox academies which appeared to have a wider curriculum, for example Rotherham, but even there the most important secular subject was the classics and there were only two tutors in all. The Baptists generally were not keen on higher education and even where at Bristol, they were, the standard was not high. Those supposedly orthodox academies such as Daventry and then Northampton which did encourage free thought and had a broad curriculum, in fact, became largely Unitarian and so were dissolved. Unitarians, indeed, seemed justified in their belief that free enquiry based on modern studies and methods, such as Belsham's tuition at Daventry and later Hackney, would naturally lead to the spread of Unitarianism. Increasingly, orthodox Dissenters became apprehensive of the more radical principles disseminated at such academies as Warrington and Hackney and withdrew to their own academies where subscription to orthodox Calvinism was the rule and no laymen were admitted, thus returning to or retaining the early academical tradition. In many of these academies

<sup>1</sup> Kentish J., The Importance of Education to the Christian Minister. A Sermon preached at George's Meeting House Exeter, June 17th, 1804, in recommendation of the Academical Institution, 1-3.

studies were restricted to theology, scriptural subjects and the classics, science was neglected and greater time was spent on pastoral work.<sup>1</sup>

It was the relatively few, but outstanding liberal academies, therefore, which fostered a more modern curriculum. Nicholas Hans has given a valuable counter-balance to the view that it was only these who provided new subjects and a radical alternative to the traditional grammar school curriculum in the eighteenth century, yet most of his private secular academies were vocational in character or at least divided between classical, vocational and technical streams; two-thirds of them were in London and mainly for the lower-middle class.<sup>2</sup> The liberal Dissenting academies gave a wider education in that they also taught religious subjects and divinity and were actively engaged in contemporary religious and political controversies. Furthermore, although as a class academies offered a more flexible practical and modern approach than other educational institutions, the liberal Dissenting academies were the most reputable scholastically and offered their wide education at university standard.

Other Unitarians shared Priestley's contempt for the universities in their contemporary state, opposing the exclusiveness of national institutions and arguing forcefully for the greater morality, "wholesome discipline and regularity", smaller cost and, above all, the openness and upholding of freedom of enquiry which they especially regarded as the chief glory of their academies.<sup>3</sup> William Turner Junior later claimed that Unitarians alone had acted uniformly and consistently in the defence of free enquiry and genuinely tried in their teaching to keep their own minds open and refrain from exercising undue influence. They could do this because of "a rational and well-founded confidence in the grounds and evidence of our opinions". Whatever the public called them, Unitarians had rarely called the academies chiefly supported by them "Unitarian"

<sup>1</sup> McLachlan H., ...Test Acts, 91-9, 162-9, 175-82, 192-203, 237-43, 270-2.

<sup>2</sup> Hans N., op.cit., 63-116.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. ed. Aikin L., ...Works ...Barbould, vol.II, 365; Barnes T., "A Plan..." op.cit., 20.

as they

would rather not give them a title which might seem to imply a disposition in their conductors to promote the interests of unitarianism in preference to those of truth. We value and pursue the former, only because we believe it to be an important portion of the latter...<sup>1</sup>

However, the liberal academies were much criticised, especially from those used to a more traditional education, including Gilbert Wakefield, as noted above. He was sure that truth could only be promoted by impartial enquiry if each student knew Hebrew and Greek thoroughly and widely. Lectures in different creeds, he asserted, wearied active youths and produced only a "harvest of theological coxcombs" and an institution built on sand. Similarly, the wide variety of subjects meant students were masters of none.<sup>2</sup>

As seen, there was a wide range of subjects at these liberal academies. At Manchester Academy, for example, the various branches of theology, Latin and Greek classics, together with polite literature and mathematics and natural philosophy, were taught. Other subjects, too, were subsumed under these, for example, history, geography, theory of language and oratory and the history, principles, laws, regulations and ethics of commerce. The first three years of the five year course for theological students and the three year course for those intended for the professions or for civil and commercial life were very similar, except that the latter two groups did not study theology or metaphysics although they did have short courses on moral philosophy and the evidences and principles of natural and revealed religion in their third year.<sup>3</sup>

1

Turner W., (Jun.) Lives of Eminent Unitarians, (1840), 347-53.

2

Wakefield G., op.cit., 352-3.

3

Harrison R., op.cit., Appendix II, Manchester Academy 20.5.1786, 8-9;  
Prospectus 22.2.1786.

Tutors at these academies were obviously expected to be very versatile teachers as the careers of Thomas Belsham and Priestley himself, for example, exemplified.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, however, tutors were overloaded with too many subjects. For example, at Manchester from 1800, the Rev. George Walker was left as sole tutor, complaining that he was daily exhausted by doing the work of three:

My present labours are fitter for a Hercules in his youth than  
for an old man.<sup>2</sup>

Wakefield's criticism, however, was levelled more at the overloading of students, but Unitarians of the day, such as Andrew Kippis, appear to have been satisfied that this and superficiality were being avoided.<sup>3</sup> They expressly referred to these studies as a preparation for later specialisation. They played a significant part in deliberately introducing, extending and teaching relevant, useful and thought-provoking subjects at the academies. Priestley's various lectures were much used, including those on commerce which Barnes used at Manchester Academy where over 65% of the students enrolled for the commercial course.<sup>4</sup> It was not intended to provide technical tools<sup>5</sup> but rather to produce enlightened businessmen.

Unitarians patronised, taught and studied in these liberal academies and altogether played no negligible role within them. Indeed, as has been indicated, it was the very growth of Unitarianism which led to a split within the academy movement of the eighteenth century and the dissolution of some of the most progressive academies - Warrington in 1786, Daventry 1789, and Northampton

<sup>1</sup> Williams J., op.cit., 78, 224.

<sup>2</sup> Ditchfield G., op.cit., 90.

<sup>3</sup> Kippis A., op.cit., 19.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. McLachlan H., op.cit., 123; M.C.O. Roll of students entered at Manchester Academy, 1786-1803.

<sup>5</sup> Jones N. Manchester Academy, 1786-1803, (M.A. Leicester, 1980), 42, seems to regret this.

1798.<sup>1</sup> Students from these who continued their studies, and those who resigned from academies where Calvinism remained the professed and a subscribed creed, went to Hackney, Manchester or Glasgow University.<sup>2</sup> Other problems contributed, especially those recurrent ones of discipline and finance.<sup>3</sup> By the late 1780s, Rational Dissenters, despite their steady growth, feared the loss of suitable academical institutions for their offspring, especially near London,<sup>4</sup> and so generously responded to the call for a new academy there.

The moving spirit behind the new foundation was Thomas Rogers, a London banker. He and many Unitarians were on the Committee which, quickly growing to sixty, was dominated by laymen who designed the College to educate not only intending ministers but also laymen on whom, according to Hugh Worthington, "the advancement of knowledge and goodness in our respective societies must principally DEPEND."<sup>5</sup> Worthington and Andrew Kippis, two of the first four tutors appointed, desired the college to educate future learned ministers, virtuous, "enlightened, useful and active citizens" and professional men, stimulating in them fervent yet rational religion and knowledge "which invigorates the understanding, [and] inspires noble and enlarged sentiments of liberty."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Williams J., op.cit., 249, 300, 421; McLachlan H., op.cit., 165-6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 169; Kenrick J., op.cit., 7-10.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. see McLachlan H., op.cit., 224; Wakefield G., op.cit., 199-201; Bright H.A., "A Historical Sketch of Warrington Academy", Transactions of Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, (1859), vol. XI, 17; Williams J., op.cit., 251.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. see Kippis A., op.cit., 36, (Resolutions and Letters of Hackney Committee, Feb. 1786), 57-61.

<sup>5</sup> Worthington H., op.cit., 49.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 50-4; Kippis A., op.cit., 16-9, 39-42.

Such Priestleian sentiments were in accord with the Resolutions passed by the Committee<sup>1</sup>. The new institution was called a "College"

not for the sake of imitating the establishment, but because the word Academy (applied of late years to every common school) does not convey a proper idea of our plan of education.<sup>2</sup>

Hackney, a well-known Nonconformist area close to the intellectual circle of Newington Green where Dr. Richard Price and Thomas Rogers, both founder members of the College, lived, was chosen because at that time it was both near the country and London, the latter of which would supply a supervisory committee.<sup>3</sup> Proponents of the scheme rigorously warded off fears of the deleterious effects of London.<sup>4</sup>

Although it became known as a "Unitarian College", Hackney was both non-denominational in principle<sup>5</sup> and in fact, for example, in 1794 Priestley said that there were one Roman Catholic and several Anglicans there.<sup>6</sup> However, the first four tutors were either Socinian or Arian Unitarians as were ten out of the total of thirteen tutors. Of the three outstanding leaders of Unitarianism until the 1830s, Priestley was at the College for three years, Belsham for six and Lindsey was on the Committee.<sup>7</sup> The College provided a refuge for Unitarian

<sup>1</sup> Kippis A., op.cit., (Resolutions and Letter of Hackney Committee, March 18th, 1786) 57, 71.

<sup>2</sup> Worthington H., op.cit., 47n..

<sup>3</sup> D.W.L., 38.14, Hackney College Minutes 1785-91, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., April 11th, 1786, 28; Kippis A., op.cit., 46-8, (Resolutions...) 59-60; Worthington H., op.cit., 47.

<sup>5</sup> It was to attract "the Great Body of Protestant Dissenters... and others, whose views may coincide with Ours" - Hackney College Minutes, March 28th 1786, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Priestley J., "...Heads of Lectures", Works, XXV, 385n.

<sup>7</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 247-51; Belsham T., ...Theophilus Lindsey, 189, 194-5.

converts, like Charles Wellbeloved, who were fleeing more orthodox institutions.<sup>1</sup> These factors and the predominance of Hartleian philosophy<sup>2</sup> meant that Hackney became increasingly Unitarian in tone.

The College was indeed, through its Unitarians, radical in every sense, political, religious and educational, as can be seen in the annual sermons at the Old Jewry already much referred to because of their remarks on education.<sup>3</sup> Belsham's sermon on "Truth" in 1790, prophesied that:

This rising institution shall burst like the morning star through every mist of prejudice, envy and calumny and shall diffuse light and truth and virtue and happiness to generations yet unborn.<sup>4</sup>

This was no more calculated to calm the fears of the orthodox or more conservative than Priestley's sermon of 1791, three months before the Birmingham Riots, which foretold that the spread of knowledge would lead to acceptance of the "Divine Unity"<sup>5</sup>, or that of Price's in 1789, asking for a reform of the constitution. The latter sermon, repeated to the society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain, and attended by many Hackney students, ended resoundingly with

Tremble all ye oppressors of the world... You cannot now hold the world in darkness. Struggle no more against increasing light and liberty. Restore to mankind their rights and consent to the correction of abuses, before they and you are destroyed together.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick J., op.cit., 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Williams J., op.cit., 426-8; Belsham T., The Importance of Truth...14-5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., See above passim sermons by Kippis, Worthington and Priestley ("..Proper Objects..").

<sup>4</sup> Belsham T., The Importance of Truth... (McLachlan H. "The Old Hackney College 1786-1796" T.U.H.S., (1925) vol.III, No.3, 195 .

<sup>5</sup> Priestley J., op.cit., Works, XV, 431.

<sup>6</sup> Price R., op.cit., 49.



It was indeed, impossible to separate the aims of education among the Rational Dissenters from religious and political principles. The tutors at Hackney College were not merely interested in the radical politics of the day, they lived them and, indeed, often led them. In 1788 Kippis preached the sermon at the Revolutionary Society, Rees pronounced the eulogy on King William and Price proposed the principal toast. Price's 1790 Sermon provoked Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. This, in turn, was replied to by Priestley whose Letters to Burke went through three editions in one year. Ten members of the General Committee of Hackney belonged to the Revolutionary Society and two of them, Sir Henry Houghton and Henry Beaufoy, were the M.P.s who had introduced the bills for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1787, 1788 and 1790 respectively. The letter of one tutor, George Cadogan Morgan to his uncle, Richard Price declaring his gratification at seeing in Paris, "A king dragged in submissive triumph by his conquering subjects", was quoted in an anonymous pamphlet on 1790 attacking Price and Priestley as subverters of the religious, social and political institutions of Britain. Priestley, of course, was already one of the most hated men in England when he became a tutor although, in September 1792, he was honoured in France.<sup>1</sup> Students of Hackney attended the Commons to listen to the debates in 1790, as they did the trial of Warren Hastings. Some were themselves involved in politics, for example, Charles Wellbeloved and William Hazlitt defended Dissenters' rights and Priestley respectively in the newspapers, for to them the French Revolution was "the greatest event since the Reformation", or in Hazlitt's words

<sup>1</sup>

McLachlan H., "The Old Hackney College 1786-1796", T.U.H.S., (1925), vol.III, No.3, 189-201; Steinhof, H.A., op.cit., 55-58; Thomas D.O., op.cit., 59-60; Dixon R.A.M., "Dr. Priestley F.R.S. and the offer to him of French Citizenship and Membership of the National Assembly of France", T.U.H.S., (Oct.1932) vol.V, Part 2, 145-7.

A new world was opening to the astonished sight...

Nothing was too mighty for this new begotten hope...<sup>1</sup>

Such involvement with radical politics, however, meant disaster for Hackney from 1790 when even moderate people began to turn first against the French Revolution and thence against all reformist politics. The students who sang "Ca ira" and the "Marseillaise" and invited Tom Paine to a Republican dinner at the College were full of enthusiasm for the end of corruption and privilege and for the new age of liberty depicted for them by their tutors,<sup>2</sup> but many of the erstwhile supporters of Hackney were not so sure. Hackney was increasingly isolated from the mainstream of society. When Priestley began lecturing there the servants refused to live in the house for fear of attack.<sup>3</sup> In 1794 an ex-pupil, Jeremiah Joyce, who denounced the war against France as one aiming at the "total subjugation of the HUMAN MIND", was among those arrested for high treason.<sup>4</sup> (Another ex-pupil William Shepherd closed his school a fortnight early to hurry to London to stand on Tower Quay each day so that the imprisoned Joyce could see him.)<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, such political radicalism was coupled with increasing religious radicalism. Although Charles Wellbeloved was agreeably surprised to find a more religious atmosphere at Hackney than at Homerton in 1787, the general view of Hackney was that it was a nursery of infidelity or worse. The connection with the College of the loathed, supposedly anti-Christian Priestley, the open row over Gilbert Wakefield's Enquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public and Social Worship and its repercussions, and the examples of questioning

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt W., "Memoirs of the late Thomas Holcroft", Works, III, 155;

Steinhof H.A., op.cit., 54-6; Kenrick J., op.cit. 16-7, 24;

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 21-5.

<sup>3</sup> Steinhof H.A., op.cit., 60.

<sup>4</sup> Seed J. "Jeremiah Joyce, Unitarianism and the Vicissitudes of the Radical Intelligentsia in the 1790s", T.U.H.S., (April 1981), Vol. XVII, No. 3, 99.

<sup>5</sup> Ridyard H., op.cit., 34, 51-2. See also ibid. 121.

students, present or past, who did reject Christianity, albeit often temporarily, all aroused "a great cry against Unitarianism".<sup>1</sup> Belsham was sadly surprised that "unlimited freedom of enquiry... has led to scepticism" although he himself had a temporary, private crisis of faith.<sup>2</sup> However, he remained convinced that

truth must be favourable to virtue, and that freedom of enquiry must ultimately be favourable to truth...<sup>3</sup>

For Belsham that meant Unitarian Christianity.

However, the tide everywhere seemed to be turning against any type of liberal thinking. This, coupled with those problems of discipline and finance seemingly endemic in liberal academies, caused Hackney to close. The latter two problems undoubtedly were strong contributory factors and Belsham, like many nineteenth century Unitarians, certainly believed that the financial burdens resulting from sumptuous building was the main cause of the closure, especially as by 1793 he thought the College's

reputation now seems to be in some degree rising... The political and theological prejudices of the times are, to be sure, strongly against us but had there been prudence at the onset nothing would have injured us.<sup>4</sup>

Discipline, which had at first been misguidedly placed in the hands of an external committee of management, had also raised difficulties but these had been gradually solved from 1789 when Belsham had been appointed divinity tutor, although he was

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick J., op.cit., 25-8; McLachlan H., op.cit., 201-2; Williams J., op.cit., 473. It must be remembered that Unitarianism was still a proscribed religion.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 467; Stephenson H.W., "Hackney College and William Hazlitt", T.U.H.S., (1929), vol.IV, no.3, 239, (1930), vol.IV, no.4, 391-4, 398-9.

<sup>3</sup> Williams J., op.cit., 467.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 447; McLachlan H., op.cit., 191, 204.

given full control only in 1794.<sup>1</sup> Even so, support was gradually withdrawn and in midsummer, 1796, the College closed to the joy of its many opponents, for example the Gentleman's Magazine crowed in glee "Babylon has fallen, Babylon has fallen", attributing this to the English refusal

to encourage the modern philosophers in their attempts  
to undermine the constitution.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Hackney was not able to survive although she drew to herself a galaxy of talent in her tutors - Price and Priestley were international figures; Kippis famous for his work on Biographia Britannica, Wakefield for his translation of Lucretius, Rees for his editorship of Chamber's Cyclopaedia and Worthington for his Essay on the Resolution of Plane Triangles. Of the thirteen tutors, 1786-96, four held doctorates and five were F.R.S.<sup>3</sup> Since, once again, a liberal academy dominated by Unitarians, was closed, it might seem that the Unitarian contribution to such was to destroy them yet it was to Unitarians that the academies often owed their chief glory and success.

One liberal academy did survive: Manchester Academy, established like Hackney in 1786. This, too, had no articles of subscription, was attached to no party or name, was open to all and aimed to disseminate such liberty to all.<sup>4</sup> As such, the academy was marked as a stronghold of Rational Dissent, an attribution strengthened by the fact that the two successive principals, Thomas Barnes and George Walker, were Arians (and in 1798 the trustees approached five known Socinians to succeed Barnes before they secured Walker), the majority

<sup>1</sup> Williams J., op.cit., 433-4, 443-7; Priestley J., "...Heads of Lectures...", Works, XXV, 390-1; Kenrick J., "A Brief Memoir of John Kentish, M.A.", Kentish J. Sermons, (1854), xxvi; MSS M.C.O., J.K.IV, W. Turner to G.W.W., 25.9.1809.

<sup>2</sup> Stephenson H.W., op.cit., 395 and also 235, 397.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 225, 239-42; Steinhof H.A., op.cit., 28-30; McLachlan H., ..Test Acts, 222, 247-8.

<sup>4</sup> Barnes T., A Discourse..., 57; M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, (M.C.O.) 6, Report on 9, 30-1.

of the tutors were Unitarians as were many of the supporters and students and the academy was closely connected with Cross Street and Mosley Street Chapels.<sup>1</sup> Manchester Academy, although backed by only about one-third of former Warrington trustees, was viewed by many of its supporters as the successor to Warrington. The apparatus and library of Warrington, in fact, were eventually divided equally between Manchester and Hackney. Barnes, certainly, thought that in those days of hazardous travelling there was a need for liberal academies in both the north and south of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Barnes and Ralph Harrison, the first two tutors, explained that the Academy would aim to be a "Seminary of LIBERAL EDUCATION", inculcating wisdom, "pure religion" and a spirit of liberty, all equally necessary to those intended for the ministry, the professions, civil or commercial life. As at the College of Arts and Sciences, sciences and the arts would complement each other. Certain that such an education would help spread the principles of religious truth and liberty, Barnes dedicated the Academy "to TRUTH! to LIBERTY! to RELIGION! Harrison similarly emphasised that wisdom of all kinds grew from developing the intellectual powers through knowledge. Thus individuals gained dignity, superior power, virtue and happiness and communities gained mastery of nature, civilization, good government and liberty, healthy commerce and religious wisdom without superstition or enthusiasm. Even the hereditarily rich and powerful would look insignificant and wretched without such.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Davies V.D., A History of Manchester College, (1932), 66-7; Williams J., op.cit., 479-80; Wade R., The Rise of Nonconformity in Manchester, (1880), 49.

<sup>2</sup> Wykes D., "Sons and Subscribers 1786-1840" in ed. Smith B., op.cit., 38, M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, 10-1; Barnes T., op.cit., 70; Harrison R., op.cit., Appendix I, Meeting of Academy Committee, Feb.22nd, 1786, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Barnes T., op.cit., 55, 59-73; Harrison R., op.cit., 3,5,7-10,34.

The hopes of the founders of Manchester Academy were by no means immediately realised, however. Barnes saw the theological course as the cornerstone of the curriculum, but the fact that only twenty students took it in the first eleven years, only three of whom completed the five year course, does not suggest that it was over-subscribed.<sup>1</sup> The various tutors were of excellent scholastic standing and the theological, mathematics and science departments, 1793-1800, were stable enough, but in those of classics and belles-lettres there was a constant turnover of staff<sup>2</sup> and from 1796 Barnes and Dalton were the only tutors. Barnes's successor in 1798, George Walker, was eventually left in sole charge and his consequent resignation led to the removal of the academy from Manchester.<sup>3</sup>

However, there were deeper causes of failure, such as the seemingly usual difficulties in maintaining both discipline and viable finances. Despite the assurances of its founders as to the suitability of Manchester for an academy, the deliberate abandonment of the collegiate system of Warrington, the internal control of the tutors over the students and the careful records and correspondence with parents, discipline was so bad that by 1797 the weary Barnes was seeking resignation. His successor, George Walker, though an excellent scholar and a conscientious Principal, was unequal to the task of curing the problem. How far actual immorality was rife is uncertain, but Pipe-Wolferstan, for example, certainly did not approve of the luxurious and idle habits his son was acquiring and so removed him.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roll..., 1786-1803, (1868 M.C.O.)

<sup>2</sup> Low pay and dependence on fluctuating students fees might account for this - see e.g. Ditchfield G.M., op.cit., 86-9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 86-90, 98, MSS; Letters re M.C.....early Nineteenth century, (M.C.O.) Letter of J. Astley to C.W., 16.12.1797; C.W.II, C.W. to W. Wood, 14.1.1798.

The College was uniquely placed to educate sons of businessmen and at a comparatively low cost if they lived at home.<sup>1</sup> Businessmen and merchants generally preferred their sons to enter apprenticeships at fourteen or sixteen and considered both the cost and time spent on formal education at those ages prohibitive. Unitarians were prepared for their sons to absorb at least the ethos of a liberal academy but, all too often, sent their sons at sixteen for only one year or two. Between 1786 and 1796 only three of about 78 commercial students completed the three-year course. The rest of the lay students (about 25%) chiefly distinguished themselves in science or medicine,<sup>2</sup> for example Edward Holme and Samuel Hibbert, the geologist.<sup>3</sup>

The short stay of laymen further unsettled the financial basis of the Academy which never received an adequate amount of benefactions, especially before the demise of Hackney. From 1792 Manchester Academy suffered a heavy loss of subscription, a serious matter since it already depended on the various funds connected with liberal Dissenters to provide for the education of divinity students.<sup>4</sup> The lack of support, exacerbated by a period of severe economic dislocation, was probably connected with the political tensions of the 1790s which sharply divided Manchester. Without having the phalanx of leading radicals that Hackney had, the Manchester tutors were firmly in the reformist camp.<sup>5</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Davies V.D., op.cit., 64.

<sup>2</sup> Roll, op.cit.,

<sup>3</sup> Hibbert was admitted as a commercial student - ibid., 1796; McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement..., 144;

<sup>4</sup> Davies V.D., op.cit., 99; M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, 12-17 passim.

<sup>5</sup> For example, George Walker, Principal 1798-1802, was a well-known writer against the Test Acts and for Parliamentary reform - Record of Unitarian Worthies, op.cit., 240.

riots of 1792 were partly directed against Cross Street Chapel, so closely connected with the Academy, and seven members of the Academy's committee were named in January 1793 by the Bull's Head Committee against "levellers and republicans."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the close connection with Rational Dissent would hardly add to the Academy's popularity.

Unlike Warrington in its later years, Manchester Academy could not attract Anglicans after 1792 nor members of the aristocracy and landed gentry at any time. Nor did many sons of bankers, overseas merchants of leading businessmen attend.<sup>2</sup> Manchester Academy, therefore, suffered in varying degrees, the problems of Hackney and Warrington and appeared, at the turn of the century, to be moving shakily towards its end, yet its reputation among Unitarians, at least, seemed to be growing and it was not dissolved but, in 1803, moved to York, so that the Rev. Charles Wellbeloved, minister of St. Saviourgate Chapel, York, could be principal.<sup>3</sup>

In the late 1790s, however, it seemed that liberal education of the type offered in the academies was being destroyed. Brian Simon sees this as the end of an era when the purposes of the liberal, progressive, humanitarian, reforming middle-class, became narrowed and it engaged in fighting both the aristocracy and emerging proletariat. Only in examples like the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society and in the school at Hilltop of Thomas Wright Hill does Simon see the humanism and all-sidedness persisting.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Prentice A., Historical Sketches... (1851), 423-4.

<sup>2</sup> Wykes D., op.cit., 51, 55-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ditchfield G.M., op.cit., 99; M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, 15-8.

<sup>4</sup> Simon B., The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870, (Lawrence and Wishart Paperback, 1974), 69-70.



first of these included many Unitarians and Hill was also a Unitarian.

The Unitarians, indeed, did not lose their ideals. They had played a vital part in the progressive, scientific and humanitarian movement in education in the late eighteenth century. Their ideals were not unique. They were shared by other progressive educationalists the principal of whom were all friends of Unitarians, three - Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Erasmus Darwin and Thomas Day - being members of the Lunar Society.<sup>1</sup> Edgeworth's great rationalist manual on Practical Education on 1798, written with his daughter Maria and drawing on his deep involvement in the education of his own nineteen children, Maria Edgeworth's exceedingly popular childrens' books in which she enshrined the rational moral and educational values of herself and her father in spirited fiction, and Day's and Darwin's educational writings, all looked to a Rousseauesque, useful, happy education appropriate to the child's age and proper development. They emphasised things rather than words and practical, illustrative methods of learning, but stressed not only the supreme importance of environment and upbringing but also the strong power of association in the development of children, the interdependence of intellectual, moral and physical education and thus the vital need of an intelligent, careful, practical education.<sup>2</sup> R.L. Edgeworth's mature thoughts on this led him to refute his earlier devotion to Rousseau's ideas on leaving young children "as much as possible to the education of nature and of accident".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Darwin and Day were graduates of Edinburgh University. The Scottish influence in the Lunar Society was strong - Haines G., German Influence upon English Education and Science 1800-66. Connecticut College Monograph 6 (1957) 25.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Edgeworth M. and R.L., Practical Education, (1801 ed.) vols I, II and III passim; Harden O.E. McWhorter, Maria Edgeworth's Art of Prose Fiction, (1971), passim; Day T., Sandford and Merton, (undated, possibly 1883; Leicester school of Education Library), passim; Darwin E., A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools, (1797), passim.

<sup>3</sup> Edgeworth R.L. and M., Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth Esq., (1821), vol. I, 173-4, 268-70.

Darwin particularly wished girls to be given an interesting, useful education, uniting "health and agility of body with cheerfulness and activity of mind", thus giving women happiness and freedom from feebleness or unnecessary penury.<sup>1</sup> The Edgeworths advocated that girls should have largely the same full education as boys and, within the limits of contemporary society, they wished women to take a far more equal role, particularly wishing governesses to be well-educated, well-paid and of high status.<sup>2</sup> In this they fundamentally disagreed with their friend Thomas Day who preferred Rousseau's women formed for their husband's pleasure and total direction, although he did want for them a robust, useful and cultured education to strengthen both body and mind. On this aspect he was closer to the conservative Evangelical reformer, Hannah More.<sup>3</sup>

Day, however, delighted his friends by his fictional attacks on the selfish values of the arrogant, idle, dependent rich, for the chief concern of all these educationalists was to imbue the middle-class with rational values of humanity and usefulness and make it capable of enlightened leadership. Their philosophy helped them to respect the poor and acknowledge that the latter's "faults" could be improved by proper education but they emphasised more, not the education of the poor, but the education in courtesy, attentiveness and benevolence of the better-off.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Darwin E., op.cit., 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Edgeworth M. and R.L., Practical Education..., vol.I, 258-60; vol.III, 1-26, 48, 53-5, 229.

<sup>3</sup> Harden O.E. McWorther, op.cit., 13-5; Edgeworth R.L. and M., Memoirs ..., vol.I, 219, 221, 245, 332-5, 341; vol.II, 92-7, 103; Day T., op.cit., 194, 254-74, 397, 443-5; More H., Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, (1799), 42, 69, 105, 142, 162-230, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Day T., op.cit., 244-7, 254-86, 337; Schofield R.E., op.cit., 212; Keir J., An Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Day Esq., (1791), 80-2. See, for example, Edgeworth M., Castle Rackrent, (O.U.P. Paperback, 1980), where the faults and vices of the rich are gently but ironically portrayed.

On the whole these educationalists' views on the curriculum concurred with those of the Unitarians although Darwin opposed the classics altogether as "an idle waste of time" whilst Edgeworth feared a gentleman would appear "inferior to others of his own rank" without them, although he did suggest a much quicker, more intelligible and moral way of teaching them.<sup>1</sup> They also attacked the public schools and universities, although Edgeworth hoped they could be reformed.<sup>2</sup> Their greatest difference, however, was over religious education which the Edgeworths and Day left to a similarly rational but secular morality.<sup>3</sup> None of them used Dissenting academies for their offspring and they were also less radical than their Unitarian friends in politics, especially the Irish landlord, Richard Edgeworth.<sup>4</sup>

Two other leading progressive educationalists of the day, Mary Wollstonecraft and David Williams were much closer to Unitarianism. Williams, although called a Unitarian by Brian Simon,<sup>5</sup> was a Deist. From 1773 to 1775 he ran a very successful school at Chelsea where he gave a scientific training based on first-hand knowledge. Later he used many of these experiences as illustrative material for his Lectures on Education. Like Mary Wollstonecraft,

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Ed. Herford C.H., op.cit., 304; Edgeworth M. and R.L., Practical Education..., vol.II 184-231.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol.I, 340-2; vol.II, 98, 356-86; Memoirs ..., vol.II, 371; Day T., op.cit., 263.

<sup>3</sup> Edgeworth M. and R.L., op.cit., vol.II, 384; Practical Education..., vol.I, ix; Simon B., op.cit., 43.

<sup>4</sup> Edgeworth R.L. and M., Memoirs..., vol.II, 225.

<sup>5</sup> Simon B., op.cit., 47.

whose educational ideas have already been noted, Williams adhered strongly to the law of association and the interdependence of moral, intellectual and physical development and well-being. Both, indeed, were in essential agreement with all the Unitarian principles of education.<sup>1</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft had similar ideas on religious education; yet, on the other hand, she was the most radical of all in her wish for free, public co-educational schools for all children, regardless of class, from five years to nine. She also envisaged further education which was divided into vocational or liberal education according to the abilities and future employments of the pupils.<sup>2</sup>

The Unitarians, therefore, despite their great handicap of despised and illegal religious opinions, were an important, often a leading group, within a larger, albeit a minority, educational movement. Although members of an individualistic religion, they were also part of a group with tightening links. Thus their ideals were passed on and kept alive even in the adverse circumstances of the Napoleonic Wars.

<sup>1</sup> Williams D., Lectures on Education, (1789), vols. I, II and III, passim.

<sup>2</sup> Wollstonecraft M., Thoughts on the Education of Daughters, (1787), 16-7; A Vindication..., 286-7.

## CHAPTER III

## The Unitarians and Middle-class Education from 1800 to 1853

The Unitarian educational ideals of the late eighteenth century were supported and extended in the nineteenth century both by those, like William Turner, who continued their educational activities for many years and by new Unitarian educationalists such as John Rely Beard. The latter, like the older generation, derided much of contemporary education, preferring one which allowed harmonious development of all the faculties, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual and which gave rational, useful knowledge which glorified God and helped the "RELIEF OF MAN'S ESTATE".<sup>1</sup> Associationism was still held to be the vital basis of education although Beard, like John and Lucy Aikin, did acknowledge innate tendencies in children.<sup>2</sup> Lant Carpenter's chief work, Principles of Education, clearly showed his adherence to Priestley and Hartley whose ideas he amplified from his own observations and clarified and substantiated by a wealth of illustration.<sup>3</sup> The writings of such Unitarian educationalists made a contribution in themselves to English education and will be referred to continually throughout this chapter.

Unitarian educational aims were quickened by their pride in the mercantile, industrial and professional middle-class. This was illustrated in novels like Deerbrook and North and South, by Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Gaskell respectively, where the heroes were middle-class provincials representing a new type of "gentleman", the epitome of middle-class initiative, honesty and uprightness, scorning feudal "barbaric" codes of honour. The heroines, likewise, were self-reliant, courageous, intelligent and courteous.<sup>4</sup> Provincial pride,

1. Beard J.R., Schools, (1842), 38, 42; Self-Culture, (3rd ed., 1st ed. 1859 but lectures on which based given earlier), iv.

2. Ibid., 44-5., ed. Le Breton P.H., Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters of the Late Lucy Aikin, (1864), 25-7; Compare also Edgeworth M.E., Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, (1821), vol. 11, 367-70.

3. Carpenter L., Principles of Education, (1820), passim.

4. Martineau H., Deerbrook, (Virago paperback 1983; 1st ed. 1830), passim; Gaskell E., North and South, (Penguin paperback 1970; 1st publ. Household Words 1854-5), passim.

indeed, could be quite aggressive; Unitarians recognised that their own strength and the "true nonconformist spirit" could have "a more active life and a more natural seat in .. manufacturing and commercial parts, than it ever can possess in the Metropolis".<sup>1</sup> Some Unitarians such as J.R. Beard, Harriet Martineau and W.J. Fox and the Monthly Repository Circle, were also eager to promote the middling class to which they clearly aligned themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians also continued, unlike almost all other religious groups, to want for their daughters an education similar to that of their sons. This was despite the fact that generally women's lives became more restricted in the early nineteenth century. The growth of the ideal of the "perfect lady" whose sole function was marriage and procreation pervaded the lives of middle-class women, although many of them found it impossible to achieve either economically or psychologically. Women's dependence on men, sanctioned by religion, was, in this period, strengthened by the Evangelical Movement's emphasis on obedience and submission and stimulation of emotional rather than religious fervour, all of which was reinforced by social pressure and by the meagre education which girls received.<sup>3</sup> For girls who longed for deeper studies there were many obstacles in the way of obtaining them, as Mary Somerville testified. Her passion for classics and Euclid shocked her father who feared she would end up in a straight jacket.<sup>4</sup> Ignorance was supreme, said Henry Morley, in the ladies'

1. M.C.O., Printed Papers and Addresses, 1839 Letter to Trustees, 3.

2. Parnaby M.R., William Johnson Fox and the Monthly Repository Circle of 1832 to 1836, (Ph.D. Australian National University, 1979), passim.

3. The basic arguments on women's education in the next few pages were examined in Watts R.E., The Unitarian Contribution of the Development of Female Education in the Nineteenth Century, M.A. Dissertation, Leicester, 1980. However most of the evidence used is fresh.

4. Ed. Somerville M., Personal Recollections from Early Life to Old Age of Mary Somerville..., (1873), 54.

drawing room; few considered allowing women any studies which would engage their brains; those rare, notorious women publicly academically successful, like Harriet Martineau and Mary Somerville, were hardly considered desirable and showed up men's ignorance too much.<sup>1</sup> Frances Power Cobbe, whose parents spent a fortune in training her in fashionable accomplishments, developed her talents, as did Mary Somerville, when adult and a Unitarian.<sup>2</sup> A woman was not generally expected, however, to shine in public life or even know much about the world. She was to be dependent and submissive, the "angel in the house" who in her innocence and purity guarded the home from the doubts, conflicts and temptations which troubled men in the outside world. Such an emphasis was confining, however, and seen as self-defeating by the more spirited. Anna le Breton recalled how it took real courage for a woman at the beginning of the nineteenth century to risk being called a "blue-stocking" or to undertake deep research and how lucky she was in educational and cultural terms to belong to the Unitarian Aikin family.<sup>3</sup>

Radical Dissent, as has been shown,<sup>4</sup> by its very nature engendered very different attitudes to women. Accepting the revolutionary concept that all moral beings needed their reasoning faculties developed by education, and adhering to Hartleian philosophy, Unitarians continued to have much higher expectations of the female abilities than was the norm.

1. Morley H., "A Defence of Ignorance", Early Papers and Some Memories, (1891, "A Defence.." 1st pub. 1851), 160-77.

2. Cobbe F.P., Life of . . . ., (1904), 57-69; Somerville M., op.cit., 9-79.

3. Le Breton A., Memories of Seventy Years, (1883), iii-iv.

4. See above chap. II

William Shepherd, said that women had at least the same capacity for learning as men and that many examples proved that "a lovely woman cannot be made less lovely by the high cultivation of her talent" but that intellectual attainment, added to feminine grace, made better mothers and increased virtue.<sup>1</sup> Even the students at Manchester College, York, in 1822, decided that women's capacities were equal to those of men, although they had decided before the debate to vote against the motion if any of the females invited attended!<sup>2</sup> Lant Carpenter argued that, although intellectual and moral worth do not necessarily coincide, "the noblest heights of moral excellence can only be obtained where the intellectual principles receive suitable cultivation."<sup>3</sup> The Revd. J. Squier, like others such as Harriet Martineau, urged that women should be given a "solid and substantial education" so that they could be self-reliant, independent and accountable for their own actions. In further asking that women be allowed their own opinions Squier was indeed being radical for the time,<sup>4</sup> while William Ellery Channing and John James Tayler were sure that women who were fully developed intellectually and morally would have an incalculable influence for the good of mankind.<sup>5</sup>

Radical Dissenters would also add, however, as Squier did, that such an education would also fit a woman to be, as intended, "the rational companion and faithful friend of man" and to be a good mother.<sup>6</sup> Unitarian men obviously had firm expectations of marriage partners who would offer intellectual companionship and an actively supportive role in their professional and educative endeavours as, for example, the letters of J.J. Tayler and Henry Morley illustrate.

1. Shepherd W., Joyce J., Carpenter L., Systematic Education, (1817), 19-20. (Hereafter referred to as Shepherd only).

2. MSS M.C.), Letters re M.N.C. early 19th century, W. Holt to father, 5.11.1822.

3. Carpenter L., op.cit., 149

4. Squier J.O., The Character and Mission of Woman, (1837), 22-4; Martineau H., Household Education, (1870, 1st ed. 1847), 226; Deerbrook, 364, 367.

5. Channing W.H., The Life of William Ellery Channing, (Boston, 1880), 32-3, 430; ed

J.H. Thom. Letters embracing the life of John James Tayler, B.A. (1872), vol. I, 218-9.

6. Squier J.O., op.cit..



John Relly 'Beard's wife was known as his curate<sup>1</sup> whilst William and Elizabeth Gaskell prepared together his lectures on "The Poets of Humble Life." Although in the earlier days of their marriage Mr. Gaskell read his wife's letters and pocketed her earnings, he also encouraged her to be a professional writer, corrected her proofs, helped her in research and never questioned her right to express the most controversial opinions.<sup>2</sup> Matthew Davenport Hill was contemptuous of the unreasoning compliance that modern "Griseldas" were supposed to show and welcomed more equal opportunities both within and without the home.<sup>3</sup> Although some Unitarians, such as William Rathbone VI, evinced a more patronising tone on the subject of wives and an earnest desire for self-sacrificing devotion as well as intellectual companionship, simply to expect the latter was a radical concept.<sup>4</sup> Anne Simpson, for example, daughter of a farm labourer, was sent to the Carpenters' school in Bristol as a preparation for marrying Richard Yates, son of a Unitarian minister; she became an excellent companion to him in all his interests as a leading citizen of Liverpool.<sup>5</sup>

Such views on marriage were perhaps partly influenced by the social isolation of Unitarians and their tendency to marry young, but resulted, too, from their adherence to Hartleian associationism and its implications for the importance of women as mothers and as teachers of small children. Women thus had a moral obligation to fit themselves by education for this duty; in particular, they should be educated in mental philosophy so that they could ensure correct development of their children. Such an obligation would negate the charge that deep

1. Ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., 57-9; Solly H.S., The Life of Henry Morley, LL.D., (1898), 53, 64-6; McLachlan H., Records of a Family 1800-1935, (1935), 14.
2. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell, (1966), 33, 34, 113; Brill B., William Gaskell 1805-84, (1984), 54-7.
3. Davenport Hill R. and F., The Recorder of Birmingham. A Memoir of Matthew Davenport Hill, (1878), 22-4, 30, 94-5, 250-1, 427.
4. MSS Liverpool University, William Rathbone VI, IX.9.8, IX.9.9.
5. Manton J., Mary Carpenter and the Children of the Streets, (1976), 39.

study was unfeminine or that learning made women conceited and pedantic, since if all women were given a full education learned women would no longer stand out.<sup>1</sup> Lant Carpenter, above all, was convinced of the great moral influence of virtuous women, especially through an intelligent hold on the filial affections. He gave his eldest daughter, Mary, a copy of Hartley for her 21st birthday present.<sup>2</sup> J.R. Beard pointed out that the mother was the central influence on a child's development and the centre of life should be "light as well as warm".<sup>3</sup> An article in the Monthly Repository detailed the wide range of subjects a mother should be mistress of if she were to satisfy the natural keen curiosity of her children and encourage clear, accurate understanding.<sup>4</sup> A principle theme of Unitarian novelists was the importance of early upbringing and Mrs Gaskell's Ruth delighted in a process of self-education once she had a baby to bring up.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of the philosophy and psychology of Radical Dissent, therefore, women were to be educated for their own perfection and self-development and for their roles as wives and mothers. Although HarMartineau ideas were so important in this context, the later re-direction of Unitarian belief, under the influence of Channing, hardly weakened the stress on the importance of education, women's capabilities or their crucial moral and educative role, since Channing emphasised all these so much in his elevated concept of humanity.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in the light of their educational philosophy, the burning desire of many Unitarians to achieve greater power for the new middle-class and to be enlightened leaders of that class required the first teachers and chief influences upon Unitarian children to be fully prepared for their role, which was to include an education in liberal and radical ideas.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the constant struggle of Unitarians against the

1. M.R., (1823), XVIII, 77-81, (written by Harriet Martineau).

2. Carpenter R.L., Memoir of the Revd. Lant Carpenter. LL.D., (1842), 84, 333, 338, 497.

3. Beard J.R., Self-Culture, 258.

4. M.R., (1831), N.S. 5, 527.

5. Gaskell E., Ruth, (Dent 1967), 175-6, 189; Martineau H. Deerbrook, passim

6. Ed. Le Breton A., Correspondence of Lucy Aikin and William Ellery Channing, (1974), 192.

7. Ibid., 126-30.

disabilities of Dissenters and their longing to spread rational religion made it imperative that their children should understand their principles and, hopefully, later support them.

These Unitarian themes of the importance of education and the maternal role in it were strengthened by adaptation of other contemporary progressive educationalists such as Pestalozzi and Combe,<sup>1</sup> as were other facets of their educational ideal. J.R. Beard, for example, acknowledged Johann Pestalozzi, the Swiss educationalist, as "the greatest impulse to infant education in this country".<sup>2</sup> Ebenezer Cooke was to say that those few English who advocated Pestalozzian principles in the early 19th century never really understood what they professed.<sup>3</sup> Unitarians who enthusiastically promulgated such principles certainly knew what they themselves were professing. Pestalozzi appeared to have much in common with them. His simple, tolerant yet deep religious beliefs, his insistence that education must be physical and moral as well as intellectual; his emphasis on the importance of maternal and home education; his basing of teaching on the immediate interests and natural development of the child, on the build-up of sense impressions and "things not words"; his fostering of clear, accurate ideas; his focus on the child herself, drawn from Rousseau, yet not leaving the child to nature and thus confused sense impressions<sup>4</sup> - all these reaffirmed central Unitarian ideas whilst giving detailed analyses of suitable method. William Frend and the Hill brothers, for example, similarly believed in teaching successively through measuring, drawing and writing.<sup>5</sup>

1. Eg. Pestalozzi J.H., Letters on Early Education addressed J.P. Greaves Esq., (1827), xx, 3-6, 32-3, 57-67, 109-17; Combe G., On Popular Education, (Cassell and Co. 1893 1st ed. 1833), 57-67.

2. Beard J.R., Schools, 9.

3. Ed. Cooke E., How Gertrude teaches her Children, (1894), xxv-xxx.

4. Ibid., passim; Pestalozzi J.H., op.cit., passim.

5. Frend W., A Plan of Universal Education, (1832), passim; Hill M.D. and R., Plans for the Government and Liberal Instruction of Boys in Large Numbers drawn from Experience, (1822), passim.

Unitarians were amongst the first in England to take any notice of Pestalozzi. The Napoleonic Wars effectively cut England off from many continental developments until 1815 but thence a small, but increasing, number of English took interest in his work, including, by the 1820s, leading educationalists such as Andrew Bell and Henry Brougham. In the 1820s and 1830s James Pierrepont Greaves, the Mayos and James Kay attempted, with varying degrees of success and diminishing ones of understanding, to establish schools on Pestalozzian lines in England.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1813, however, William Turner read John Bruce's paper on "Pestalozzi's System of Education" at the Newcastle Lit. and Phil.<sup>2</sup> (John Kenrick visited Yverdon briefly in 1820).<sup>3</sup> The Hills were also influenced by Pestalozzi as were Lant Carpenter, Lady Byron and others.<sup>4</sup> W.H. Herford recalled the Pestalozzian methods at J.R. Beard's school in 1835 and in turn became a leading exponent of Pestalozzian education in England from 1850.<sup>5</sup> The keenest interest was taken in Pestalozzi's writings by the Unitarian periodical The Monthly Repository in 1818 and especially from 1827: Harriet Martineau, for example, vigorously denounced those who mistook Pestalozzi and interrogated children from morn till night.<sup>6</sup> Once W.J. Fox took over The Monthly Repository Pestalozzianism was popularised "with a conviction and consistency that was new" according to Margaret Parnaby.<sup>7</sup>

1. Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 424-35; Pollard H.M., Pioneers of Popular Education, 1760-1850 (1956), 147-151, 158-9, 174-182, 213-54.
2. Bowery M.M., William Turner's Contribution to Educational Developments in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1782-1841, 187.
3. MSS M.C.O., J.K.III, J.K. to G.W.W., 10.10.1820.
4. Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 143; Carpenter L., op.cit., viii; Stewart W.A.C. and McCann W.P., The Educational Innovators, 1750-1880, (1967), 149-54, 161, 169-80, 184, 187.
5. D.W.L., Beard James, Typescript of Notes for Life of J.R. Beard, (1835); D.N.B. 2nd Supplement, vol.II, 255.
6. M.R., (1818), vol.XIII, 733; (1827) N.S. 1, 684-5, 842; (1828), 43-8, 817-23; (1830), 829; (1831), 257.
7. Parnaby M.R., op.cit., xv, 149, 219, 370, 375, 424-35

Fox himself described in poetic terms the Pestolozzian school of Caroline Southwood Smith who herself wrote a series of articles on this in 1834. These, incidentally, inspired James Hill, an East Anglian corn merchant and banker to meet and marry her, and found a school on Pestolozzian lines. Other members of the Monthly Repository circle were likewise interested and were linked with James Pierrepont Greaves, Channing's Boston Circle and other similar influences.<sup>1</sup>

In Liverpool, Unitarians were interested in Pestolozzi even before Blanco White, the Spanish intellectual who had been closely involved in the Pestalozzian Institute in Madrid, lived amongst them from 1835 to 1841.<sup>2</sup> William Rathbone VI was sent to the Revd. William Brown's Pestalozzian school at Cheam (interestingly near the Mayo's site) from 1828 to 1829. Brown supplied his mother with "as much of practical Pestalozzi as I can get together" for her other children's governess. In 1829 William went to St. Domingo House, Everton, run by a pupil of Pestalozzi, a Swiss Mr. Voelker, who emphasised making boys think. Many Unitarians, including Thomas Ashton and James Stansfeld, attended.<sup>3</sup> Possibly the school in Burlington Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, run by a man called Merz who had been brought over in the 1830's by several prominent Manchester citizens, including Benjamin Heywood, Aspinall Turner and Samuel Dukinfield Darbshire, to establish a progressive school, was Pestalozzian.<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid., (1833), 421-6, 429-33; Mineka F.E., The Dissidence of Dissent, (University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 408. Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 218-9, 426-8; M.R., (1833), 839-40.

2. Rathbone E.F., William Rathbone A Memoir, (1980), 52, 59-61.

3. MSS Liverpool University, William Rathbone VI, IX.1.9; Harrop S., The Place of Education in the Genesis of the industrial Revolution with particular reference to Staleybridge, Dukinfield and Hyde, (Manchester M.A. 1976) 152.

4. Ramsden G.M., A Record of the Kay Family of Bury, Lancashire, (Gift to M.C.O.) 59. From 1847 to 1851 it was run by W.B. Hodgson, a member of Cross Street Chapel, who in 1867 resigned from the Council of University College when Martineau was rejected as professor of mental philosophy - D.N.B. vol. 27, 73; McLachlan H. "A Liverpool Ladies Journal a Century Ago", T.U.H.S., (Oct. 1954), vol. XI, no. 1, 12.

The most popular adaptation for the middle-classes was the Mayos' school at Cheam, in reality an Anglican school influenced by broad Pestalozzian principles.<sup>1</sup> Popular educationalists disliked Pestalozzi's disregard of conventional Christianity and lack of emphasis on books, and Pestalozzian ideas in middle-class schools reached no further than the progressive fringe. Here Unitarians were amongst the foremost to welcome such thinking.

Unitarians in north-east Cheshire and south-east Lancashire in the early nineteenth century also greatly patronised the Moravian schools at Fairfield. Here natural methods of instruction, by object lesson and example, were foremost principles.<sup>2</sup> Henry Morley also received his most telling education from the gentle, kindly Moravians.<sup>3</sup>

Many Unitarians were also fond admirers, or personal friends, of the Edgeworths, particularly Maria, whose educational ideas have already been examined in Chapter II.<sup>4</sup> Some of the most enthusiastic Unitarian educationalists quoted Maria Edgeworth particularly; for example, Lant Carpenter (though he chastised them for their neglect of religious education),<sup>5</sup> Harriet Martineau and Jeremiah Joyce.<sup>6</sup> Maria Edgeworth's promotion of rational humanitarian virtue through her didactic stores was particularly favoured by Unitarians

1. Steward W.A.C. and McCan W.P., op.cit., 146-54, 169-78.
2. Harrop S., op.cit., 58, 65-6, 119, 151.
3. Solly H.S., op.cit., 25-33.
4. Eg. le Breton A., op.cit., 21, 47, 95-6, 98; Le Breton P., op.cit., 123, 131, 164; ed. Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., The Strutts and the Arkwrights, 1758-1830; (1958), 174n.4.175-8; Somerville M., op.cit., 155-6, 203-4.
5. Carpenter L., op.cit., 11, 42-7, 158, 160-5, 249; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 207.
6. M.R., (1823), Vol. XVIII, 81; (1831), N.S. 5, 261; Martineau H., The History of England during the Thirty Years Peace 1816-46, (1849), Vol. II, 704; Parnaby M.R. op.cit., 412 ftn.

both in England and, indeed, Havard, Massachussets,<sup>1</sup> as by others of liberal views such as contributors to the Edinburgh Review. (The evangelical Christian Remembrancer, on the other hand severely criticised her for her "worldly" principles, as they did Harriet Martineau).<sup>2</sup>

How far Maria Edgeworth's morality suited the striving, fiercely competitive industrial world in which many Unitarians were now so actively engaged has been disputed by M. Lang. She argues that although Miss Edgeworth insisted on a rational world, interdependent families and literate self-disciplined individuals, she nevertheless upheld middle-class values which would protect, though reform, the existing hierarchical social order - a stable rural society rather than a mobile, industrial one.<sup>3</sup> Yet Unitarians of the time did not seem to see any discrepancies. Mrs Marcet recommended tales like Maria Edgeworth's Cherry Orchard in her Conversations on Political Economy<sup>4</sup> (Maria Edgeworth herself, a correspondent of David Ricardo's on political economy, congratulated Mrs Gaskell on her contribution in Mary Barton to this growing "science").<sup>5</sup> The most fervent of Maria Edgeworth's Unitarian admirers, the family of T.W. Hill, were first famous for establishing a school for the middle-classes which, in Brian Simon's words, was:

the utilitarian conception of education in operation in one of the main centres of industry.<sup>6</sup>

1. Howe D.W., The Unitarian Conscience, (Havard U.P.1970), 191.
2. Edinburgh Review, (July 1809), Vol. XIV, no. 28, 375-88, The Christian Remembrancer, (1841), Vo. II, 179-180.
3. Lang. M., "Maria Edgeworth's 'The Parent's Assistant' (1796): a document of social education", History of Education, Vol. 7, no. 1, (1978), 21-33.
4. Marcet J., Conversations on Political Economy, (1817), 12. See also Martineau H., Biographical Sketches, 1852-68, (1870), 389.
5. Watson G., The English Ideology, (1973), 3-4.
6. Simon B., The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870, (1960), 110.

The stirring efforts of the various Hills as youngsters to save sufficiently to buy Maria Edgeworth's Parent's Assistant, their continuous praise thereafter and the use of her work at Hazelwood and Bruce Castle, testify to their deep-seated admiration.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians were also much affected by Utilitarian thinking, as has been shown. William Frend, for example, in his A Plan of Universal Education (1832) envisaged a non-hierarchical, democratic community, with no Church Establishment and organised around its educational system. In Frend's dream society, teachers were highly trained, highly paid and highly regarded. All children were in one school system although the sexes were taught separately except for dancing. Clear conceptions, helped by much illustrative and practical work, were aimed at. The children worked through individual cards and were classified accordingly, their course of study being redirected if they appeared unable to master it. The children's comfort at school was much respected, there were games and leisure facilities of all sorts and the lessons themselves were amusing wherever possible, for example, funny word games on cards were used to teach logic and etymology. All subjects taught were expected to be useful and a wide range was available. The vernacular was the most important language although there were non-compulsory schools of Hebrew and Greek for older children. Citizens could wander freely into any school and there was continual assessment of talents, capacities and character plus careful career counselling. Apprentices could have time off to go to school. Indeed, in Frend's conception the whole population was in a continuous process of being educated and this as much through the public walks, public buildings where models and maps could be used, public telescopes (to prevent superstition) and participative government as through formal lectures or education.

1. Hill R. and G.B., The Life of Sir Rowland Hill, (1880), 49-50, 160-8; ed. Hill C., Frederic Hill, (1894), 26-7, 33, 54, 190-1; Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., viii-ix, 122, 192-3 and 105, 128, 140, 199-200, 204; Hill A., A Sketch of the System of Education ... Bruce Castle ... and Hazelwood, (1833), 26-9.



Even the rich had, eventually, foregone their selfish dominance and arrogance once they appreciated:

That the greatest happiness of the greatest number ----- is the foundation of morality, and of virtue, and of religion; ----- and the poorest inhabitants ----- possessed greater advantages than the greatest wealth could formerly bestow on its possessor.<sup>1</sup>

Frend's Utopia was far from being realised in the nineteenth century but his aim clearly followed Utilitarian as much as Unitarian principles, as can be seen by looking at the "<sup>h</sup>Crestomathic" (that is, "conducive to useful learning") system <sub>Λ</sub> designed by Jeremy Bentham from 1816 to 1817. In method, for example teaching by proceeding from the simple to the complex, in the use of monitors in middle-class education (Bentham relied much on Bell's writings), and in the stress on sciences, mathematics (particularly geometry) and grammar (though no classics for Bentham), together with history and biography, they were similar. Bentham stressed individual competition, eschewed corporal punishment and hoped for a certain amount of self-government by the pupils themselves. Bentham's school, unlike Frend's, however, was to be co-educational and funded by shareholders.<sup>2</sup> The whole rather abstruse and dry programme and methods of study were justified on the principle of utility by a comparison of advantages and disadvantages, profits and losses and were analogous to a factory system in schools, according to P.J.Millar.<sup>3</sup>

1. Frend W., op.cit., 110, passim.

2. Bentham J., <sup>h</sup>Crestomathia, (1816), passim. <sub>Λ</sub>

3. Millar P.J., "Factories, Monitorial Schools and Jeremy Bentham: The Origins of 'the Management Syndrome' in Popular Education", Journal of Educational Administration and History, (July 1973), vol.V, no.2, 10-20.

Crestomathia was hardly a popular book, though it did powerfully influence prominent people such as Brougham, Chadwick and Lowe.<sup>1</sup> Bentham's Crestomathic school was never built but he and his friends found their enthusiasm captured by a similar, but independently conceived school - that of Hazelwood near Birmingham. This school had originally been established at Hill-Top by Thomas Wright Hill, an ardent disciple of Joseph Priestley, and was moved to Hazelwood in 1819 by his sons. In 1827 they established a similar school at Bruce Castle, Tottenham, near London. Rowland and Matthew Hill's account of Hazelwood, in 1822, Plans for the Government and Liberal Instruction of Boys in Large Numbers - later called Public Education, caught the imagination of Bentham and the Utilitarians became eager supporters. The Grotes, for example, transferred two nephews from Eton to Hazelwood.<sup>2</sup> This was in spite of the fact that the Hills did not share Bentham's enthusiasm for monitorial methods and they did teach classics, albeit by their own method and not wholly successfully until Arthur Hill took this over.

In other ways, however, the Hills were very close to Benthamite thinking as has been seen.<sup>3</sup> Though they reformulated practices in their schools as they learnt from experience, they always had clear aims and objectives - to make the "after-life of the pupil most useful to society and most happy to himself" and the schoolboy as happy as possible. Their curriculum covered the elements of a wide variety of subjects for the pupil to thoroughly master and understand and thus be equipped for self-education through life - a process which the Hills knew only too well. The children were set for subjects according to their ability and taught as much as possible through the senses. There was an emphasis on elocution (T.W. Hill acquired a reputation for curing stammering) and an enthusiastic turn for mechanics undoubtedly inspired by the inclination towards invention amounting to genius in the Hill brothers themselves. The boys were

1. Ibid, 14.

2. Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., 173.

3. Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 124-5, Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., 65-7

expert at mental arithmetic and used their wide mathematical knowledge in practical ways such as rising before three to make a complete and accurate survey of part of Birmingham, using flags and telescopes to keep each other in view.<sup>1</sup> The Hills believed that the various physical sciences had become an indispensable part of education both intellectually and for their future use but their efforts here eventually succumbed to parental opposition, by this time mainly Anglican.<sup>2</sup> Stimulated by Lant Carpenter's writings the Hills ensured that much time was devoted to healthy activities and the boys' gymnasium, built incidentally by their own hands with advice from Robert Dale Owen, was the first such in an English school.<sup>3</sup> (Gym apparatus was set up in Dr. Morell's playground in 1828.)<sup>4</sup> The successful teaching of modern languages, based, like classics, on much oral work and learning through dramatization, was symptomatic of their eagerness to exploit pupil participation.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, within a tightly organised framework the whole school ran on self-activity, including the school government (a system possibly inspired by that of the Old Meeting Sunday School<sup>6</sup>), school fund and a unique court and jury system, all run by the boys themselves. The elaborate reward system ranked boys weekly according to proficiency in different subjects, periodically for good conduct; half-yearly ranking give privileges to the leaders. Class and voluntary work

1. Ibid., 68-73, 85-6, 91-7; Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 194 and passim; The Hazelwood Magazine, (printed and published by the pupils of Hazelwood School, Birmingham; copy in Birmingham Public Library), Vol. 1, no. 8, 1-2; No. 12, 1-2; Hill R. and F., op.cit., 13.
2. Hill F., National Education, (1836), Vol. I, 207-9; Steward W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 115-8; Hill A., op.cit., 43.
3. The Hazelwood Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 6, 5; No. 7, 1; Vol. 2, Nos. 2-4, 29-30; Hey C.C. The History of Hazelwood School ... (M.A. Swansea, 1954), 170.
4. Solly H., These Eighty Years, (1893), Vol. I, 118.
5. Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 43-6, 151-9.
6. Frost M.B., The Development of Provided Schooling for Working-Class Children Birmingham, 1781-1851, (Birmingham M.Litt. 1978), 147.

(encouraging boys to excel in any worthy interest they personally were good at, including printing the Hazelwood Magazine), and the filling of certain school offices, earned counters or marks which could be used to pay fines, the most common form of punishment. (On leaving Hazelwood, F. Harrold left 5,000 marks to his brother whose subsequent behaviour led to the marks being doled out in small payments!).<sup>1</sup>

The whole system was one of learning morality through practice. Habits of punctuality, efficiency and order were enforced, for instance by a school band stimulating prompt marching to classes.<sup>2</sup> This combined drive towards both order and self-discipline and to initiative and self-activity emphasised those attributes of the middle classes seen by middle-class educational reformers as vital in the new industrial England. Hazelwood became a showplace for distinguished visitors.<sup>3</sup> The Unitarian Utilitarian, Dr. Southwood Smith, ecstatically saw it as an independent, practical exemplification of Bentham's *Crestomathic* school, giving the middle-classes - "the strength of the community --- the men --- who think for the rest of the world ---" - an education which would make them enlightened, clear and just and able to influence for good the classes both below and above them;

on this admirable system of education the brightest hopes of the human race may anchor.<sup>4</sup>

1. Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 18-29, 125; Hazelwood Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, 2-4, *passim*.

2. Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 31.

3. Hill R. and G.B. op.cit., 173.

4. Westminster Review, (1824), Vol. I, 75-9.

Others were less enthusiastic about the radical Hills. Even the largely favourable review in the Edinburgh Review talked of the "foppery" of schoolboys land-surveying or making astronomical observations and doubted that morality was learnt from practice in government and law at school.<sup>1</sup> William Lucas Sargant, an ex-pupil, later suggested that Hazelwood was a moral hot-bed where boys aged too quickly, however, and that learning by experience meant a permanent state of unsatisfactory flux.<sup>2</sup>

Hazelwood's very success led to increasing numbers, often of difficult boys until these were made unwelcome. In the later 1820's Hazelwood rapidly declined, especially as the Hills' political liberalism and undogmatic religion became suspect.<sup>3</sup> Thus it could hardly become the basis of a national system as Rowland Hill dearly wished, though Bruce Castle continued to inspire liberal educationalists. (N.B. Later, at Bruce Castle an Anglican chapel was built and some of the Hills appear to have left Unitarianism although that does not invalidate their earlier educational work).<sup>4</sup>

Middle-class education, nevertheless had its problems to face. The Hills radical system of education did not convert the conventional or even the majority of more progressive spirits. Yet there was a gap to be filled in English education. The state of the public and grammar schools still left much to be desired in the early nineteenth century. James Anthony Froude's almost soul and mind-destroying years in the cruelty of Westminster and Thackeray's experiences at Charterhouse<sup>5</sup> are just two examples of the ample testimony to the evils of the public schools. The Revd. Sydney Smith was merely one of the most

1. Edinburgh Review, (Jan.1825), Vol.41,315-35.

2. Hill R. and G.B., op.cit.,123-4.

3. Bartrip P.W.J., "A Thoroughly Good School" British Journal of Educational Studies (1980), Vol.XXVIII,52-5.

4. Hill A., op.cit.,43; Household Words, (28.2.1852), No.101,546-50; Chambers Edinburgh Journal, (22.7.1843), Vol.XI, No.599,213-5; Quarterly Journal of Education, (1833), Vol.V, No.IX,115-121.

5. Forster M., William Makepeace Thackeray, (Quartet Paperback 1980), 9-12; Dunn W.H., James Anthony Froude 1818-56, (1961), 31-8.

articulate critics when, speaking from bitter experience of Winchester, he castigated a system where "every boy is alternately tyrant and slave", neither situation being calculated to bring out the best in them - a comment echoed by Frederick Hill. Most damagingly, however, Smith dispelled the general illusion that England's most illustrious characters in arts and science came from her public schools.<sup>1</sup>

Public schools, often praised for being "aristocratic and manly" and internally egalitarian, in fact, were, or were in the process of becoming, exclusive institutions to which none but the rich had access. Surviving endowed grammar schools were often becoming more exclusive at a lower level. Any reforms only intensified classics as the core of the curriculum, concentrating on linguistic perfection induced by constant flogging. Before 1869 it was next to impossible to remove lazy, negligent masters.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians were not slow to criticise both types of school. William Shepherd, for example, accepted that public schools could benefit somewhat those entering public life, though not the weak, nor those merely after useful connections and certainly not future tradesmen or businessmen.<sup>3</sup> Some Unitarians attended local grammar schools, for example James Martineau suffered the ethos and curriculum at Norwich for four years before turning with relief to Lant Carpenter's school from 1819 to 1821.<sup>4</sup> Generally, Unitarians keenly felt that educational institutions endowed for the use of everyone had been appropriated by the rich and the

1. Smith S., Selected Writings of..., (1855), Vol. I, 78-91, (from the Edinburgh Review, 1810); Hill F., op.cit., 228.

2. Lawson J. and Silver H., A Short History of Education in England, (1973, Methuen Paperbacks), 250-6; Halevy E., A History of the English People in 1815, (Penguin 1937), 163; Horn P., Education in Rural England, (1978), 27.

3. Shepherd W., op.cit., 8-17.

4. Drummond J. and Upton C.B., James Martineau, (1905), 16-8.

Established Church for the use of a minority or allowed to fall into educational disrepair. In Birmingham, for example, in the 1820's, King Edward's was almost a closed corporation (sending some pupils to Hazelwood for private coaching in mathematics).<sup>1</sup> The governors of the sagging Free Grammar School were only prevented by prompt action by Birmingham's powerful and numerous Dissenters from expressly excluding them by law from being governors (in practice this had already happened). Unitarians such as William Matthews, an ardent propagandist for the manufacturing class, were amongst those who had assailed the 'iniquitous' Tory governors. Eventually, in 1831, the Birmingham Grammar School Act did empower governors to build a neighbouring school for modern subjects. The Monthly Repository helped advertise the affair to warn Dissenters elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

John Relly Beard attacked generally the alienation of nearly one million pounds of ancient endowments from popular education and, in particular, the abuses of Manchester Grammar School which now served only a fraction of the population of Manchester. Beard argued that science was now the best instrument of education, (not Latin grammar) and particularly not the mere verbalism which was classics at Manchester Grammar:

The Manchester Grammar School has been, and is, an incompetent teacher even of that single branch of learning which it arrogates as its own.

The ample funds were wasted on luxuries; boarders from outside Manchester now overwhelmingly appropriated Oxford exhibitions; the very well paid High-Master used his virtual control to block reform.<sup>3</sup> Beard emphasised that endowment itself led to irresponsibility, as did other educational reformers, such as the Central Society of Education, Whigs and Utilitarians. Brougham's Commission of Inquiry

1. Hey C.C., op.cit., 302.

2. Matthews W., A Sketch . . . ., (1830), 29-34; Simon B., op.cit., 108; M.R., (1831), N.S.5, 68-72.

3. Beard J.R., The Abuses of Manchester Grammar School, 1837, (Manchester, 1837), 14 and passim.

into Charities, 1819 to 1837, removed some abuses though until 1840 legal restrictions made it difficult to make modern subjects an integral part of the grammar school curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

Generally, however, the middle-classes, especially Nonconformists, turned in despair from endowed to private schools, though there was no guarantee that these would provide better fare. Parents could secure a more modern curriculum but little more, since teachers were usually neither trained nor necessarily particularly qualified (some far-fetched advertisements greatly amused the Monthly Repository, but horror stories like that in Dickens's Nicholas Nickleby highlighted the possible reality). Conversely, the extremes of parental demand for either a very basic or a "gentlemanly" education prevented good teachers, like the Unitarians Catlow and Goodacre in Mansfield and Nottingham, from retaining pupils for long periods or making extra subjects part of the ordinary curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

Since parental fees controlled the livelihoods of private schoolteachers it is little wonder that the Unitarians so consistently emphasised that their version of a liberal education was essential to the middle-classes. Henry Morley's satirical Defence of Ignorance, in 1851, actually depicted most middle-class schools as part of Ignorance's defence, preventing children from developing naturally under gentle discipline or enjoying the excitement of science, history and other subjects (plus frequent recreation) in a pleasant, thought-provoking environment. Thus was prevented the growth of minds, free, thoughtful, observant, knowledge-thirsty, though perhaps "very backward in... Greek and Latin". Middle-class schools more likely kept children sitting immovable on immovable desks, in miserable surroundings, dragged roughly through grammar, flogged, confused, terrified and angered into ignorance.<sup>3</sup>

1. Ibid.; Silver H., English Education and the Radicals, (1975), 37-8; Central Society of Education Prospectus, 1839, (1968), vi.

2. Dickens C., Nicholas Nickleby, (1838-9); M.R., (1833), N.S. 7, 644-52; Wardle D., Education and Society in Nineteenth Century Nottingham, (1971), 153.

3. Morley H., op.cit., 104-17.



There was a demand for improved education for boys at least but how to obtain it was another matter. Frederic Hill argued that national education would facilitate essential long-term views, almost an impossibility in the jungle of private education;<sup>1</sup> William Frend's ideal system was run by the entire community; Matthew and Rowland Hill strongly favoured "public schools", meaning fairly large schools, as stimulating the best intellectual and moral education.<sup>2</sup> Such conclusions for middle-class education were not generally held by Unitarians in this period. Lant Carpenter's belief that the state should see that everyone had the means of instruction being radical enough.<sup>3</sup> William Shepherd referred darkly to the near barbarity that resulted from Spartan state education and feared that civic regulations would cramp the intellect and fetter the search for truth.<sup>4</sup>

The answer seemed to be for Unitarians to promote better education for the middle-classes by their writings and activities and to provide their own educational establishments.

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1. Hill F., op.cit., 202-6.

2. Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 189-218.

3. Carpenter L., op.cit., 13.

4. Shepherd W., op.cit., 5-6.

When promoting a better education nineteenth century Unitarians, like their eighteenth century forebears, put moral and religious education first. There is evident, for example in the religious books criticised or recommended in Unitarian periodicals a dislike of gloomy or unintellectual religion, and an encouragement of religion based on the understanding for "though knowledge is not virtue, it is her powerful ally...". There is, too, an emphasis on freedom of inquiry and on the cultivation of religious dispositions, especially at home, in accordance with the child's age and interest.<sup>1</sup> The thorough religious education, including extensive study in scriptural history and geography, given especially to the young of their congregations by Priestley, Turner and others, continued, for example by John Kentish, Charles Wellbeloved and Robert Aspland. It might well, as in James Martineau's instruction, include the latest advances in Biblical knowledge.<sup>2</sup> (Henry Morley stopped "hopping round the vulgar literal reading of the Cosmos in Moses" in his day school in Liverpool).<sup>3</sup> John Tayler wrote his Retrospect of Religious Life in England, Lant Carpenter his Geography of the New Testament, for their catechumens, so testifying to the high standard reached.<sup>4</sup> Lant Carpenter's pupils responded eagerly to his tremendous charisma, his intense devotion to their religious education, his "winning voice", deep understanding of them and efforts to make them think for themselves. John Bowring, who, when a political prisoner in France in 1822, addressed himself to Carpenter as "your Son", described Carpenter as "an object of the highest reverence, almost of worship", to himself and other catechumens at Exeter:

1. E.g. M.R., (1820), XV, 166, (1824), XIX, 650-2; (1827), N.S. 1, 684-5, 842; (1829), N.S. 3, 672-85; (1831), N.S. 5, 201-3, 679-83; (1832), N.S. 6, 575, 718-30, 853-4.
2. Kenrick J., "A Brief Memoir of John Kentish" in Kentish J., Sermons, (1854), xxxviii; Kenrick J., A Biographical Memoir of the Late Revd. Charles Wellbeloved, (1860), 37; Aspland R.B., Memoir of the Life, Works and Correspondence of the Revd. Robert Aspland of Hackney, (1850), 115, 199-200, 202; Carpenter J.E., James Martineau, (1905), 143-6; Drummond J. and C.B., op.cit., 76, 162, 203-4.
3. Solly H.S., op.cit., 132-3.
4. Martineau J., Essays, (1890), Vol. I, 384; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 163-4.

He lectured, he catechized, he exhibited experiments in chemistry, electricity and galvanism... he taught us geography, astronomy, and the use of the globes, and wrote a book of Scripture geography, principally for our instruction..... Others had the title of Doctor ... but he was the Doctor ..<sup>1</sup>

Carpenter also taught literature and physiology.

Carpenter, like many Unitarians, saw the best guide to moral education as Hartley's "Rule of Life".<sup>2</sup> He relied most, however, for religious and moral guidance on practice, as the whole ethos of both his house and boarding-school in Bristol illustrated. Martineau, a deep though not uncritical admirer, said of Dr. Carpenter that with his rare power of "commanding the reverence ... of the least manageable class of human beings", he inspired supremely high standards of intellectual and moral excellence (plus an intense interest in politics and religious liberty). "Religion in his house, was... on the spot, and awake, and positively busy with the duties of every day".<sup>3</sup> (Orthodox Christians valued his religious methods sufficiently to send their sons to his school - on the other hand, many of his catamorphoses later turned Anglican.<sup>4</sup>)

Active morality rather than mere adherence to precepts was highly congenial to Unitarians, both as a religious and a civic ideal, as Thomas Southwood Smith's enthusiasm over the Hazelwood system (including its revolutionary attention to health) illustrated.<sup>5</sup> Part of moral education included punishment. There were a few severe Unitarian disciplinarians, chiefly older ones, for example, William Shepherd, for all his fund of humour, and James Bransby's spiteful, drunken

1. Ibid., 223-7, 237; MSS M.C.O. A3, Carpenter Family Letters (J. Bowring MSS), 10.10.1822, 25.10.1822; Bowring J and L., Autobiographical Recollections of..., (1877), 42-3, 337.

2. Carpenter L., op.cit., 149-323.

3. Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 342-5.

4. Ibid., 223; D.N.B., Vol. 9, 158.

5. Westminster Review, (1824), Vol. I, 73-7.

assistant master, although Bransby himself, an amusing but increasingly eccentric kleptomaniac, was rather exceptional among Unitarian schoolteachers.<sup>1</sup> It seemed more usual, although it is not possible to find evidence in every case, for Unitarian educationalists to range from Lant Carpenter's moderate corporal punishment in certain circumstances<sup>2</sup> to banning it altogether. Eliezer Cogan, for example, believed flogging to be "useless and inhuman" and on the very rare occasions he used it was visibly shaken (Henry Solly remembered one case in five years).<sup>3</sup> Solly's son's father-in-law, Henry Morley, stopped lessons as his most severe punishment! Like J.P. Malleon, he believed that the teacher should have "faith in the good spirit of childhood".<sup>4</sup> J.R. Beard reserved corporal punishment for extreme cases only.<sup>5</sup> John Withers Dowson and Travers Madge allowed none of "the ordinary vulgar methods of coercion" at their school in Norwich, nor did the Hills for, though teachers might occasionally hit insolent boys as a "private right", punishment was not to entail ungentlemanly public disgrace which might destroy self-respect.<sup>6</sup> Such attitudes befitted a group who denied original sin and concentrated more on developing the good than flogging out the bad.

This alliance of psychology and middle-class aspiration suited well Unitarian desire to treat young and old as rational beings and so continued to inform their curriculum and teaching methods. Thus they promoted energetically a more modern curriculum. Their arguments over how far classics should intrude into the

1. Roscoe Sir H.E., The Life and Experiences of..., (1906), 12-3; Ridyard H., Selections from the Early Letters of the late Revd. William Shepherd, LL.D., (1855), 62; Bowring J., op.cit., 44-6; D.N.B., Vol. 6, 227.
2. Carpenter L., op.cit., 254-62.
3. Christian Reformer (1855), 246; Solly H., op.cit., 64-5, 81.
4. Solly H.S., op.cit., 129; Morley H., op.cit., 117; Household Words, (21.1.1854) No. 200, 501; Inquirer, (3.4.1869), 222.
5. Unitarian Chronicle, (1833), 192.
6. Inquirer, (19.7.1879), 467; Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 83-4).

curriculum, and how they should be taught, if at all, continued. Eliezer Cogan was exceptional in teaching little but the classics, though he taught the latter excellently according to Solly: Cogan, however, could not get Disraeli, another ex-pupil, to understand the subjunctive! Kenrick found Cogan's students distinguished by their "accuracy and finish of scholarship" at Manchester College. He admitted that Cogan was old-fashioned (for a Unitarian) in following the Oxbridge requirements of pure, critical philology in classics and training in classical composition and verse but he had raised the "literary character" of Unitarians and proved they were not "illiterate." Solly preferred Dr. Morell's school where the classics were still well-taught but mathematics, modern language and much general knowledge were added.<sup>1</sup> Lant Carpenter considered classics the best intellectual training in early education and gave a thorough grammatical grounding in them but also taught a range of modern subjects.<sup>2</sup> William Frend and his former pupil, Lady Byron, both termed the classical grind useless, the latter preferring for her grandson a tutor "with more of the living than the dead world in him" to those professional scholars who were "extinguishers of Nature's light."<sup>3</sup> Anna Swanwick and other Unitarians feared that classics taught immorality to schoolboys, as did, incidentally, the Phrenologists, with whom Unitarians had many educational links.<sup>4</sup> Letters to the Monthly Repository ranged from the arguments that parents should resign a "visionary idea of a classical for the invaluable attainment of a general education" and that the genius of ancient civilization lay in their men not spending time on dead languages and in being men of action as well as thought, to an apologetic plea for some classics for grammar, the

1. Solly H., op.cit., 76-7, 81, 93-5, 119, 122; D.N.B., Vol. II, 219; Christian Reformer (1855), 251-5.

2. Carpenter L., op.cit., 130-47; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 346-7; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 18-21.

3. Knight F., University Rebel, (1971) 284, MSS Liverpool University, Elizabeth Rathbone, Correspondence with Lady Byron, 1839-59, VI.1.230, 25.2.1840.

4. Bruce M.L., Anna Swanwick, (1903), 34-5; Giustino D., de Conquest of Mind, (1975) 169-72, 182.

principles of language and mental training.<sup>1</sup> Southwood Smith allowed classical studies as indispensable to professional men and ornamental for "gentlemen".<sup>2</sup> Frederick Hill however, questioned whether even the aristocracy needed to spend much time on "the nice distinctions of languages now fallen into disuse" and on the ancient history of nations who had little in common with contemporary England if:

a character for superior virtue and talent will be looked upon as essential to any claim for the possession of superior power.. other and far worthier qualifications might be given to our legislators than the power of making smart speeches interlarded with trite quotations.<sup>3</sup>

The question hinged once again on what made a "gentleman". In many cases the answer entailed learning some classics though with a new emphasis on the content and context, but learning also subjects which heralded a new dawn. William Rathbone VI summed up such attitudes when in the same year he opposed his brother, Sam, going to the Royal Institute School, Liverpool, because a "lot of Latin and Greek, and only that was crammed down their throats", yet suggested that Sam and he could study Latin together as "a gentleman's education is not complete without it."<sup>4</sup>

Significantly, in Liverpool, James Mullineaux and Richard Yates wished their Mechanics Institute School to include classics for those who needed them because they were so expensive elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> The amount of classics taught often depended on the wealth of the consumer as the Taunton Commission later recognised. Fees

1. E.g. M.R., (1829), N.S.2, 44-5, 349-50; (1832), N.S.6, 556-64 and see 649-59 (comments by J.S. Mill).

2. Westminster Review, (1824), Vol. I, 46.

3. Hill F., op.cit., 225-6.

4. MSS Liverpool University, William Rathbone VI, IX.2.50, 13.1.1839; IX.2.61, 14.4.1839.

5. Tiffen H.J., A History of the Liverpool Institute Schools, 1825-1935, (1935), 27.

at Lant Carpenter's school in Bristol were one-hundred guineas a year. On the other hand a more classical curriculum might occur when many pupils were Anglican as at Carpenter's school and the Hills' Bruce Castle, though conversely parents might well have chosen these schools because they were not purely classical.<sup>1</sup>

In the actual teaching of classics Unitarians looked to improved methods, J. Hollings of the Leicester Propriety School, for example, together with the headmaster, Edmonds, produced a simplified Latin grammar, concentrating on arousing interest, on content rather than grammar. Hollings, like John Biggs and Charles Berry of Leicester, wanted less emphasis on Latin.<sup>2</sup> The Hills' advocacy of using translations to aid preparation was not admired by William Shepherd, but the reaction to a similar method - the Hamiltonian system, lengthily discussed in the Monthly Repository, was varied. The testimony of Dr. Morell, an excellent Unitarian classical scholar and teacher, to its actual success, was surely influential.<sup>3</sup>

Unitarians did have many good classical scholars, notably amongst those who went on to Manchester College<sup>4</sup> but also others like Samuel Sharpe, (admittedly a pupil of Cogan's) who was not only a renowned Egyptologist but a reviser of the Bible and one of the four Unitarian scholars involved in the 1870 Revised Version.<sup>5</sup> An example of how the sheer pleasure some Unitarians derived from the classics was turned to public profit was when Richard Taylor, founder of the Taylor and Francis

1. Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 18; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 222-3; Hill A., op.cit., 43.
2. Ed. Simon B., Education in Leicester, 1540-1940, (1968), Zena Crook and Brian Simon "Private Schools in Leicester and the County, 1780-1840", 126; Greenwood M., Education and Politics in Leicester, 1828-50, (M.Ed., Leicester, 1973), 62.
3. Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 37-43, 126-60; Shepherd W., op.cit., 27-33; M.R. (1827), N.S. 109-16, written by Dr. John Johns, 296, (1828), 757-65; McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England, (1934), 129..
4. See chap. IV.
5. D.N.B., Vol. 51, 425-6; Davis V.D., A History of Manchester College, (1932), 115.

publishing firm, printed many beautiful editions of the classics. He was to do the same for his other love, natural history.<sup>1</sup>

James Martineau taught his own children, both boys and girls, Greek, once they had mastered English grammar.<sup>2</sup> Although Henry Morley and William Turner appear to have omitted classics in girls' education, many Unitarians believed with William Shepherd and John Morell that if classics did exercise the understanding and refine the taste then they were as desirable for one sex as the other. If this led to the exclusion of grossness and immorality from classical teaching so much the better for males!<sup>3</sup> There are many instances of Unitarian girls, both in fact and fiction, being taught Latin or even Greek, the Rev. B. Mardon, for example, hoping that such would be able to read the Scriptures in the original.<sup>4</sup> Anna Swanwick, later a widely-praised translator, studied both Greek and German in Germany, as did other Unitarians such as John Kenrick.<sup>5</sup>

Modern languages were, indeed, increasingly promoted by Unitarians in the nineteenth century. Many women appear to have been very highly taught in them: Susannah Winkworth (taught by William Gaskell), Harriet Martineau and Sarah Austin became well-known translators, for example.<sup>6</sup> Sarah Austin, indeed, an excellent Latin scholar, could speak French, German and Italian fluently.<sup>7</sup> Many young women went abroad to study languages, for example from the Byerley, Aspland, Carpenter

1. D.N.B., Vol. 55, 458.

2. Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 158.

3. Solly H.S., op.cit., 127; Robberds M., Recollections of a Long Life, (Church of the Divine Unity, Newcastle); Shepherd W., op.cit., 20; M.R., (1815), X, 242-4.

4. E.g. Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 179; Manchester Guardian, (6.8.1896), Potter L., "Eighty Years Ago", Aspland R.B., op.cit., 168-9; Ross J., Three Generations of Englishwomen, (1888), Vol. I, 68; MSS M.C.O., Presbyterian Chapels, Vol. V, 14.

5. Bruce M.L., op.cit., 25-31, 36-41, 86, 90, 105-8, 114-5, 220-2; Inquirer (9.5.1899), 322.

6. Ed. Shaen M.J., Memorials of Two Sisters. Susanna and Catherine Winkworth, (1908), 22; D.N.B., Vol. 36, 312; Record of Unitarian Worthies, (1876), 319.

7. Ross J., op.cit., vi.



and Gaskell families.<sup>1</sup> Miss Wreford spent seven years in Italy, Germany and France to qualify her for establishing a school.<sup>2</sup>

French and Italian, at least, were acceptable for girls generally, though Unitarians taught them more thoroughly than was the norm, but they also wished males to learn them too. Dr. Morell learnt German on the Hamiltonian system, accompanied by a few of his own pupils.<sup>3</sup> J.R. Beard would like to have revolutionised education by introducing the science of comparative grammar and then studying languages in groups of related tongues. He, like William Shepherd, recommended learning languages by oral teaching or even better by travel (despite the cost and immorality abroad!), a recommendation followed by a number of his pupils, for example, his son Charles (who also helped him compile a Latin dictionary), William Herford and Brooke Herford.<sup>4</sup> Frederick Hill, used to his brother's oral and dramatic methods of teaching French, wished to reverse the usual order of middle-class education and teach children their own language first, then modern languages and last classics.<sup>5</sup>

In the teaching of English, indeed, Unitarians became even more enthusiastic, partly in response to the contemporary outburst of English literature and partly through their own love of Milton and other writers and their share in the renaissance of Shakespeare. For example, Mrs Barbauld, famed for her poetry in the eighteenth century, edited the works of Addison, Steele and Richardson and a collection of British novelists and published The Female Speaker, in the early nineteenth century. Her brother, John Aikin, continued to write much from 1800 to 1810, including a number of edited works and edited the Monthly Magazine,

1. Hicks P.D., A Quest of Ladies ..., (no date given), 65; Aspland R.B., op.cit., 503;

Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 333; Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 894-9.

2. Christian Reformer, (1841), opposite "Contents" April.

3. Solly H., op.cit., 119.

4. Beard J.R., Self-Culture, 249-55; Shepherd W., op.cit., 23; D.N.B., Vol. 22 Supplement, 154; Supplement Vol. II, 254, 255.

5. Hill M.D. and R., op.cit., 43-6; Hill F., op.cit., 208.

1796-1806, and the Athenaeum, 1807-9.<sup>1</sup> Many Unitarians, such as Thomas Noon Talfourd, were intensely interested in the theatre, one of the few sources of emotional expression open to them and seen by some of them as an avenue to the civilization of humanity.<sup>2</sup> Many, such as Harriet Martineau, Lucy Aikin and Elizabeth Gaskell, were brought up on Shakespeare and Milton rather than the classics,<sup>3</sup> their reverence for Milton receiving a further stimulus by the discovery and subsequent publication in 1822 and 1825 of De Doctrina Christiana, in which Milton revealed his Arian views. The Monthly Repository extensively reviewed this and the Christian Reformer (for "humbler" Unitarians) published a series of articles by J.T. Rutt, mostly of extracts. In 1826 Channing published his famed Character and Writings of Milton, exulting in Milton's mental genius and moral direction.<sup>4</sup> Samuel Rogers, the poet-banker, like many Unitarians was a friend of the poet Thomas Campbell<sup>5</sup> but because Unitarians tended to confuse a writer's creative ability and political views and because they emphasised so strongly the didactic and moral nature of all art, they judged poets and writers on these matters rather than aesthetically. Thus they oscillated over claiming the infamous, amoral Lord Byron who was married to a Unitarian and apparently agreed with her religious views if nothing else.<sup>6</sup> Many of them, however,

1. Ed. Aikin L., The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, (1825), xxxvii-liv, lviii; Aikin L., Memoir of John Aikin M.D. (1823), Vol. I, 233-54; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 84.
2. Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 470-7.
3. Martineau H., Autobiography (1877), Vol. I, 72; ed. le Breton A.L., op.cit., v, 1-2; Easson A., Elizabeth Gaskell, (1979), 22.
4. M.R., (1825), Vol. XX, 609-13, 687-92, 710-3, 748-50; (1826), Vol. XXI, 724-31; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 85-96; Delbanco A., William Ellery Channing, (1981), 110-1, 115, 172-3, 176-7.
5. E.g., le Breton A.L., op.cit., 39-40; Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., 149; Shirren A.J., Samuel Rogers, (Stoke Newington Public Libraries Committee, 1963), 21-9.
6. Bowring J. and L., op.cit., 344; Martineau H., Biographical Sketches., 317-22; M.R., (1819), Vol. XIV, 442-4; (1824), Vol. XIX, 200-1, 632; (1827), N.S. I, 868-9; (1830), N.S. 4, 124-8, 605-13.

appreciated Wordsworth whose philosophy appealed to them in different ways.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Crabb Robinson was the first to see literary potential in the slovenly, awkward, vituperative Radical, William Hazlitt, an ex-Unitarian and superb essayist.<sup>2</sup> Similarly W.J. Fox in the Monthly Repository was one of the first to recognise the talent of Tennyson and Browning.<sup>3</sup>

At school John Rely Beard's weekly readings of Milton and the substitution of English composition for Latin verses were heartily recommended by William Herford<sup>4</sup>. Beard assured autodidacts desirous of a cultured education that this could be gleaned from English literature alone, supplemented by translations if wanted. Beard, though retaining a characteristic Unitarian preference for true tales over fiction realised that the desire to read was stimulated by interest. Furthermore, accepting that "Every man's style has its roots in his thoughts", he urged careful reading of the English and American classics to stimulate good writing and speaking.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Robert Aspland held weekly meetings at the Gravel-Pit, Hackney, to which outsiders were invited, where English classics such as The Spectator or Shakespeare were read aloud, errors of pronunciation and intonation being pointed out.<sup>6</sup> Shepherd's detailed chapters on the study of language in Systematic Education were amply illustrated throughout equally from

1. E.g. Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 10, 37, 48; Connell J.M., "Dickens Unitarian Minister Edward Tagart", T.U.H.S. (1944), Vol. VIII, No. 2, 73; Martineau H., Autobiography..., Vol. II, 238; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 65. For Wordsworth's Unitarian friends see ed. Moorman M., Journals of Dorothy (Wordsworth), (O.U.P. Paperback 1971), 11, 37, 39, 65, 164; H.C.R., Vol. I., 17, 138, 251, 287, 351-65. On Wordsworth's thought see particularly ed. de Selincourt E., The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, (1956), 164-5 ("Tintern Abbey", lines 102-11), 460-2, ("Intimations of Immortality.."), 62, ("My heart leaps up..."); Willey B., The Eighteenth Century Background, (1950), 136-7, 154, 253-92.

2. H.C.R., Vol. I, 35, 241, 250, 287; Vol. II, 401; Birrell A., William Hazlitt, (1902), *passim*

3. Parnaby M.R. op.cit., xi, xvi, 143, 408-9; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 299, 353-62.

4. Beard James., op.cit., 1835.

5. Beard J., op.cit., 129-35, 88-9, 99-103, 113, 222, 242-3.

6. Aspland R.B., op.cit., 115-6.

the Latin and English classics.<sup>1</sup> Henry Morley was outstanding for the times in the effort he expended on English language and literature.<sup>2</sup>

History too was extolled in Priestleian fashion, by William Shepherd and Southwood Smith, for example, a writer in the Monthly Repository desired history to be no longer

the mere record of tyrannies and slaughters, which by immortalizing  
the execrable actions of one age, perpetuates the ambition of  
committing them in every succeeding one,

but the accumulated knowledge of how to achieve good but unobtrusive government.<sup>3</sup> Beard and Morley stressed that there was little profit in learning history as a mere collection of facts - connections, biographies, progress needed to be studied, analysed and understood. Above all, history should live. Beard preferred Macaulay to Mangnall; Morley used records at the town library and poured out lively stories to a responsive audience.

Both these teachers tackled geography in a similar fashion.<sup>4</sup> Physical geography was not pioneered as a university discipline until after the famous work of the Unitarian Mary Somerville in 1848,<sup>5</sup> but Unitarians were teaching it long before, as has been shown. James Martineau apparently made such lessons "truly delightful".<sup>6</sup>

Political Economy grew in importance in teaching, corresponding to its growth in importance generally in middle-class debate. Jeremiah Joyce, Mrs Marcet and Harriet Martineau were all Unitarians of growing national recognition (or notoriety) who gave ample materials for teachers to work from and left no doubt of how important they conceived an understanding of the subject for all

1. Shepherd W., op.cit., 49-239.

2. Solly H.S., op.cit., 102, 256-7.

3. M.R., (1831), N.S. 5, 121-2.

4. Beard J.R., op.cit., 90-1, 112-2, 131-5, 237-41; Morley H., op.cit., 504; "A Defence of Ignorance", 107-8.

5. Sanderson M., "Mary Somerville; Her work in physical geography", Geographical Review, (1974), No. 64, 410.

6. Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 79.

citizens,<sup>1</sup> even females, to be, for as Mrs Marcet explained, even if women were not able to become legislators themselves, the growth of "correct" ideas in childhood and adolescence would be greatly facilitated if mothers and female teachers were free from errors and ignorance.<sup>2</sup> W.J. Fox said that women would remain fools and slaves whilst they knew and cared nothing about matters in which "every rational being should be deeply interested".<sup>3</sup> The Monthly Repository called it a science reflecting how "the condition of the whole human species shall be permanently bettered..<sup>4</sup>"

Mental philosophy, a principal subject in Unitarian higher education, was promoted especially by Lant Carpenter (particularly for girls),<sup>5</sup> but also by other such as William Jevons, William Turner Junior and Harriet Martineau. Dr. Southwood Smith recommended learning the laws of the mind as he did those of the body, arguing fiercely that more attention was given to the health of horses in England than to that of men who consequently were "a puny race" unable "to think clearly, to feel generously, and to act vigorously". Proper diet, exercises and games would revolutionise the health and strength of youth.<sup>6</sup> Unitarian teachers such as Drs. Cogan and Morell, J.R. Beard and the Hills all gave much opportunity for healthy activities.<sup>7</sup> The importance of physical education as a means to both bodily and mental health was closely argued by Lant Carpenter and again as much for girls as for boys,<sup>8</sup> perhaps even more revolutionary in those days of tight-

1. Shepherd W., op.cit., Vol. II, 436-505; Marcet J., Conversations on Political Economy (1817); Martineau H., Illustrations of Political Economy, (1832).

2. Marcet J., op.cit., 11-2.

3. M.R., (1832), N.S. 6, 641.

4. M.R., (1831), N.S. 5., 122.

5. Shepherd W., op.cit., Vol. II, 244-322; Carpenter L., op.cit., 145-7. M.R., (1827), N.S. 1 890-901; (1828), N.S. 2, 293-8, 595-601; (1829), N.S. 3, 102-6, 159-62, 522, 605, 707-11, 751, 629-33.

6. Westminster Review, (1824), Vol. I, 72-3, 76.

7. Solly H., op.cit., 63, 89, 96-7, 118; Beard James, op.cit., 1833.

8. Carpenter L., op.cit., 329-436.

lacing, heavy clothes and the domestic confinement of females, though boys schools too often left much to be desired in regard to health.

Similarly, the Unitarians were amongst the first to encourage the teaching of physiology, though the whole idea of women understanding and being in control of their own bodies was anathema to Victorian ideology.<sup>1</sup> Southwood Smith gave the Unitarian viewpoint:

That notion of delicacy which would exclude women from a class of knowledge calculated in an extraordinary degree, to open and expand their minds, and to fit them for the performance of their duties, appears to me alike degrading to those to whom it affects to show respect, and debasing to the mind that entertains it.<sup>2</sup>

Reports of his lectures on physiology and health, gave Monthly Repository readers, at least, some chance to gain this knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Carpenter gave illustrated anatomy lessons in both Exeter and Bristol and at his school where Samuel Greg described dissecting a sheep's head.<sup>4</sup> J.R. Beard also taught his pupils physiology and later recommended to self-educators the Physiology and Health of Combe, a popular pioneer of this subject.<sup>5</sup>

Jeremiah Joyce contributed two illustrated chapters on "Man, his Structure and Functions" to Systematic Education, covering most important points except reproduction, together with other detailed chapters covering mathematics, natural philosophy, mechanics, chemistry and natural history.<sup>6</sup> Joyce's Familiar Introduction to Arts and Sciences for the use of schools and young persons, written expressly for both sexes, gave necessary facts, illustrations and questions covering a variety of subjects usually neglected in larger schools,

1. Ed. Delamont S. and Duffin L., The Nineteenth Century Woman, Her Cultural and Physical World, (1978), 45-7.

2. M.R., (1833), N.S. 7, 49-50.

3. Ibid., 50-9, 120-131, 197-207.

4. Greg S., Letters of.. 1820-5, 10 (9.11.1821).

5. Beard James, op.cit., 1833, 1835; Beard J.R., op.cit., 111.

6. Shepherd W., op.cit., Vol. I, 454-578, II, 1-243, 506-44, 568-70.

especially sciences which, with mathematics and architecture comprised 64.5% of his lectures (whilst geography was included in the arts<sup>1</sup>). Dr. Carpenter's boyhood taste for science, stimulated at Glasgow University (where he won first prize in natural philosophy in 1801), was further encouraged by his premiss that science helped mental and thus moral development. At Exeter, he initiated efficient, popular science lectures at the public library he had helped institute. In Bristol, he taught both his catechumens and his schoolboys science, allowing, for example, Martineau, who was then hoping to be an engineer, to spend extra time on mathematics, elementary science and chemistry.<sup>2</sup> Science was also part of Beard's curriculum and W.H. Herford recalled weekly lectures in geology and chemistry "well-provided with specimens and experiments" by "thoroughly qualified lecturers".<sup>3</sup>

This taste for science was characteristic not only of Unitarian ministers but of lay Unitarians too. The Hills appointed Edward William Brayley, who had studied science in London and at the Royal Institution, to teach science at Hazelwood and Bruce Castle in 1829 and thence asked him to publicize their joint views on the need for rational man to learn to think scientifically, understand scientific truths and civilise mankind by applying science to its welfare.<sup>4</sup> J.F. Hollings, of the Proprietary School, Leicester, in the face of the Leicester Journal's disgust at what it saw as the teaching of incomprehensible subjects and entertaining tricks, opened his weekly lectures to the public for a small fee.<sup>5</sup> Henry Morley saw science as the foundation of knowledge for children.<sup>6</sup> The Liverpool Institute High School, founded largely through Unitarians, had

1. Joyce J., A Familiar Introduction to the Arts and Sciences, (1810), passim.

2. Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 16, 35, 41, 48, 50, 133-4, 196, 227, 347-8; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 21.

3. Beard James, op.cit., 1835.

4. Brayley E.W., The Utility of the Knowledge of Nature considered;.. (1831), passim.

5. Peet D., The Proprietary School of the Town and County of Leicester, (P.G.C.E., Leicester, 1953), 14, 20-2, 30.

6. Solly H.S., op.cit., 84, 102.

excellent scientific facilities, colourful teaching and public lecturers, all to the delight of Henry Enfield Roscoe whose mother deliberately sent him there. Roscoe also had his own laboratory at home. His boyhood enthusiasm nearly led to a premature demise when making fireworks with his cousin Roscoe Jevons. Fortunately he survived to combat the narrow classical specialisation of English education.

Unitarians, always anxious to turn knowledge outwards, indeed, stressed the applied sciences, including applied mathematics:-Augustus de Morgan, for example, fulminated against the esotericism of most school mathematics.<sup>2</sup> The best example of John Aikin's desire for useful education was his Arts of Life published in 1802. In this he showed that, unlike animals, man has to learn by practice, observation and through the experience of others, that is by art, how to fend for himself. Aikin, whilst providing a simple, clear guide to the common arts of life to teach all men how to do this, included many poetic quotations and many moral touches, for example, on manure -"Thus nothing is lost; but things the vilest in nature are made to contribute to the general good." Aikin's admiration of both the human skill and industry which could produce delicate Brussels lace from flax and various scientific and beneficial arts such as that of cooking, and his asides such as his wish that every country labourer had a garden, were indicative of his humanistic and practical outlook.<sup>3</sup> M.D. Hill wanted technical education in 1824.<sup>4</sup> Unitarians were often deeply involved in the practical application of science in those new scientific opportunities opening up in chemistry and in engineering, as the careers of Henry Schunk<sup>c</sup>, Philip Taylor and his brother John, illustrate.<sup>5</sup>

1. Roscoe H.E., op.cit., 14-9, 254-5.

2. Morgan A.de. "Professional Mathematics", Central Society of Education, (1838), 132-147.

3. Aikin J., The Arts of Life, (1802), 4, 41-2, 69, 87-100, 112, 119-20, 201, 169.

4. R. and F. Davenport Hill, op.cit., 75.

5. D.N.B., 2nd Supplement III, 274-5; Vol. 55, 456-7.



Such subjects, usually considered masculine, if taught at all, were also offered to girls by Unitarian educationalists. For example, Mrs Marcet's very popular Conversations on Chemistry, ... Natural Philosophy and ... Vegetable Physiology were written for both sexes and "opened an entirely fresh region of ideas" to the young of the day, according to Harriet Martineau.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the first volume of Samuel Parkes' world-famous Chemical Catechism was written for his daughters.<sup>2</sup> J. Hollings opened his lectures to ladies at reduced fees.<sup>3</sup> Mrs Gaskell portrayed the enthusiasm of a well-educated girl for dynamics in Cousin Phillis and Lant Carpenter's scientific teaching was reflected in his daughter Mary's zeal for botany.<sup>4</sup> Catherine Finch, granddaughter of Priestley, taught her pupils astronomy by punching holes in cards for stars. She also taught them conchology (her own collection she left to the Museum of Elementary Schools in Birmingham).<sup>5</sup> Nor was mathematics neglected, as the famous examples of Lady Byron and her daughter, Ada, illustrated.<sup>6</sup>

These were the chief subjects promoted and taught by Unitarians. The emphasis, even in literature, remained on usefulness, rationality and morality: for example, Lant Carpenter's occasional vivid delight in art, music or painting was on ethical not aesthetic grounds.<sup>7</sup> N.G. Annan, in describing the intellectual aristocracy of nineteenth century England, amongst whom he regards Unitarian families as comprising a major group, says that "literature... was in their bones" but their "experience of the visual arts was meagre", despite their worship of the beauties of nature.<sup>8</sup> Unitarians were not entirely deficient in art and music,

1. Martineau H., Biographical Sketches, 388-9.

2. D.N.B., Vol. 43, 307.

3. Peet D., op.cit., 21.

4. Gaskell E., Cousin Phillis and other Tales, (O.U.P. 1981), 289; MSS M.C.O., James Martineau Letters, J. Martineau to M. Carpenter, 1.4.1828.

5. Dixon R.A.M., "Priestley's Daughter and her Descendants", T.H.U.S., (1931-4), Vol. V: 292-3.

6. Knight F., op.cit., 238-9, 300, 304.

7. Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 348.

8. Ed. Plumb J.H., Studies in Social History, Annan N.G., "The Intellectual Aristocracy", (1955), 251.

however, Individuals such as John Biggs, Samuel Rogers, Edward and Emily Higginson and Margaret Gaskell and her parents were deeply interested in the fine arts, whilst others, such as Elizabeth Rathbone and her son, William, saw an educational interest in art as part of the culture necessary for enlightened leaders of the new society.<sup>1</sup> George William Wood, much to John Kenrick's approval was the prime instigator of the Manchester Royal Institution, whose first aim was to exhibit and foster the fine arts.<sup>2</sup> Fox's vision of spreading popular understanding of art such as there had been once in Greece, Rome and Florence, began with the middle-classes. In the Monthly Repository, supported by Sarah Flower and her future husband, William Bridges Adams, he promoted the fine arts as important in developing national taste and a sense of moral and spiritual beauty.<sup>3</sup>

John and William Biggs were amongst those Unitarians who were interested in public buildings as a source of civic pride, whilst changing Unitarian religious tastes were reflected in both the classical church at Brighton and the splendid Gothic edifices triumphantly erected after the settlement of the Lady Hewley case.<sup>4</sup>

Individual Unitarians, such as the organ-playing scientist, William Carpenter, and Edward Taylor, Gresham Professor of Music from 1837 to 1863, (with his family, a friend of Mendelssohn), were also interested in music.<sup>5</sup> The renowned choir of

1. Evans R.H., "The Biggs Family of Leicester", Leicestershire Archeological and Historical Society Transactions, (1972-3), No.48,45; Unitarian Worthies (1876), 157, 159; D.N.B., Vol.26,372; Ed.Whitehall J., Letters of Mrs Gaskell and Charles Eliot Norton, 1855-65, (1932), 632-3; Brill B., William Gaskell, 1805-84, (Manchester Literary and Philosophical Publications, 1984) 34,41; MSS Liverpool University, William Rathbone VI, IX.2.18, IX.2.25, IX.2.63, (Jan.-April 1839).
2. MSS M.C.O., J.K.III, 4.10.1823, 24.11.1823; Kargon R.H., Science in Victorian Manchester, (1977), 16-9.
3. Fox W.J., "Five Lectures on Education", Collected Works, (1865), Vol.VIII, 166; M.R., (1832), N.S.6, 338-45; (1833), N.S.7, 1-13, 840-5; (1834), N.S.8, 756-62.
4. Evans R.H., op.cit., 48; Smith L. "Unitarians and the Gothic Revival", T.U.H.S., (July 1980), Vol.XVII, No.2, 81-7.
5. D.N.B., Vol.9, 168; Ross J., op.cit., 28; Breton A Le, op.cit., 73.

the Leicester Great Meeting, led by William Gardiner, was the first to introduce Beethoven's music in England (for which Gardiner was honoured in Bonn).<sup>1</sup> The musical (and poetical) services of W.J. Fox's South Place Chapel, in the talented hands of Eliza Flower, also refuted the idea that Unitarians contributed nothing to the musical life of England.<sup>2</sup> Joseph Strutt's family's many pianos and organs indicate the general revolution on domestic music and entertainment brought about by the piano. Typically, however, it would seem that Unitarians wanted more than the usual superficial female execution: for example, Marianne Gaskell was sent to London by her music-loving parents to have lessons in harmony at Queen's College.<sup>4</sup> Music might be included, as at J.R. Beard's school, as an extra subject, as was dancing, surely an indication of a wish to educate "gentlemen".<sup>5</sup>

In all this, however, it was the total education which was most important: for example, Harriet Martineau illustrated in Deerbrook how education would not have the desired effect, that is, turning out virtuous, rational, socially-minded people, if the proper moral element was missing. Silly mothers with narrow ideas would bring up similar daughters but the girls who improved in kindness and generosity also improved in Latin!<sup>6</sup>

1. Wilshire J., William Gardiner, 1770-1843, (1970 Leicester Research Services), 7, 9, 15-20, 24; Thomas Rev. A.H., A History of the Great Meeting, Leicester and its Congregation, (1908, Leicester), 57-8.
2. Garnett R and E., The Life of William Johnson Fox, (1909), 218-9; D.N.B., Vol. 19, 340.
3. Fitton R.S., and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 179.
4. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 137.
5. Unitarian Chronicle, (1833), 192.
6. Martineau H., Deerbrook, .. and passim.

Such writings acknowledged the gap that existed for many of the Middle-class in post-school education, a gap which Unitarians, especially, did much to fill, as will be seen. At an earlier age, however, some Unitarians knew the meaning of self-education, and could understand well the simple pride in "painfully acquired learning" of Philip Hepburn in Mrs Gaskell's Sylvia's Lovers.<sup>1</sup> A few examples illustrate this: John Kennedy the wealthy Manchester manufacturer was self-taught. (His daughters married James Heywood, Samuel Robinson and Edwin Chadwick).<sup>2</sup> The older Hill brothers had to teach and learn at the same time, for their parents were poor, although they did provide the eager stimulus of an intelligent, knowledge-thirsty, liberty-loving Unitarian household, as Canon Duckworth, at Rowland Hill's funeral in Westminster Abbey, acknowledged.<sup>3</sup> Rowland Hill recalled how at seventeen, he had walked twenty-four miles, carrying a quadrant, to give lessons in navigation which he had just puzzled out himself. Through his plans at Hazelwood his younger brothers were better taught and this closely-united family were notably successful, though not all remained Unitarians in later life. Matthew Hill became the Recorder for Birmingham, Rowland, who was knighted in 1860, the inventor of the postage stamp, Frederic, an effective reforming inspector of prisons, Edwin, a legendary mechanical genius at the Post Office, Arthur, the headmaster of Bruce Castle. All were keenly interested and involved in many aspects of education.<sup>4</sup>

A similar eager, intellectual and liberal vitality was found in the homes of the Strutts and the Gregs. Quarry Bank at Styal, for example, was created by Hannah Greg as a family society "where intellect and excellence could rule". She even ran a family "Junior" Literary and Philosophical Society, with rules, meetings and officers. Her children proved the strength of her education. They

1. Gaskell E., Sylvia's Lovers, (O.U. Paperback, 1982), 95, 119, 161.

2. Thackray A., "Natural Knowledge in Cultural Context: The Manchester Model", American Historical Review, (Feb. 1974), Vol. 79, No. 1, 706.

3. Inquirer, (13.9.1879), 600.

4. Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., 14-66, 184-98; Hill R. and F., op.cit., *passim*; ed. Hill C., op.cit., *passim*; Hey C.C., op.cit., 256-64.

Unitarians were eager to advise on how new school subjects should be taught, as has been shown, as they also were in providing suitable educational materials and books.<sup>1</sup> New editions of John Aikin's and Richmal Mangnall's books appeared, as well as new books by them and other writers, such as Joseph Nightingale, J.R. Beard and Thomas and John Holland. The Hollands' Exercises for the Memory and Understanding with a Series of Examinations, despite its rather uninviting title, was praised for its modern methods by the Monthly Repository, which was always interested in educational books and aids, especially those stimulating interest in science, or civil or religious liberty.<sup>2</sup>

Many books, indeed, were written to absorb and interest whilst instructing. Evenings at Home had its imitators, for example, Thomas Roscoe's The Juvenile Keepsake, though this was rather sentimental, portraying conventional sex roles. Emily Taylor's books for children were far more amusing and her brother Richard translated Grimms' Fairy Tales.<sup>3</sup> John Beard recommended many Unitarian books and educational aids, such as the outline maps published by Abel Heywood, in his Self-Culture of 1859. (This was based on Mechanics Institute lectures given earlier and intended for those deprived of any decent education, but in language and style was probably above them).<sup>4</sup> Beard's many writings from 1852, especially for Cassell's Popular Educator, were aimed at those who had left school, as was Shepherd, Joyce and Carpenter's Systematic Education, quoted many times already, (although much of it was equally relevant to schools), and Augustus de Morgan's "Professional Mathematics".<sup>5</sup>

1. E.g. see M.R., (1829), N.S.3, 46-7.

2. Aikin L., op.cit., Vol.1, 233-44; Ramsden G.M., op.cit., 52-3; D.N.B., Vol.41, 66; D.N.B., Vol.4, 14; M.R., (1806), Vol.1, 211-13; e.g. M.R., (1822), XVII, 571-3; (1829), N.S.3, 14-6; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 410-22.

3. Roscoe T., The Juvenile Keepsake, (1829); Taylor E., The Boy and the Birds, (1840); Letters to a Child on .. Maritime Discovery, (1820); see also Historical Prints, (1821). Emily Taylor had a Unitarian childhood but later became an Anglican.

4. Beard J.R., op.cit., especially iii, 1-3, 89-144; Inquirer, (6.1.1894), 9-10; Beard James, op.cit., 1859.

5. Ibid., 1852 f.f.; Shepherd W., op.cit., iii-iv; Morgan A.de, op.cit.

included Robert Hyde Greg, M.P., a brilliant businessman, deeply interested in archaeology, education and liberal politics, Samuel Greg, the industrial reformer W.R. Greg, well-known Victorian essayist, and Elizabeth Rathbone, whose philanthropy and educational work in Liverpool bore out Hannah's ideal.<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Malleson (nee Whitehead) was more stimulated by the intellectual vitality of her home, with a mother of "vigorous, independent mind and alert intelligence", friends like Peter and Catherine Taylor (nee Courtauld), visits to Anti-Corn Law League meetings, readings of Shakespeare by Fox, constant theatre-going and voracious reading of English literature, past and present, than by her short period of schooling, albeit at a Unitarian school of great repute in Clapton.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth and William Gaskell were intimately involved in their daughters' education, anxiously working out an individual path for each child and supplementing a wide, general education with governesses, masters and schools when necessary. Once again, the Gaskells' own home, a centre for Cross Street worshippers, those at Manchester College in the 1840s and those many admirers of a leading novelist, was in itself, a cultural and intellectual centre, an "oasis" for "daring adventurers" into the Lancashire wilderness, according to a somewhat exaggerated report in 1913. It remained so under Margaret and Julia Gaskell. Julia learnt drawing under Ruskin, climbed in the Alps with Leslie Stephen and, with Margaret, made the first female crossing of Mornong Pass. A wide education indeed!<sup>3</sup>

Clearly the homes which are documented were those of the more outstanding of the Unitarians but there does seem to be sufficient evidence to show that the network of family and intellectual relationships in which Unitarians moved provided the lively and stimulating upbringing for their children which their

1. Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 173-84; Fletcher E., Hannah Greg, (draft copy, see bibliography).

2. Malleson E., Autobiography., (1926 for private circulation), 5-7, 27-8, 36-41 and see 85-9.

3. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., passim; Gaskell E., My Diary, (privately printed 1923); Brill B., op.cit., especially 40-2; Inquirer, (31.10.1908, reprinted from the Manchester Guardian), 694; (1.11.1913), 698-9.

educationalists wished. Indeed Unitarian children travelled round the close-knit Unitarian community to gain such an education. Catherine Finch and the Frend daughters, for example, stayed with Mrs Barbauld, and Mary Turner, at eighteen, went on "pleasant and improving journeys", visiting John Wedgwood in London, Mrs Barbauld, John Aikin, Dr. Crompton and William Roscoe.<sup>1</sup>

Some Unitarians continued to educate their children at home, although, as P. Musgrove has pointed out, by the 1830s new needs were increasingly recognised for children which the family, even of the professional middle-classes, could not meet.<sup>2</sup> Home education often entailed some time at school, or visiting masters, a governess, or, for the wealthier, a tutor. Lady Byron (nee Annabella Milbanke) had William Frend as tutor in Mathematics and Latin.<sup>3</sup> Samuel Darbishire's sons and daughters were taught by James Anthony Froude (whose writings, culminating in The Nemesis of Faith, had alienated him for a time from his family, Oxford and orthodox Anglicanism). The girls were also taught by Francis Newman and James Martineau.<sup>4</sup> Aspinall Turner's family and others were tutored by James Riddell McKee.<sup>5</sup>

Fathers such as Dr. Charles Aikin, William Frend and Samuel Kay taught their children, particularly their daughters, themselves. Sophia Frend learnt Hebrew, philosophy, natural philosophy and chemistry; Louisa Potter (nee Kay), learnt Latin and science as well as studying many Unitarian educational books.<sup>6</sup> James and Harriet Martineau, well-educated at home and school by their enlightened parents, who saw education as their only security, advocated that the family

1. Ed. Kenrick Mrs. W. Byng. Chronicles of a Nonconformist Family (1932), 145; Knight F., op.cit., 281; Robberds M., op.cit.
2. Musgrove F. "Middle-class Families and Schools 1780-1880" in ed Musgrove P.W., Sociology, History and Education (Methuen Paperback 1970), 117-25.
3. Knight F., op.cit., 238-9.
4. Lansbury D., Elizabeth Gaskell. The Novel of Social Crisis, (1975), 12-3; Dunn W.H. op.cit., 151-4.
5. Inquirer, (1.9.1883), 555.
6. Breton A. le. op.cit., 3; Knight F., op.cit., 241-3, 279-83, 290, 304; Manchester Guardian, ( .8.1896), Louisa Potter. "Eighty Years Ago".

should be the centre of education, and that boys and girls should be educated equally. James Martineau, despite his many commitments, largely conducted the education of at least his older children adapting his original methods to each child, and enjoying games, literature and much fun with them.<sup>1</sup> Harriet Martineau wrote Household Education, first published in 1847, as a manual of family self-education, acknowledging the scarcity of good schools, whether private or public. Her novel Sense and Sentiment or Five Years of Youth, drew on the childhood of two other members of the Monthly Repository Circle, Eliza and Sarah Flower, who were educated by their independently-minded mother and their father, Benjamin Flower of the Cambridge Intelligencer, to be self-reliant, undogmatic, competent in domestic arts but understanding politics, literature and political economy, and able to be active in all aspects of social improvement.<sup>3</sup>

Placing such importance on early education, it was natural that Unitarians should be interested in the infant school movement of the 1820s and 1830s, which will be discussed further in chapter V. Although, generally speaking, this movement involved working-class children, some Unitarians wished the middle-class to have infant schools. Frederic Hill, for example, believed that the middle-class would be able to supply the necessary learning aids, playground, garden and lively patient, sympathetic, skilled teachers. Refreshingly, he realised that a mother should have other occupations, for the benefit of herself, her husband and society.<sup>4</sup> Arthur Hill established an infant school as part of Bruce Castle, in 1836.<sup>5</sup> Members of the Monthly Repository circle, with their enthusiasm for

1. Carpenter J.E. op.cit., 7, 12-3, 157-8, 342-4; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 8-9, 78-80; Martineau V., Gertrude Martineau, passim; Inquirer, (1.7.1876), 439; Martineau H., Autobiography..., Vol.1, 27, 53-6, 69-72.
2. Martineau H., Household Education, (1870), 172-5 and passim.
3. Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 397-404.
4. Hill F., op.cit., 219-21.
5. Hill A., op.cit., 61; Fry A., "The Junior School of Bruce Castle, Tottenham", Central Society, op.cit., 243-9.



Pestalozzi and domestic education, were naturally very keen on infant education. Margaret Parnaby has pointed out that Fox's ideas on infant education paralleled those of Froebel's Education of Man of 1826, although English Dissenters saw the child belonging to the family rather than the community. Froebel's work, however was not translated into English until much later and kindergartens on Froebelian, child-centred lines were not established until the 1850s. Mrs Gaskell drew Dickens's attention to the first, established in Hampstead by Johannes and Bertha Rouge in 1851, and he publicised it in Household Words in an article written by Henry Morley, also a friend of Mrs Gaskell's.<sup>1</sup>

The fervent educational ideals of Unitarians and their wish to obviate less desirable educational influences meant that they produced many enthusiastic school-teachers. Many ministers also needed to teach to make up their meagre salaries, including those like the Revd. Corcoran who, in 1830, lost over half his salary in the Lady Hewley dispute and so took on pupils.<sup>2</sup> Probably most Unitarian ministers did some teaching, some undoubtedly, somewhat reluctantly - for example Robert Aspland and James Tayler, though nevertheless they appear to have been good teachers (the latter, however, did not compare with Lant Carpenter in Samuel Greg's eyes).<sup>3</sup> John James Tayler, who described the daily work of a school as "harrassing and fagging", gave private lessons and public lectures and ended his career as Principal of Manchester College.<sup>4</sup> Henry Morley and Harriet Martineau stoutly maintained that teaching was a professional job and should be given a professional salary.<sup>5</sup>

1. Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 154-6, 218-9; Steward W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 298-9.

2. MSS M.C.O., Wood W.R., Correspondence, M.C.Y., 1829-31, 34, (7.11.1830), 41, (30.1.1831).

3. Aspland R.B., op.cit., 113, 144; ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., Vol.1, 32; Greg S., op.cit., 1-35, (8.10.1820-1.7.1822), *passim*.

4. Ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., 31.

5. Solly H.S., op.cit., 119-20; Martineau H., History of the Thirty Years Peace.. vol.II, 714.

Unitarian schools were usually small, although there were some notable exceptions: Eliezer Cogan had sixty to seventy pupils and once had refused as many as twenty; Hazelwood had 150 boys in 1826; Standard Hill, Nottingham had five full-time teachers for 80 boys and J.P. Malleson had a large and successful school in Leeds in the 1830s.<sup>1</sup> Unitarians such as J.R. Beard (although he had 57 pupils by 1840) stressed the family-like care and atmosphere.<sup>2</sup> Henry Morley followed this to its natural conclusion and advocated co-education, but although some girls, for instance Sarah Beard, Mary Carpenter and Caroline Hill, attended boys' schools, especially those of their fathers William Herford's co-educational school at Ladybarn outside Manchester was unusual even at the end of the century.<sup>3</sup>

Some Unitarian schools were specifically for older pupils, for example Thomas Belsham's at Hackney, attended by William (V) and Richard Rathbone; the Revd. Benjamin Carpenter's small but scholarly school in Nottingham (he educated a future Dean of St. Paul's); and the Revd. Catlow's at Mansfield, well-equipped with a library, scientific apparatus, twelve acres of ground and a swimming bath.<sup>4</sup> J.J. Tayler, William Gaskell and James Martineau all took private pupils, chiefly of a post-school age, in Manchester and Liverpool respectively.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement... 106; Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., 178; Wardle D., op.cit., 155; D.N.B., vol.35, 424-5.

<sup>2</sup> Unitarian Chronicle, (1833), 192; Beard James, op.cit., 1840.

<sup>3</sup> Morley H., op.cit., 121; McLachlan H., Records of a Family... 98,111; Manton J., Mary Carpenter and the Children of the Streets, (1976), 25-7; Hey C., op.cit., 21-2.

<sup>4</sup> MSS Liverpool University, William Rathbone V, V.1.1 (23.3.1803); Wardle D., op.cit., 151,158.

<sup>5</sup> Martineau J., op.cit., vol.I,384; Brill B., op.cit., 78-9; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 71.

Unitarian schools continued not to be designated "Unitarian" but were open to all. Some, indeed, like Lant Carpenter's, Hazelwood and Bruce Castle and the Revd. H.R. Bowles<sup>1</sup> school in Yarmouth, took many Anglicans. When William Turner re-started his school in Newcastle in 1813, nine of the first eleven boys were Unitarians but only 30 per cent were from 1813 to 1825.<sup>2</sup> This is important when assessing the contribution made by such schools.

Of the many Unitarian schools examined for this thesis, some continued from the eighteenth century - those of William Shepherd, William Field, John Estlin<sup>3</sup> and John Currie, for example. Some schools are detailed in McLachlan's The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England<sup>4</sup> but information is often scarce, if generally complimentary. Charles Berry's school, 1807 to 1846, for example, is called "the chief school of radical Leicester" by Simon although little more is known than that he educated many of the leading men of Leicester and drew scholars from Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire. At least one-sixth of the fifty-three ex-pupils at his jubilee dinner at the Great Meeting in 1846 were solicitors or barristers and one-quarter in commerce or industry; two had been mayors of Leicester. Berry was a known classical scholar, an excellent mathematician and was personally keen on science, so presumably these were all taught.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.R., (1829) N.S.3, 586-8.

<sup>2</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 115-21.

<sup>3</sup> D.N.B., vol.18, 12-3.

<sup>4</sup> McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement....103-39.

<sup>5</sup> Simon B., Education in Leicestershire...114-5; J.C., In Loving Remembrance of the late Rev. Charles Berry, (Leicester, Burdett and Gibbons, 1877), 1-7; Inquirer (19.5.1877), 323-5; Thomas A.H. op.cit., 59; I am indebted to David Wykes, (Leicester University) for some of this information.

Classics, science, modern languages, mathematics and English were the most frequently offered subjects, as can be illustrated from advertisements. For example, the Revd. Edward Higginson of Hull offered all these, together with history, geography, use of globes and masters for German, drawing dancing or music. J.R. Wreford at Bristol, 1838 to 1861, offered classics, mathematics and "other branches of a Liberal and Useful Education" (he also enthusiastically encouraged music, poetry and fine walks). His sisters at Plymouth offered French and all branches of an English education along with Latin, German, Italian, music, singing, dancing and drawing as extras. The Misses Carpenter at Bristol offered a similar curriculum and paid considerable attention to scientific knowledge (Mary Carpenter supplemented her knowledge from notes taken at the British Institution lectures and from Lyell's Geology).<sup>1</sup>

A sense of vitality is reflected in the reports of many Unitarian schools. For example, at Horsham the Revd. Thomas Saddler used his electrical machine to electrify the boys. (They in turn electrified his favourite cat who, in understandable protest, burst through the schoolroom window). When Saddler's usher, Robert Ashdowne, took over as minister and schoolteacher this scientific interest was maintained along with a vibrant absorption in the social, political and intellectual questions of the day, as reflected in the school magazine, The Albion Terrace Academy Gazette. One pupil sealed a letter in 1845 with an inscription praising the arrival of cheap postage but asking also for cheap bread and free trade.<sup>2</sup> At the Goodacres' school, Standard Hill, Nottingham, pharmacy and astronomy were taught and as well as scientific apparatus there was an observatory.<sup>3</sup> The interests of pupils in The Hazelwood Magazine ranged

<sup>1</sup> Christian Reformer, (1834), vol.I, Jan.5, Aug.7; (1841), vol.VIII, opposite Contents pages for April, May, June,7; Inquirer, (30.7.1881), 515; Carpenter J.E., Mary Carpenter, (1879), 17-9.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O., Presbyterian Chapels, Short Articles 2, 40-5,57-62, Inquirer 1892 Records of Horsham Church by E. Kensett.

<sup>3</sup> Wardle D., op.cit., 154.

from their own experiments to test the comparative strength of oak and deal, copper etchings and a survey and map of a small estate through many school events (principally school trials and the boys own collective critical reports of any pupil leaving) to how best to administer charity.<sup>1</sup> At Lant Carpenter's school debates were held in parliamentary form on such questions as slavery, liberty and hanging: Samuel Greg carried the motion that hanging should be abolished even for murder at a time when it was still the punishment for about 200 offences.<sup>2</sup>

Many of these schools seem to have been very highly thought of, at least by Unitarians, for example Catharine Turner's (nee Rankin), The "singularly able and accomplished" Mrs Turner stressed accuracy, clarity and steady mental application when these were unusual in girls' schools. She was helped by John Taylor of High Pavement School and by visiting masters such as Herbert Spencer's father who taught natural philosophy. Her first two pupils were sisters of Mark and Robert Philips and many of her pupils were from well-known Unitarian families. Her school was picked out by David Wardle as being the exception to the general run of useless, unintellectual girls' schools in nineteenth century Nottingham.<sup>3</sup> Further examples include the school run by Mrs Carpenter and her daughters where Mary Carpenter especially seems to have been a brilliant teacher,<sup>4</sup> and Rachel Martineau's school in Liverpool, highly praised by both Sarah Dendy (nee Beard) and Susannah Winkworth for its thorough intellectual education and wise care of health. James Herman, leader of the Liverpool concerts, taught music at the latter school; James Martineau taught Latin, mathematics, history, botany and the New Testament to the intellectual delight of pupils like Julia Wedgwood. Some of Martineau's children attended

<sup>1</sup> Hazlewood Magazine, op.cit., passim.

<sup>2</sup> Greg S., op.cit., 9 (9.11.1821), 12 (1.1.1822).

<sup>3</sup> Record of Unitarian Worthies.... 384, Wardle D., op.cit., 162; Inquirer (5.5.1894), 279; (12.5.1894), 297.

<sup>4</sup> Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 17-9; Manton J., op.cit., 38-9; Cobbe F., op.cit., 699-703.

the school, as did Meta Gaskell whose mother had had an excellent education at the school of the gifted and well-educated Byerley sisters in Warwickshire. The Byerleys were Anglicans but, as neices of Josiah Wedgwood and with many Unitarian connections, they provided an education both "polished" and intellectually thorough to many Unitarian girls, including Bessie Parkes, a great-granddaughter of Priestley.<sup>1</sup> This school, like many used by Unitarians, drew from a wider clientele than the locality: Robert and William Goodacre at Standard Hill, Nottingham, for example, drew from Manchester and London and even France, as well as Nottingham. David Wardle estimates that eleven of Nottingham's hosiers of the 1840s were educated there between 1797 and 1825 as well as many others outside those dates.<sup>2</sup>

Some of these Unitarian schools were, indeed, as may be inferred already by the repeated references to them in this chapter, outstanding for their day with a progressive curriculum and enlightened attitudes. Lant Carpenter's school in Bristol, 1817 to 1828, for example, was a small community (about fifteen pupils a year), an extension of his orderly, high-minded household, held together by the superbly efficient management of Mrs Carpenter and the singular moral control of Dr. Carpenter himself.<sup>3</sup> John Relly Beard's school, 1833 to 1849, at Stony Knolls, Salford, was purpose-built with a large playground, gym apparatus and garden plots for the boys. Beard, a well-known radical in Manchester, took in many Jewish as well as Unitarian boys. Like the Hills, Beard well rewarded voluntary work, especially practical work, with marks.<sup>4</sup>

Testimony was given to the excellence of their schools by former pupils, for example W.H. Herford put J.R. Beard on a par with such educational reformers

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter J.E., James Martineau...158,271-2; ed. Shaen M., op.cit., 58; McLachlan H., Records of a Family...117; Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 214,259-60; Hicks P.D., op.cit.,passim; Dixon R.A.M., op.cit., 293.

<sup>2</sup> Wardle D., op.cit., 159-61.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 342-5.

<sup>4</sup> Beard James, op.cit., 1833,1835.

as Dr. Butler and Dr. Arnold and felt that Beard had been the first to open his mind, although he had previously attended both Shrewsbury and Manchester Grammar.<sup>1</sup> Martineau's praise of Dr. Carpenter<sup>2</sup> was echoed by Samuel Greg who said that under him he had had "every advantage for improvement ---every means of knowledge--- opened to me---."<sup>3</sup>

Such testators in themselves bore out their schools' teaching. Unitarian schools did not educate a large proportion of the English population but they contributed much by their example and by the type of people they sent forth, albeit that home background and further education also played an important part. W.H. Herford, for example, whose accomplished artistic mother ran a school,<sup>4</sup> attended Manchester College also. Herford became tutor to Lady Byron's grandson whom he took to Hofwyl, and in 1850 he established Castle Howell at Lancaster on Pestalozzian principles, a school with an excellent academic record. Herford pioneered Froebelian education in England and later established a successful co-educational school, Ladybarn, in Manchester, where J.R. Beard's granddaughter, Mary Shipman Beard, and Herford's daughter, Caroline, were successive headmistresses.<sup>5</sup>

Other pupils of Beards included Thomas Worthington, Gothic architect, John Ashton Nicholls, cotton spinner, philanthropist and educationalist, and Beard's own children.<sup>6</sup> His daughter Sarah helped him in his work and herself partially

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 1835.

<sup>2</sup> See above P.49 n.3.

<sup>3</sup> Greg S., op.cit., 32 (8.4.1822).

<sup>4</sup> D.N.B., 2nd Supplement Vol.II, 255.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., McLachlan H., The Unitarian Home Missionary College, (1915), 49;  
McLachlan H., Records of a Family...98.

<sup>6</sup> Smith L., op.cit., 85.

educated her own large family, including her daughter Sarah Dendy, an exceptional linguist, who taught at the Manchester High School, earning an honorary M.A. from Manchester, as did another daughter Mary who, amongst many educational activities, became a member of the Manchester School Board and pioneered special education for defective children. Charles Beard, J.R. Beard's eldest son, went to Manchester College, gained a London degree, was a feminist, popular preacher and a leading figure in the foundation of University College, Liverpool. He was awarded an LL.D. by St. Andrews.<sup>1</sup>

Lant Carpenter had many remarkable Unitarian pupils, James Martineau being surely the most successful in Unitarian terms: a lifelong educationalist, Principal of Manchester College, a radical and renowned philosopher, and the deeply devout and sensitive minister who turned Unitarianism away from its cold, dry image to a warmer, more spiritual rationalism.<sup>2</sup> Samuel Greg, sensitive and enthusiastic, retained a Christian ardour throughout life, although his attempt to found a Utopian industrial community at Bollington proved abortive.<sup>3</sup> James Heywood, F.R.S., university reformer and benefactor, a founder of the Manchester Athenaeum, prominent in the Royal Historical Society and Statistical Society, Liberal M.P., fighter against religious disabilities and for popular education, was a school-fellow of Dr. Martineau's who admired his lifelong witness to liberal truth. Heywood was also keenly interested in Biblical criticism and liberal theology and published pioneer work in this field.<sup>4</sup> Robert Needham Philips, M.P., merchant and manufacturer, student and long-time supporter of Manchester College, was Heywood's fellow student at Carpenters before going on to Rugby. He claimed

<sup>1</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 38-51, 104-27, 135-84; D.N.B. vol.22 Supplement, 155.

<sup>2</sup> Carpenter J.E., op.cit., passim; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., passim.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O. Greg S., op.cit., passim; especially 48-9 (11.12.1822); Rose M., The Gregs of Styal, (National Trust, 1978), 13, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Inquirer, (23.10.1897), 689-90.



at a Speaker's dinner that he "found more Members of Parliament who had been at Dr. Carpenter's small school than had been at Rugby."<sup>1</sup>

Other pupils included John Cam Hobhouse, the radical politician and intimate friend of Byron, Sir John Potter, thrice mayor of Manchester, Thomas Potter, M.P., and liberal Anglicans such as the Earl of Suffolk and his two brothers.<sup>2</sup> Further pupils included Carpenter's own children, three of whom achieved sufficient fame to be in the D.N.B.: William, the eminent physiologist, "one of the last examples of an almost universal naturalist", the excellent and cultured registrar of London University, 1856 to 1879; Philip, the eccentric conchologist; and Mary, Carpenter's devoted disciple, a renowned and influential social reformer in both England and India. (The religious reformer Rammohun Roy had died whilst visiting Lant Carpenter in 1833).<sup>3</sup>

Contrary to Jo Manton's assertion, Benjamin Heywood, founder of the Manchester Mechanics Institute and elder brother of James, did not attend Carpenter's school but that of the highly educated, gentle John Corrie in Birmingham, where Carpenter had taught from 1801 to 1802. Heywood too became an M.P. and President of Manchester College (1840-42, James was President 1854-8). Benjamin Heywood was knighted in 1838, joined the Church of England about 1841 and thence sent two sons to Eton.<sup>4</sup>

Unitarian schools, indeed, produced many future leaders of the middle-class, both men and women. The ex-pupils of Hazelwood and Bruce Castle, for example,

<sup>1</sup> College Roll M.C.O., 1831, 1853, 1854; McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement...132.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 79; Fraser D., Urban Politics in Victorian England, (Macmillan Paperbacks 1979), 204; Wade R., The Rise of Nonconformity in Manchester, (1880), 60-1.

<sup>3</sup> D.N.B., vol.9, 166-8, 159-61; Manton J., op.cit., 20-3, 47 and passim.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 26; Heywood T., A Memoir of Sir Benjamin Heywood, (private circulation), 8-9, 63, 72, 103, 121-2 and passim; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 87.

included an impressive array of inventors, scientists, liberal politicians and prominent citizens, including Unitarians such as Follet Osler, F.R.S., the first man to produce sheets of glass up to 20 feet and a donator of £10,000 to the new Birmingham University, and William Bowman, known as the "father of general anatomy" and knighted for his services to medicine. Many ex-pupils were involved in educational activities, for example W.L. Sargant and J.D. Goodman later became leading members with Unitarians such as Joseph Chamberlain and George Dawson in the Birmingham Educational Association which did so much to bring about the 1870 Education Act. Of those former pupils prominent in local politics, some were among the twenty-three Unitarian mayors of Birmingham between 1841 and 1893.<sup>1</sup> Professor Armytage has termed the Hills' system as an "educational refraction of Priestley's ideas" and has marked the chain leading from M.D. Hill through his grandson, a science master at Eton who inspired Julian Huxley, the first secretary of UNESCO and proponent of a philosophy of "world scientific humanism."<sup>2</sup>

Although these schools were very individualistic, it is not difficult to see why they produced so many men and women deeply imbued with a liberal, rational outlook, and, so often, eminent in their chosen field. Unitarianism itself was the vital link. Also many of the male teachers had attended the same Dissenting academies, generally the most progressive, even if orthodox ones. For example, William Belsham (Hackney)<sup>3</sup>, Eliezer Cogan (Walthamstow), Lant Carpenter, LL.D., Glasgow (Bristol) and William Field (Leamington) had all attended Daventry; <sup>or Northampton</sup> Charles Berry (Leicester) and John Morrell, LL.D. (Brighton),

<sup>1</sup> Hey C., op.cit., 265-76; Bushrod E., The History of Unitarianism in Birmingham from the middle of the 18th century to 1893, (Birmingham M.A.1954), 225.

<sup>2</sup> Armytage W.H.G., "The Lunar Society and its Contributions to Education," University of Birmingham Historical Journal, (1967-8), Vol.V, 67-70.

<sup>3</sup> Places where these teachers established their schools are indicated in brackets. The information has been gleaned from the various books by McLachlan, D.N.B. and obituary notices in the Inquirer, Christian Life and Christian Reformer, and Roll of Students, M.C.O. all references used elsewhere in this chapter.

Homerton; Benjamin Carpenter (Nottingham) and John Malleison, B.A. Glasgow (Brighton), Wymondly. J.P. Estlin hon.LL.D., Glasgow and William Turner M.A., Glasgow (Newcastle), were old enough to have been to Warrington but in the 19th century many Unitarian schoolteachers came from Hackney or Manchester College: William Shepherd hon.LL.D., Edinburgh, (Liverpool) and John Corrie F.R.S. (Birmingham) had left Daventry for Hackney in 1788; Samuel Bache (Birmingham), J.R. Wreford F.S.A., D.D., Erlangen (Birmingham), John Gooch Robberds (Manchester Edward Higginson Junior (Hull), John Relly Beard hon.D.D., Giessen (Salford), W.H. Herford B.A., London, (Manchester), Robert Wallace (Chesterfield), Charles Wallace M.A., Glasgow (Hale Lowe), T.E. Poynting (Monton) were alumni of Manchester College; Hugh Hutton M.A. (Birmingham) and Henry Green (Salford and Knutsford) were further students of Glasgow.

All these men held ministerial appointments as well, although some eventually concentrated on schoolteaching, for example J.R. Wreford.<sup>1</sup> Links with Manchester College were further maintained by some teachers sending pupils on there, for example Morell, Malleison, Corrie, William Johns, Berry, James Tayler and William Evans.<sup>2</sup> Teachers like Robert Goodacre learned from other teachers: Lant Carpenter, for example, was assistant teacher to Corrie and, in turn, had James Martineau and Samuel Bache as assistants.<sup>3</sup> Pupils often moved round from one school to another, too, for example (Sir) Henry Holland, the famous physician to Queen Victoria and President of the Royal Institution, moved from William Turner's school (1799-1803) to J.P. Estlin's (1803-4) before attending Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities. J.R. Wreford attended Dr. Estlin's, the

<sup>1</sup> Bushrod E., op.cit., 246.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O., Wellbeloved Letters, C.W. to G.W.W., 23.5.1830; J.K.III, J.K. to G.W.W., 17.10.1817; McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement...124,130; McLachlan H. Essays and Addresses, (1950), 65-7; M.R., (1827), N.S.1,759; Roll of Students, M.C.O., information from David Wykes.

<sup>3</sup> Wardle D., op.cit., 157-8,161; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 69,86-91,318-9, Bushrod E., op.cit., 246.

school of the Revd. John Evans and the academy of Dr. Morell.<sup>1</sup>

There were further links between Unitarian teachers : Wreford himself was son-in-law of Charles Wellbeloved and nephew of Dr. John Morell, the success of whose school at Hove, Brighton was maintained by John Malleeson from 1828. (Professor Thomas Solly, Henry Solly, C.P. Scott of the Manchester Guardian and Isambard Kingdom Brunel were pupils, the latter nearly frustrating a brilliant career by swallowing a half-sovereign whilst there).<sup>2</sup> Two of Malleeson's pupils were Peter Taylor M.P. and William Shaen. The first became a partner in Courtauld and Company (his mother's family), a radical politician and, with his wife, Clementia, keen supporter of the Women's Movement. His sister Catherine married J.P. Malleeson's son William whose brother Frank married Elizabeth Whitehead. The two Malleeson brothers were "pillars of strength" to Josephine Butler in her fight against the Contagious Diseases Act, as was William Shaen, the able President of her society and tireless worker for women's rights and higher education. A brilliant student at London and Edinburgh and a supremely able lawyer, Shaen supported the underprivileged, from the Workingmen's College in London to the Aborigines in Australia and Zulus in Africa. "The weaker everywhere found in him a friend" said the Pall Mall Gazette.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D.N.B., vol.27,145; Inquirer, (30.7.1881),514; Wreford J.R., Statistics on Dissenting Colleges (MSS M.C.O.) pages at end on Brighton private Academy and Hackney Academy,1812-18.

<sup>2</sup> Rowland J., The Story of Brighton Unitarian Church, (1972),6-7; Inquirer, (3.4.1869),222; Solly H., op.cit., vol.I,91; Rolt L.T.C., Isambard Kingdom Brunel, (Penguin, 1957),36,137-8. Rolt says that this happened in 1843 when Brunel was 31.

<sup>3</sup> D.N.B., vol.55,455-6; Strachey R., The Cause, (1928), 106,118; Malleeson E., op.cit., passim; Butler J., Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade, (1896), 49-50,121,196; Inquirer, (12.3.1887), 171-3; Christian Life, (5.3.1887),118; (12.3.1887),126-30.

William Shaen married Emily Winkworth, a former student of William Gaskell's. Gaskell helped Henry Morley establish his school and was co-pastor at Cross Street with John Gooch Robberds, himself a schoolmaster and married to Mary Turner, daughter of William Turner at whose home Elizabeth Gaskell had continued her education. There are so many familial links of this sort, as often through the women as the men - for example Rachel and James Martineau were schoolteachers as were James's relatives by marriage, Edward Higginson and Samuel Bache, whilst their sister, Harriet, though not a schoolmistress, never stopped teaching in her voluminous writings. Harriet's companion to America, Louisa Jeffrey, was niece of Ruth Jeffrey, teacher in Horsham, and wife of J.R. McKee, a cousin of Peter Taylor, which brings us full circle.<sup>1</sup>

Often daughters of teachers, for example those of Henry Green, William Johns and William Field, established schools themselves. The four Miss Lawrences and their mother established a very reputable if Spartan, school in Birmingham and thence Gateacre, 1807-39, after Mr. Lawrence had failed in business, a solution repeated by their great-nieces the brilliant Lawrence sisters who established Roedean. The first school was much used by leading Unitarian families.<sup>2</sup> Another link stretching into the future came through Samuel Sharpe, ex-pupil of Eliezer Cogan, whose daughter Matilda, together with Revd. Robert Spears, was the principal founders of Channing School, Highgate, a school for girls which celebrated its centenary in 1985.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Solly H.S., op.cit., 115; Brill B., op.cit., 22-3, 26-9, 33-4, 41; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 31; Inquirer, (1.9.1883), 555, (17.9.1887), 607.

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan H., The Unitarian Movement..., 135; Records of a Family... 109-11; Christian Life, (3.12.1910), 608-9; Rodgers B., Georgian Chronicle, (1958), 262-3; M.R., (1829), 502; Zouche D.E. de, Roedean School, 1855-1955, (printed for private circulation, 1955), 15-7.

<sup>3</sup> Saunders E.M., A Progress. Channing School, 1885-1985, (1984), 7-8.

Not many Unitarian schools lasted half so long and, indeed, Channing School now has few Unitarians among its pupils. Although, considering the smallness of the Unitarian numbers, there were many schools of high quality run by Unitarians, they were often ephemeral, dependent on the teaching lives of their founders, for example Henry Morley's brave experiment lasted two years only. Furthermore, they were not in every locality and even places such as Manchester, Nottingham and Birmingham which were well-served by such schools were not accessible to everybody, especially before the railways were built. Some teachers, like James Martineau after 1845 when salaries were reduced at Manchester College, had just a few private pupils. Many schools were very expensive: Lant Carpenter, for example, charged 100 guineas a year for his boarders; Beard's fees were 50-60 guineas; Mrs Carpenter and her daughters, J.R. Wreford, Edward Higginson Junior and the Misses Wreford all charged between 40 to 70 guineas<sup>1</sup>. In very practical terms, therefore, much of the Unitarian education described above, progressive and enlightened as it may have been, was reserved largely for the more affluent even of their own movement.

Some schools were cheaper, for example Standard Hill, Nottingham<sup>2</sup>, but there were not enough of them. Considering that even the wealthy often had numerous sons and daughters to educate there was a real need for good but cheap education for the middle-classes. Older Unitarians especially, still feared a state system of education: William Shepherd, for example, argued:

A man may as well attempt to penetrate the mazes of an entangled wood in fetters, as to investigate the vast variety of intellectual subjects, with a mind tramelled by the imperative decisions of human institutions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Solly H.S., op.cit., 123,187; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 18,121-2; Beard James, op.cit., 1840; Unitarian Chronicle, (1833),192; Christian Reformer, (1834), Jan.5,Aug.7; (1841),Feb.7, April 7.

<sup>2</sup> Wardle D., op.cit., 160.

<sup>3</sup> Shepherd W., op.cit., 6.

Frederick Hill was one of the first English educationalists to advocate a national system of education, believing that this would overcome the inability of private schoolteachers to make long-term plans or experiments. Hill noted that a half-way step to national education had been taken by the middle-classes in the establishment of proprietary schools, run by joint-stock companies and governed through committees which determined the curriculum, appointed the teachers and raised greater resources.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians and their radical friends, the Utilitarians, were pioneers of such schools in England. As early as 1825, for example, a letter in the Monthly Repository urged such schools, and the progressive school at Chorlton on Medlock in the 1830s appears to have been a co-operative venture of Manchester Unitarians.<sup>2</sup> Probably the first proprietary school in England was, not as Brian Simon says the Liverpool Institute school of 1825,<sup>3</sup> but that established by the Liverpool Royal Institution in 1819 which lasted until 1892. As a classical school, educating up to eighteen, it only partially filled the gap in Liverpool middle-class education (the old Free School had closed in 1803), and for this reason the Mechanics Institute directors decided, in 1835, to establish a school providing an education, liberal, modern, scientific and useful for those destined for "active and commercial life". The founders were largely the same group of Whigs, including many Unitarians, who had founded the Royal Institution but the real initiative came from the drive and munificence of the Unitarians, James Mullineux and Richard Vaughan Yates. A library, museum, model room and playground, were all envisaged. This school became essentially one for the sons of mechanics, so in 1838 a high school for

<sup>1</sup> Hill F., *op.cit.*, 202-6. These were thus anticipated by the later Dissenting Academies.

<sup>2</sup> Ramsden G.M., *op.cit.*, 59.

<sup>3</sup> Simon B., The Two Nations...115; The school actually opened in 1835 not 1825.

400 boys aged eight to fifteen, with higher fees than the lower school for 200, was opened. There were six departments: English, mathematics and commerce, philosophy (that is science), classics, French, writing and drawing. Practical methods were used wherever possible. At eight to ten guineas a year according to age, plus extra languages for another two guineas, the directors hoped the school would offer an educational bargain to the middle-classes of Liverpool. Unfortunately, as so often happened, a liberal, modern scheme of education, eagerly promoted by Unitarians, failed to win the support of the commercial middle-classes. Despite constant re-modelling of the administration, curriculum and organisation, excellent teachers (according to H.E. Roscoe) and enormous efforts to interest the boys, numbers declined to seventy by the end of 1855. It was from the mid 1850s, after the end of the period of this thesis, that the High School began its steady improvement to spectacular success.

A girls' school was established at five pounds a year in 1844 due to the continual generosity of another Unitarian, George Holt. Callisthenics were pioneered and sciences were offered as part of the basic curriculum, whilst French was an extra. The school opened with 260 girls plus 45 mixed infants in the new infants' school and despite a temporary setback was extremely popular by 1856 and outstandingly successful in the 1870s. It also trained ladies as teachers, having twelve trainees in 1846.<sup>1</sup>

The chief impulse for proprietary schools seems to have come from the founding of London University and the model proprietary school was University College School, established in 1829 by Campbell, Brougham, Mill and others. Hazelwood, in which Utilitarians were so interested, appears to have been a major influence. From 1831 Thomas Hewitt Key, a firm supporter of Hazelwood, was first joint, then sole headmaster of the school. Under him it developed its special characteristics of religious tolerance, a broad curriculum, good

<sup>1</sup>

Kelly T., Adult Education in Liverpool, (Department of Extra Mural Studies of University of Liverpool, 1960), 15-6, 22, 24; Tiffen H.J., op.cit., 26-31, 63-7, 73-87, 103-7; Roscoe H.E., op.cit., 14-9.



teacher-pupil relationships and no corporal punishment.<sup>1</sup> Unitarians like W.S. Jevons also attended the school.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians were involved in establishing a number of similar institutions, for example the Proprietary School at Leicester whose shareholders have been termed by Maureen Greenwood as "a roll-call of Leicester Radicals", many of them Unitarians.<sup>3</sup> J.F. Hollings, second master from 1837 until 1846, then headmaster, set the tone. Deeply interested in science, literature and history, Hollings was a gifted teacher, a humane and loveable man, an eloquent advocate of popular rights and educational and social movements. Again the school had no corporal punishment or religious instruction and stimulated independent thought through a range of subjects. However, like the Liverpool High School the standard of education among entrants was low and, after an initial burst of enthusiasm, the school failed to attract sufficient numbers to keep it viable. Over-optimism had set the salaries and outlay of the school too high for its income. Furthermore, through religious disputes the neo-classical Proprietary School had a rival: the Gothic Church of England Collegiate School which opened in 1836. Although this was forced by parental demand to introduce both a modern course and a commercial school, it chiefly gloried in its classical side to the delight of the Tory and Anglican Leicester Journal which deplored the "presumptuous and shallow" thinking that substituted scientific and modern subjects for classics and mathematics and taught by lecture. The Proprietary School, however, was proud of its innovations although in fact it was slower to introduce a commercial course.<sup>4</sup> The Directors' Reports basked in the

<sup>1</sup> Simon B., op.cit., 116; Thornton J.S. "Sir Rowland Hill as Schoolmaster", The Schoolmaster, (15.4.1922), (Birmingham Reference Library, 308381); Hey C., op.cit., 181, 315-317.

<sup>2</sup> D.N.B., vol. 10, 811.

<sup>3</sup> Greenwood M., op.cit., 59-60.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 61; Inquirer (20.9.1862), 676; (25.10.1862) 757-8; Patterson A.T., Radical Leicester, (1975), 240-4; Peet D., op.cit., passim.

progress of the pupils whom, they believed, would leave

disposed and accustomed to think vigorously and independently,  
to investigate with care, to express themselves with propriety  
and force, to seek recreation from the business of life, not in  
frivolous pursuits, but in intellectual communion with the hidden  
wonders of the natural world.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless once the lack of profit was obvious, the interest of share-  
holders quickly flagged and, in 1847, the Town Corporation, comprised of the  
very Radicals who were directors and proprietors, bought the school as the  
town museum. In 1849 the Leicester Chronicle blamed the failure of such  
schools on the fact that they were

eaten up by expenses incurred at the outset as extravagantly  
as if the managers had had the wealth of California at their  
disposal.<sup>2</sup>

The Collegiate School lasted until 1866 but it, too, had difficulties of  
finance and numbers.<sup>3</sup> Private schools in Leicester, however, especially  
commercial ones, flourished.

Other proprietary schools founded by Dissenters lasted longer, though not  
always fulfilling the aims of their founders. Edgebaston Proprietary School  
in Birmingham, for example, was founded with strong Unitarian support in 1838,  
largely to fill the gap caused by closing Hazelwood. William Sargant, a  
former pupil of Hazelwood, was a very active governor from the 1840s but he was  
unsuccessful in his attempt to adapt the school to a modern education.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>2</sup> Greenwood M., op.cit., 278,288-9; Leicester P.R.O.5D61, John and William Biggs' Scrapbooks, Vol. I.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Simon B., Education in Leicestershire...122-4,128-9.

<sup>4</sup> Hey C., op.cit., 267-8.

Proprietary schools did flourish in the 19th century but as co-operative ventures they had to appeal to a fairly wide section of the community and this often meant allowing Anglican control and a traditional curriculum, as the Christian Reformer deplored in 1841.<sup>1</sup>

Anglicans were involved in many proprietary schools; for example, until the late 1840s the school was the most successful part of King's College, rising from 150 pupils in 1832 to 461 in 1835. It was divided into classical and modern sections in 1850.<sup>2</sup> The National Society's attempt to establish middle-class schools was short-lived but individual Anglicans such as Canon Woodard and J.L. Brereton had greater success in the 1840s. These developments, however, were only just taking off by 1853.<sup>3</sup>

The growth of proprietary schools and popular private schools undoubtedly played a part in bringing some reform and extension of the "public" system of education, although it was not until the 1860s that the investigations of first the Clarendon Commissioners and then the Schools Enquiry Commissioners, led to this. Even then, the boys schools especially still maintained classical literature as the staple of English education.<sup>4</sup> Reform of the public school ethos had begun earlier, however, especially through the work of Arnold of Rugby whom the Victorian middle-class eventually recognised as expressing their aspirations.<sup>5</sup> Arnold's aim was to make Rugby "a place of Christian education" and "to form Christian men." He shared some of the aims and outlook

<sup>1</sup> Christian Reformer, (1841), 227-8.

<sup>2</sup> Hearnshaw F.J.C., The Centenary History of King's College, 1828-1928, (1929), 82, 101, 191-2.

<sup>3</sup> Lawson J. and Silver H., op.cit., 302; Jones D., The Making of the English Educational System, 1851-81, (1977), 33-5.

<sup>4</sup> Maclure J.S., Educational Documents, England and Wales, 1816-1968, (Methuen Education Paperbacks, 1969), 83-97.

<sup>5</sup> Percival A., "Dr. Arnold: man and myth", Times Educational Supplement, (29.12.1972) 18-19.

of Unitarians: he had a strong belief in the union of moral and intellectual excellence; he wished to make the boys self-reliant; he was the first in the public schools to show the historical, political and philosophical value of the classics and he incorporated the study of modern history (and with great difficulty) modern languages and mathematics into the school curriculum.<sup>1</sup> Colin Hey, following the suggestion of Sir Michael Saddler, has claimed that Arnold's educational doctrine was, in fact, based on that of Hazelwood, especially the similar emphasis of the development of moral and spiritual power "through the wise organisation of corporate life in a skilfully ordered community". As P.W.J. Bartrip notes, however, this goes too far. Arnold was a member of the S.D.U.K., probably knew the Hill brothers and had read their famous "Plans", but there is no record of their influence on him whilst there were certainly many differences in their systems, for example, in no sense can the Rugby hierarchical system be compared to Hazelwood's schoolboy republic.<sup>2</sup> Arnold, too, was concerned with the education of gentlemen but although he opposed many aristocratic and feudal notions he was not upholding the same gentlemanly culture as Unitarians. He increasingly defended the classical curriculum, had no science, deplored attacks on corporal punishment as "Jacobinism", expelled any boys he deemed a bad moral influence and found Unitarian tenets irreconcilable with essential Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

Arnold, nevertheless, was too much of a liberal to be a popular man in Establishment circles in the 1830s, but the gradual success of Rugby coupled with the growth of new public schools, increasingly viable because of the railways, meant that the image of public school education was being transformed

<sup>1</sup> Stanley A.P., Life of Thomas Arnold, D.D., (1904), 75,95,99-100,115,120.

<sup>2</sup> Hey C., op.cit., 12-4,81n,95,149; Bartrip P.W.J., op.cit.56-7.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley A.P., op.cit., 73,108-11,118-9,102,225-6. See also Martineau J., op.cit., vol.I,63-8; Hey C., op.cit., 181,102 n.1.

by 1853. In the following decades these schools subtly and efficiently excluded sons of tradesmen and the like to concentrate on the education of "gentlemen" - a concept which was to change from Arnold's Christian manliness to muscular Christianity.<sup>1</sup> The reformed endowed schools followed suit. In this way all of these had great appeal, especially to those who had risen to wealth through industry and commerce and now wanted the social and cultural status commensurate with their riches. To many this meant following the revitalised but traditional classical education, the civilising culture which, according to Matthew Arnold, would remove the taint of Philistinism. The professional middle-classes who wanted their sons to take advantage of the new opportunities at Oxford and Cambridge were similarly seduced.<sup>2</sup> The bitter attacks, in which Unitarians played a vital part, on the corruptions and exclusiveness of the old universities, public and grammar schools, helped lead to changes which gave new life to these institutions but thence drew many of the middle-classes, including Unitarians, in, and, thus, away from the radical educational ideals which Unitarians had professed so ardently. The endowed institutions, howsoever inept or corrupt they had been, displayed their capacity to prevail over private institutions, however brilliant or worthy.

Unitarians were partly handicapped by their own unpopularity, but also the educational ideal they promulgated was simply not universally accepted by the middle-classes. Buffeted between those who wanted a traditional education, albeit perhaps under reformed conditions, and those who demanded no more than a basic, commercial education, the radical, liberal educational ideal of the Unitarians found it hard to take hold beyond a minority of like-minded liberals. Reforms in the curriculum which did begin to take place in the public schools, so influential in the English school system, partly occurred because of changes

<sup>1</sup> Stanley A.P., op.cit., 375; Lawson J. and Silver H., op.cit., 300-1; Vance N., "The Ideal of Manliness", Times Educational Supplement, (28.9.1973), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ball F., "The Taunton Commission", Journal of Educational Administration and History, (July 1979), Vol.XI, No.2, 8-11; Arnold M., Culture and Anarchy, (Macmillan 1938), *passim*.

within the system, for example the slow introduction of mathematics at Eton stemmed from its advocacy at Cambridge. In the mid 1850s reforms in the civil service and army entrance examinations helped lead to a broader curriculum but with no fundamental shift of conception or emphasis.<sup>1</sup>

However, even if the Unitarians failed to impose their interpretation of a liberal education on nineteenth century England, the last section has indicated that their contribution was not negligible. For example, although Charles Darwin was rebuked by Dr. Butler at Shrewsbury for wasting his time on useless subjects such as chemistry, his scientific interests were stimulated by his Unitarian connections and the work of the Unitarian geologist Charles Lyell.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Unitarians contributed to middle-class education by their involvement in informal agencies of further education, scientific education and the education and position of women.

Unitarians were anxious to expand the education of those who had left school early and keep them from "temptation", to help all men, especially those in relevant industries, keep up with the latest scientific advances and to civilise the middle-classes in a new scientific and literary culture. Thus they established their own periodicals such as the Monthly Repository (on which F.E. Mineka and Margaret Parnaby have written excellent analyses) and wrote in other liberal periodicals such as the Westminster Review and Household Words.<sup>3</sup> Also despite religious difficulties, they continued to establish libraries as Lant Carpenter did in

1. Roscoe H.E., op.cit., 64. Meadows A.J. and Brock W.H., "Topics Fit for Gentlemen: The Problem of Science in the Public School Curriculum", ed.Simon B. Bradley I., The Victorian Public School, (1975), 95-100.
2. Ibid., 95, Lansbury C., op.cit., 194-5; D.N.B., Vol.32, 322.
3. E.g., M.R., (1815), X,213; Mineka F.E., op.cit.; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., W.J. Fox and Thomas Southwood Smith, for example, both wrote in the Westminster Review, Mrs Gaskell and Harriet Martineau in Household Words e.g. Westminster Review (1824) Vol.1, No.1, 43-79; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 66-7,569,571; Gerin W., Elizabeth Gaskell, (1976),101,106; Martineau H., Autobiography.. Vol.II,385-8,418-20.

Exeter in 1808 and 1813. Carpenter had been librarian at the Liverpool Athenaeum founded in 1798 to provide a good choice of books, journals and newspapers for those who could afford the ten guineas to join. Many Unitarians, especially James Currie, helped establish it. William Roscoe's immensely valuable library was partly purchased for it by his friends after his bankruptcy in 1815. Similarly, the Liverpool Lyceum, classical in design with a rotunda library, large news-room, refreshment facilities and providing scientific lectures, was erected in 1802. It numbered Roscoe and Currie among its first presidents.<sup>1</sup> Similar exclusive, male, middle-class libraries were set up elsewhere with Unitarian support, for example the Portico Library in Manchester established in 1806 and much promoted by Samuel Kay, where William Gaskell was chairman from 1849 to 1884. The Manchester Athenaeum was founded by Richard Cobden and the Unitarians William Langton, S.D. Darbishire and James Heywood, the first president.<sup>2</sup> Its purpose was to supply to middle-class youth "the deficiencies of an imperfect education" and give them refined rather than "destructive and debasing amusements."<sup>3</sup>

These libraries were confined to members but many Unitarians would have agreed with William Turner and J.G. Robberds on the need for public libraries.<sup>4</sup> John Potter, Mayor of Manchester, ensured that Manchester was the first large town to take advantage of the Free Libraries Act of 1850. Many other Unitarians supported this and extensions to the Act, as did William Biggs as M.P. for the

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 92, 178-80, 194-6; Eastell J.K., A Study of Middle-class Education in Liverpool between 1780-1820, (Liverpool Diploma of Adult Education, 1980), 25-9, 37-42; Taylor F.H., Liverpool and the Athenaeum, (Athenaeum, 1965), 11, 19, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Brill B., op.cit., 59; Ramsden G.M., op.cit., 58; Inquirer (23.10.1897), 689.

<sup>3</sup> Manchester Guardian, (5.10.1844). See also Hill T.W., Course of Evening Instructions for a Limited Number of Persons, (Birmingham 1804).

<sup>4</sup> Bowery M.M. op.cit., 222-3.

Isle of Wight in 1854.<sup>1</sup>

Many Unitarians congregations had their own libraries<sup>2</sup>, some of them, like that at Horsham, going far beyond theological works to include radical authors like Mary Wollstonecraft, Godwin and Combe. Lectures there were held on contemporary affairs from mesmerism to the Irish troubles.<sup>3</sup> W.J. Fox had a rather less radical Mutual Instruction Library at Finsbury.<sup>4</sup>

Such activity led to Mutual Improvement Societies very relevant to the underprivileged of the middle-classes.<sup>5</sup> People could also attend many independent public lectures<sup>6</sup> but, as Frederic Hill said, it was easier to pool resources.<sup>7</sup> One way to promote "Literature, Science and the Arts" was to establish Royal Institutions. The first, in London, was unique, combining brilliant research and dissemination to crowded audiences of both men and women.<sup>8</sup> The other four Royal Institutions, primarily aimed at the "higher and middling classes", generally provided meeting places for various cultural societies and, at first, extensive (and probably too advanced) lecture programmes.<sup>9</sup> The Royal Manchester Institution

<sup>1</sup> Briggs A., Victorian Cities, (Pelican 1968), 136; J. and W. Biggs Scrapbooks op.cit., Vol.II.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Unitarian Chronicle, (1832), 146-7, 197-9.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., Presbyterian Chapels, Short Articles 2, 59-60; Inquirer, (27.2.1892)

<sup>4</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 303.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., 68-73.

<sup>6</sup> Inkster I., "The Public Lecture as an Instrument of Science Education", Paedagogica Historica, (1980), Vol.XX, No. 1, 86-107.

<sup>7</sup> Hill F., op.cit., 222-4.

<sup>8</sup> Martin T., The Royal Institution, (The Royal Institution of Great Britain, 1961) passim.

<sup>9</sup> Roderick G.W. and Stephens M.D., "Middle-class Adult Education and Training: The Royal Institution in the 19th Century", Vocational Aspect of Education, (1973, April), Vol.XXV, No. 60, 39-47.



was established 1823-4 largely through the enthusiasm and initiative of George Wood, whilst James Heywood became "a moving force" in it. It provided important professional and propagandising scientific facilities for distinguished men such as Lyon Playfair and Edward Schunck and thus achieved high status.<sup>1</sup> The Liverpool Royal Institution, established in 1817 by Dr. Traill and the Unitarian coterie around William Roscoe and James Currie, offered a wide range of public lectures, schools, collections of books, art and natural history, scientific facilities, a newsroom and encouragement of relevant societies. Beginning with £20,000 of shares and professorial chairs, (though these hardly materialized) it was a very ambitious project and one whose aims the Monthly Repository, for one, wished to see emulated.<sup>2</sup>

J.K. Estell has termed the founding of this Royal Institution "the highest achievement of the Roscoe coterie in adult education". Certainly the group accrued prestige by such tangible demonstration of its pioneering zeal, as they did through other of their educational establishments in Liverpool, including the Liverpool Academy of Arts and the Botanic Gardens, all of which provided exclusive and respectable venues to rival the traditional ones from which they were excluded.<sup>3</sup> Yet, despite the wealth and enthusiasm these Radicals could muster, by 1839 the ambitious lecture programme was not viable. Roderick and Stephens suggest that a greater range of scientific and modern subjects catering for the lower middle-classes as well would have assured greater success.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kargon R.H., op.cit., 16-9, 90, 96, 98, 148.

<sup>2</sup> Eastell J.K., op.cit., 42-50; Roderick G.W. and Stephens M.D., op.cit., 39-41; M.R., (1818), Vol.XIII, 194-8.

<sup>3</sup> Eastell J.K., op.cit., 48-51.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 47; Roderick G.W. and Stephens M.D., op.cit., 47.

Unitarians continued to play a large role in the Literary and Philosophical Societies which, often modelled on Manchester, multiplied in the nineteenth century. The Unitarian links between them were illustrated by the cooperation of the Manchester and Birmingham societies for an act of parliament excepting philosophical societies from the local rates law. Arthur Ryland led the Birmingham Society, J.J. Tayler drew up the 1837 petition and G.W. Wood was largely responsible for success in 1843.<sup>1</sup> Although other liberal-minded men were also important in the founding of such societies, Unitarians often played a disproportionate role, for example, at Liverpool, the Roscoe coterie, R.V. Yates, J. Robberds and James Martineau; at Leeds, the Lupton family, George Busk and the Revd. Thomas Hincks F.L.S., in charge of the zoological collection and said to have been "for many years one of the most learned and influential members";<sup>2</sup> at Bath, Joseph Hunter; at Sheffield, Dr. George Calvert Holland; at Birmingham, J. Corrie and T.W. Hill; at Halifax, William Turner Junior; at Leicester, William Gardiner, Charles Berry and particularly J. Hollings, "the heart and centre of (the) town's literary life".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kelly T., A History of Adult Education in Great Britain, (1962), 113; Nicholson F., "The Literary and Philosophical Society 1781-1851", Memoirs and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, Session 1923-4, Vol. lxviii, No.9, 142-3.

<sup>2</sup> Eastell J.K., op.cit., 33; Roderick G.W. and Stephens M.D., Science and Technical Education in 19th Century England, (1972), 137; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit. 76; Clark E. Kitson, Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, (1924), 11-16, 38, 132-5, 159, 162-74; M.R., (1818), Vol. XIII, 463-4.

<sup>3</sup> D.N.B., Vol.28, 296; Vol. 27, 139; Matthews W., op.cit., 22-3; Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., 12, 58, 80-2, 149; Orange A.D., Philosophers and Provincials The Yorkshire Philosophical Society from 1822 to 1844, (Yorkshire Philosophical Society 1973), 24; Lott F.B., The Centenary Book of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, (Leicester, 1935), 2-59, especially 45.

Liberal Anglicans initiated the York and Bristol societies but Charles Wellbeloved, John Kenrick, William Turner Junior and William Hincks were dominant at the first, and Lant Carpenter important at the second.<sup>1</sup> The establishment of museums gained popularity for the societies as did literary readings like Fanny Kemble's from Shakespeare at Leeds, 1851-2, though some feared that this deflected members from "the more important scientific purposes" of the societies. More solidly scientific work could be done in the sections sometimes established, for example at Leicester in 1849.<sup>2</sup>

In the first decades of the nineteenth century Unitarians from Cross Street and Mosley Street dominated the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society both in terms of office and intellectually. For example four of its six presidents, 1790-1847, were Unitarians and amongst other officers the Heywood family provided successive treasurers. J.J. Tayler, secretary, 1821-37, and vice-president 1838-42, was "for long one of the pillars of the Society on its literary side" according to Nicholson.<sup>3</sup> Many Unitarians gave lectures, for example in 1819 1824, 1831, 1842 they gave about a third of the many papers published.<sup>4</sup> In the earlier decades, six Unitarian families provided almost 5 % of the Societies members and occupied 25% of the available offices, although the percentage of Unitarians amongst new members, as high as 30% from 1809 to 1811, declined by 1850.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Orange D., op.cit., 18-24, 31, 41-2, 46, 51-2, 54-6, 62-3; MSS, M.C.O., J.K. III, 9.3.1825; J.K. IV, 22.10.1824; D.N.B., Vol. 31, 15; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 267-70, 354-6.

<sup>2</sup> Lott F.B., op.cit., 31-6, 41; Clarke E.K., op.cit., 48, 49, 52, 62-3.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholson F., op.cit., 109-11, 118. E.g., see Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, 2nd Series, Vol. 2, 1813, iii-vi.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 2nd Series, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Thackray A., op.cit., 695-7, 698-705.

The Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, through its lectures, papers and generation of other specific scientific institutions such as the Manchester Natural History and Geological Societies in which Unitarians like Thomas Robinson, James Ainsworth, Dr. Holme and James Heywood played a leading role, was immensely important in creating a scientific community. The medical influence declined but the influx of innovative millowners, engineers, inventors and scientists such as R.H. Greg, Peter Ewart, William Henry and Eaton Hodgkinson respectively, all Unitarians, turned the society into predominantly a scientific one.<sup>1</sup> Kargon argues that the elite group dominating the society before 1850 followed the founding members in having an "amateur" conception of science, a wish to raise the cultural tone of the area and facilitate scientific work and communication. This argument is fair, though hardly a criticism, for these aims were important both within and outside of the realm of science. The society gave rare opportunity to scientists of the calibre of Lyon Playfair, Robert Angus Smith and Edward Schunck, all ex-students of Liebig at Giessen. Kargon describes a new scientific breed emerging from the 1840s, men still often self-trained but at the frontiers of their disciplines. Unitarians were among these, too. Eaton Hodgkinson and William Fairbairn, both Unitarian engineers, presided over the society from 1848 to 1860 and helped make the society an institution for science only. The truth which Unitarians held from Priestley and Turner to H.E. Roscoe that industry and even the quality of urban and civic life were scientifically based was gradually acknowledged, although hardly "generally accepted" as Kargon claims. In the 1860s exclusiveness against amateurs was to be pushed by scientists including H.E. Roscoe,<sup>2</sup> an inevitable development perhaps with the growth of specialism, but one that could detach science from being part of the necessary culture of a gentleman.

<sup>1</sup> Kargon R.H., op.cit., 14-9, 25-9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1-152 passim; Wade R., op.cit., 63.

Thackray, in his prosopography of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, sees science, 1780-1851, as the "social legitimisation of marginal men", congruent with Unitarianism and, to a lesser extent, Quakerism, both of disproportionate influence within the advancing middle-class. Unitarians, he claims, gave the Lit. and Phil, "its tone, its energy and its orientation". However, argues Thackray, using successive generations of Unitarians as evidence, as these people rose in power and status so they gradually reached out for more traditional prizes, albeit reforming them at the same time, and finally left Unitarianism, science and Manchester. Science itself, changed from self-conscious rationalism to differentiation and specialisation.<sup>1</sup>

Ian Inkster and J. Morell, rejecting this thesis of science as a way of social mobility, prefer to argue that in the social revolution of 1780-1840 those belonging to marginal groups outside the mainstream of the middle-class solved their identity crisis by joining distinguishing groups such as scientific societies. By the 1840s, they add, science, which anyway was no longer so needed, had become specialised.<sup>2</sup> Their book shows the diversity of scientific relationships, 1780-1850, for example the transition to formalist, specialist societies as exemplified by the British Mineralogical Society; the scientific conservatism of Oxford-orientated Bristol; the aggressive provincialism of Newcastle. The differences in the nature of these scientific enterprises are explained by the factors of differing local circumstances but it is noteworthy how Unitarians were important in each: the Aikin and Henry families in the British Mineralogical Society; an "active element of elite Unitarians" plus Lant and William Carpenter, Dr. J. Estlin and Francis Newman in the Bristol institutions. Finally, in

<sup>1</sup> Thackray A., op.cit., 678-81, 698-709.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Inkster I. and Morell J., Metropolis and Province. Science in British Culture, (1983), 39-42. See also Seed S., "Unitarianism, political economy and the antinomies of liberal culture in Manchester", Social History, (Jan. 1982), Vol. 7, No. 1, 1-12.

Newcastle, William Turner kept up his "unflagging commitment to education as an instrument of social and moral improvement" and used the New Institution of 1802 to revitalise the original aims of the Lit. and Phil.<sup>1</sup> Turner himself was appointed lecturer and gave two courses each year from 1802 to 1833. His Introductory Discourse stressed the advantages of scientific education to a commercial, industrial and mining town such as Newcastle and to the young, the retired and women.<sup>2</sup>

William Turner, as Derek Orange says, was a consistent factor in the evolution of Newcastle for almost half a century (as, indeed, he was at Manchester College) and the members of his congregation, including teachers, booksellers, printers and newsproprietors, had a disproportionately large influence on Newcastle institutions.<sup>3</sup> Orange sees Turner as epitomising the quintessence of Rational Dissent, noting his simplicity, integrity and gentleness, his ability to enter all levels of society from his own broad intellectual base, his alert social and political conscience, his acute sense of truth and therefore of education as a liberating, humanistic force. Widespread familial and religious links indicate, once again, an elaborate Dissenting network of marriage, education and commerce.<sup>4</sup>

This analysis is very acceptable. It is not, however, a portrayal of someone merely using science for other purposes, although Orange accepts that some did this as they passed through Unitarianism on their way to prosperity and Anglicanism whilst new people joined Unitarianism in their own religious and intellectual

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 27-34, Weinding P., "The British Mineralogical Society: a case study in scientific and social improvement", 120-37, Neve M., "Science in a Commercial City: Bristol 1820-60", 179-97, Orange D., "Rational Dissent and provincial science: William Turner and the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society", 205-30.

<sup>2</sup> Turner W., A General Introductory Discourse ..., Newcastle Lit. and Phil. Soc., (1802), 5-16.

<sup>3</sup> Ed., Inkster I. and Morell J., op.cit., 206-7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 220-4.

quest.<sup>1</sup> Unitarianism itself, therefore, is not depicted as foregoing its scientific leanings in this era. Those whom Thackray and others instance as dropping science are those who left Unitarianism, too (for example, John Kennedy's son went to Cambridge and thence into Anglicanism, art and hunting).<sup>2</sup> Unitarians consistently belonged to and often helped establish the scientific societies of the nineteenth century, helping in that professionalisation and specialisation already noted.

These societies, admittedly, were middle-class, usually exclusively male and sometimes very small like the Manchester Natural History Society. In others a small core only might be active members as at the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Subscription was not necessarily expensive but membership was scrutinized.<sup>3</sup> York had connections with the aristocracy and gentry (though one of the landed gentry was George Cayley, a lifelong Unitarian and ingenious practical scientist).<sup>4</sup> Generally, to belong to the same section of society which had promoted the institution was the crucial factor.

The complexion of the York Philosophical Society is significant since its founder, Vernon Harcourt, was also a chief initiator of the British Association for the Advancement of Science which first met at York in 1832. Jack Morell and Arnold Thackray's analysis of the British Association shows it to have been led by "Gentlemen of Science", minor gentry and leisured upper middle-class men of secure income and traditional education. For the most part Anglicans of Whig or Peelite Conservative sympathies, they included others who matched their undogmatic

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>2</sup> Thackray A., op.cit., 706-7.

<sup>3</sup> Kargon R.H., op.cit., 7, 15-6; Nicholson F., op.cit., 104; Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, 2nd Series passim, Lists of Members.

<sup>4</sup> Orange D., op.cit., 10-4, 16; Inquirer, (2.1.1858), 12.

natural theology. Thus one Unitarian, John Taylor, and one Quaker, Dalton, were among their twenty-three early leaders. Their presence helped promote the non-sectarian, inclusive and non-political image so sedulously promoted by the society. However, no sectarians from Roman Catholics to Jews, Socialists or working-class were admitted, although, unusually, women, welcome for financial reasons soon were. Unitarians, however, did become members and their presence deterred High Church support. In 1861 William Fairbairn was even President (the first engineer and the first man lacking university polish or aristocratic connection, to be so), as later were Charles Lyell, William Carpenter and Henry Roscoe. Nevertheless, in the period to 1853 the Association remained firmly metropolitan and academic in outlook, purposely visiting Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Dublin before any of the provincial centres where the application of science was a major feature of life.

The Gentlemen of Science remained in firm control, eventually est<sup>x</sup>ting radicals like Charles Babbage and the Unitarian James Yates who resigned as secretary in 1841. Unitarian members fought for their own scientific ideals: John Taylor managed to promote mechanical science and James Heywood statistics, whilst the Genesis and geneology controversy stimulated John Kenrick's radical Essay on Primeval History. Overwhelmingly, however, the society promoted the physical sciences and although this meant London, Cambridge and Edinburgh men chiefly benefitted from the all-important grants, the few constant provincial beneficiaries included Eaton Hodgkinson and Fairbairn.<sup>1</sup>

Some Unitarians such as John Kenrick and Lant Carpenter were keen members and when the Association met in Manchester in June, 1842, Manchester College altered the date of its annual examinations to allow attendance.<sup>2</sup> Since these men were also prominent in provincial societies it is too extreme to place the

<sup>1</sup> Morell J. and Thackray A., Gentlemen of Science, (1981), 17-28, 32, 99, 106-27, 148-157, 225-8, 240-2, 247, 259-60, 265, 317-21, 408-10.

<sup>2</sup> Kenrick J., The Union of Religion with Intellectual Culture. A Sermon...Dublin. 1835, (1835); M.C. Report (1843), 3, 4; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 399-400.



latter and the British Association in complete opposition to each other. It would seem in the case of Unitarians that they were anxious to promote science in whatever way possible. National societies and their prestige, indeed, offered them a means of overcoming their usual unpopularity. As Russell Carpenter said, at the 1836 British Association meeting in Bristol, his father enjoyed a chance to be regarded as the equal he knew he was, since

for all that he had certainly done for the diffusion of science wherever he had resided,... [in] general he had the consciousness that his influence was lessened, that his wishes were thwarted, and his motives misinterpreted, by those who felt a bitter prejudice against his opinions.<sup>1</sup>

It is always worth recalling such prejudices when assessing the Unitarian contribution.

Even so Unitarians played a significant part in the numerous scientific societies which proliferated in the nineteenth century. They initiated, helped found, joined and were made fellows as has been noted often in passing in this thesis. Of Unitarian ministers alone, J.R. Wreford counted a high number who were Fellows of various scientific societies in this period.<sup>2</sup> It would seem that in this period before university reform and expansion, Unitarians consistently sought in every way to disseminate the ideal of knowledge of science as part of a cultured being, part of being a "gentleman", in fact. Some became professional scientists: some scientists were drawn to Unitarianism, for example Charles Lyell, Augustus de Morgan, William Fairbairn and Mary Somerville.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 401.

<sup>2</sup> Wreford J.R., Statistics on Dissenting Colleges, (MSS M.C.O.).

<sup>3</sup> Record of Unitarian Worthies ... 313, 380-1, 244, 7-8.

Mary Somerville was honoured at home and abroad for her excellent scientific writings but ordinary membership of most scientific societies was closed to her.<sup>1</sup> The scientific and literary societies so much promoted by Unitarians were, for the most part, exclusively for men. Women could attend as guests on selected occasions and even take part in some activities in some societies but full membership was for men only.<sup>2</sup> As late as 1859 Elizabeth Gaskell complained:

With a struggle and a fight I can see all the Quarterlies three months after they are published; till then they lie on the Portico table, for gentlemen to see. I think I will go in for Women's Rights.<sup>3</sup>

(William Gaskell was chairman of the Portico Library from 1849-1884).<sup>4</sup>

It seems that even Unitarian women sometimes held back out of decorum or fear of encouraging "less capable representatives of (their) sex to be present!"<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Mary Carpenter was devastated to be debarred from the sections of the British Association in 1836, although this was later rectified.<sup>6</sup>

Some Unitarians did strive to alter this state of affairs: William Turner, for example, explicitly included women as members of the New Institution in Newcastle. The Whittington Club in London, initiated by Douglas Jerrold, the witty contributor to Punch, deliberately set out to include women, as well as

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Somerville M., op.cit., 173-6.

<sup>2</sup> Manchester Guardian, (5.10.1844); McLachlan H., A Liverpool Ladies Journal a Century Ago, T.U.H.S., Vol. XI, No. 1, (Oct.1955), 5-6, 10, 15, 19; Bruce M.L., op.cit., 81.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Chapple J.A.V. and A., op.cit., 567.

<sup>4</sup> Brill B., op.cit., 59.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 71; Martineau H., Autobiography.. Vol.II, 137; Baker J.N.L., "Mary Somerville". Geographical Journal, (1948), 215n 6.

<sup>6</sup> Manton J., op.cit., 156; Morrell J. and Thackray A., op.cit., 148-56.

lower middle-class men, as full members. It provided a much needed service to independent women not only for its educational facilities but also as a rare, respectable dining place. 400 belonged in 1850, about a quarter of the membership before rising fees dramatically reduced numbers. Unitarians were prominent members for example, Harriet Martineau, Caroline and James Stansfeld, W.H. Ashurst Peter and Clementia Taylor, Thomas Southwood Smith, Kate Barmby, and other liberals such as Charles Dickens and the Howitts. These included many feminists, not least the successively re-elected chairman of the management committee, William Shaen. Despite his care of the business and legal matters, however, financial difficulties and external and internal opposition to the educational and social experiments led him and others to resign. Thence the club became an ordinary men's club.<sup>1</sup>

The notion of the separate spheres for men and women which prevailed in nineteenth century England thus kept middle-class women at home, away from many of the "improving" leisure activities Unitarians were so busily promoting. It is true that many Unitarian homes were intellectually and culturally lively often due to their womenfolk. Unitarians like W.J. Fox and Harriet Martineau believed that well-informed women were more likely to be efficient housekeepers than others and John Aikin and Emily Shaen argued that housekeeping should be professional.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Catherine Barmby, wife of the very radical Goodwyn Barmby, believed she was furthering women's rights by calling the domestic sphere women's "absolute province", allotted by God and inalienable.<sup>3</sup> Such domestic emphasis, nevertheless,

<sup>1</sup> Turner W., op.cit., 14-6; Kent C., "The Whittington Club: A Bohemian Experiment in Middle-class Social Reform", Victorian Studies, Vol. 18, No. 1, (Sept. 1974), 31-56.

<sup>2</sup> M.R., (1832), N.S.6, 640; Martineau H., Household Education... 221-2; Aikin J., Letters from a Father to a Son, (1793), 338; Cobbe F.P., op.cit., 604-6.

<sup>3</sup> People's Journal, (1847), III, 37.

was restricting as many Unitarian women, from Hannah Greg and Mrs Gaskell to Harriet Martineau, acknowledged.<sup>1</sup> It was difficult, however, to get away from the maternal emphasis since marriage was seen as the goal for most women and it was accepted that for a good proportion of her married life a woman would be pre-occupied with bearing and rearing children.

Thus, despite its liberal notions on female education, Radical Dissent hardly made its adherents ardent feminists in the twentieth century sense. Furthermore, despite having far higher expectations of women's mental capacity than was normal, it was rarely anticipated that women would reach the intellectual heights scaled by men. Lant Carpenter, for example, believed that physiological handicaps would prevent women from

that persevering energetic research, that long-continued vigour of application, that intense closeness of investigation, by which the mighty processes of human improvement have been carried on.<sup>2</sup>

- a judgement rather disproved by his own daughter, Mary, who used the excellent education he had given her to notable effect. W.J. Fox accepted physiological arguments that a man's brain was heavier than a woman's but added

it may be so, but a head as heavy as an elephants may only be a lump of leaden ignorance.<sup>3</sup>

Some Unitarian women utterly disclaimed any assumption of equality with men. Lucy Aikin and Sarah Austin were such, though both were talented and famed writers who worked hard to ensure greater respect and opportunities for women.<sup>4</sup> Such

<sup>1</sup> Fletcher E., op.cit.; ed. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 50, 106, 109, 117; Murray J.H., Strong-Minded Women, (Penguin 1984), 218.

<sup>2</sup> Carpenter L., Sermons on Practical Subjects, (1840), 218.

<sup>3</sup> M.R., (1832), N.S.6, 640.

<sup>4</sup> Aikin L., Epistles on Women (1810), v; Holland Lady, A Memoir and Letters of Sydney Smith, (1855), Vol.II, Preface by Sarah Austin, xvi-xviii; Ross J., op.cit. iv-ix, 13-18, 53, 55, 68, 121, 159-60, 194-5, Vol.II, 174-84; ed. Austin S., Lectures on Jurisprudence by the late John Austin (1885), Vol.I, Preface.

women were at least partly motivated by the strong desire exhibited by Unitarians despite radicalism elsewhere, to follow conventional rules of propriety.

Mrs Gaskell, for example, would only go to lectures ladies commonly attended.

Mary Robberds did diagrams for her father William Turner's lectures at the New Institution, but before people arrived so that there could be "no objection".

Both Harriet Martineau and Mary Carpenter as single ladies deferred to their mothers' wishes until past their twenties. Mary Carpenter for many years had her papers read for her in public; Harriet Martineau, even in cultured Norwich, could not study in the daytime since it was not proper for young ladies to study conspicuously. W.J. Fox was the "darling" of the Unitarians, and his radical views, including those affecting women, were accepted, until he advocated divorce.<sup>1</sup>

Yet an important point is that all the women mentioned were highly educated, not simply beyond women's usual fare but beyond most men's too, and this enabled many of them not only to achieve great personal fame, but also, in the brilliant tradition of Radical Dissent, to expound radical views. Mrs Gaskell's Ruth, for example, was sympathetic on the forbidden subject of fallen women. Harriet Martineau astounded the literary world by writing ably on political economy, although the Quarterly Review attacked her as an unmarried woman writing on population control and the Christian Remembrancer called her economy "rank poison", her religion "heretical" and her work generally "so unfeminine as to be absolutely disgusting".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 71; Robberds M., op.cit.; Martineau H., Autobiography... Vol.I, 149, 100-1; Manton J., op.cit., 75, 99, 145-6; Carpenter J., Mary Carpenter... 126, 146, 184-6; M.R., (1833), N.S.7, 141-2, 164-77, 217-31, 352-4, 489-98; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 187-8, 296.

<sup>2</sup> Gaskell E., Ruth... passim; Martineau H., op.cit., 199-214; Edinburgh Review, (1833), Vol. LVII, No. CXV, 10, 11; Quarterly Review, (April 1877), Vol. CXLIII No. 286, 501-2; Christian Remembrancer, (1841), Vol.II, 179.

Furthermore, Unitarians were prepared to see wider job opportunities for women although the conservative James Martineau thought that in the end there would be little significant change.<sup>1</sup> Given the fact that most women were expected to marry and spend years rearing children there was some basis for this, but not all nineteenth century women married. Few were like Florence Nightingale in preferring to resist the conventional pressures to marry but many had no choice since there simply not enough men. The 1851 census revealed the amazing truth that there were fewer men than women, a fairly high proportion of men remained bachelors, others married late or emigrated. Many spinsters were middle-class women with no male relative who could or would support them. However, the only employment considered respectable for such were the over-subscribed, underpaid occupations of teaching and sewing.<sup>2</sup>

Radical Dissenters, however, both through ideology and through education, were better placed than others to take advantage of existing opportunities and to open up new fields of employment for women. Harriet Martineau, in fact, rejoiced when she and her sisters lost their money and therefore their gentility as she was then free to do useful and independent work, but although she found scope for her special talents, she realised that many educated women could not.<sup>3</sup> This concern was felt by other Unitarians, for example extracts in the 1815 Monthly Repository termed the French custom of women engaging in important work in business, large farming, shops and warehouses, as "the natural, healthy condition of society."<sup>4</sup> Such a view was bitterly opposed by prevailing attitudes of the time. W.R. Greg,

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter J.E., James Martineau... 431.

<sup>2</sup> Neff W., Victorian Working Women, (1929), 12; Burton H., Barbara Bodichon, (1949) 98.

<sup>3</sup> Martineau H., op.cit., 141-7, Vol.II, 104; Deerbrook..., 448.

<sup>4</sup> M.R., (1815), Vol.X, 72-3.

for example, who found his way out of Unitarianism in his middle-age, strongly refuted the idea that women should have any job which did not fulfil

both essentials of a woman's being; they are supported by,  
and they minister to, men.<sup>1</sup>

Thus working-class female servants were acceptable but not middle-class women trying to enter male professions: such "redundant" women should emigrate.<sup>2</sup>

In reality, in England there was little change before the 1850s, but Unitarian women used their educative superiority to profit and success in the usual fields, especially education and literature, as has been seen, and in so doing raised considerably the standards expected of women. Mrs Gaskell's famous novels enshrined social messages in compelling form as well as portraying self-reliant, compassionate women who combined intellectual sympathy with practical skill.<sup>3</sup> Many of these women entered the small literary and intellectual elite of England on their own merit and thence broadened their own ideas and diffused those of Radical Dissent in influential circles.<sup>4</sup>

The compelling ethic of Radical Dissent to turn talent and experience outwood led many women into social work. This was not unusual: philanthropy was generally held to be peculiarly permissible for ladies. As Frank Prochaska has shown, Evangelicalism, especially, with its religious fervour and stress on duty and women's moral mission in society, drove many women into philanthropic work of all kinds, where they used their domestic skills in work supposedly ideally suited to their role in society.<sup>5</sup> Despite the enormous extent of the labours of women of

<sup>1</sup> Greg W.R., Literary and Social Judgements, (1868), "Why are Women Redundant?", 364.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 363-4, 368-73.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Gaskell E., Mary Barton, (1848, Penguin 1970); North and South..

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Ross J., op.cit., 41-5; Inquirer, (17.8.1867), 535; Martineau H., op.cit., Vol. I, 180-8, 333-70; ed. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., passim.

<sup>5</sup> Prochaska F.K., Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England, (1980), passim.

all persuasions in such fields, however, it was Unitarian women who first generally managed to secure a more equal share of the management of charitable concerns and to work in a more professional sense. Their more rational outlook led Unitarians such as Lucy Aikin, Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Rathbone to doubt the value of the emotional proselytising among the poor by the enthusiastic (a term of abuse to Unitarians) but ill-informed Evangelicals.<sup>1</sup> Unitarians, though sometimes influenced by the spiritual fervour of the Evangelicals preferred a more practical approach based on firm statistical knowledge and organisation. The outstanding pioneering work by women like Catherine Cappe, Elizabeth Rathbone, Lady Byron and Mary Carpenter in hospital management, schooling for the poor and treatment of pauper and delinquent children respectively testifies to the value of their attitudes.<sup>2</sup> So did that of others such as Harriet Martineau who organised better drainage in her district of Tynemouth from her sickbed and, of course, Florence Nightingale who had a Unitarian education and was admired by Mrs Gaskell for her work before the Crimean War.<sup>3</sup>

Unitarians, therefore, although limited by the standards of their age and class, were able to teach women to help themselves. Believing that "knowledge is power" they were not afraid to give knowledge to the hitherto powerless. This was seen particularly in the Women's Movement of the 1850s which began with a small group of intellectual and energetic women in London, led by Barbara Leigh-Smith, cousin of Florence Nightingale and grand-daughter of the Unitarian,

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Breton A.le, Correspondence of Dr. Channing and Lucy Aikin, (1874), 396-8; M.R., (1823), Vol.XVIII, 78; MSS Liverpool University, Elizabeth Rathbone Correspondence with Lady Byron, VI,1., 264, VI.1.277, VI,1.283.

<sup>2</sup> Cappe C., Memoirs, (1822), 416, 430-1; Elizabeth Rathbone Correspondence.passim Bushrod E., op.cit., 42; Manton J., op.cit., passim; Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 161ff.

<sup>3</sup> Webb R.K., Harriet Martineau: A Radical Victorian, (1960), 218; Woodham-Smith C. Florence Nightingale, 1820-1910, (Fontana 1964), passim; ed. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 305-6, 316-21, 327.



William Smith M.P., and by Bessie Parkes, great-granddaughter of Joseph Priestley. This group first made a spirited, although unsuccessful, bid to alter the Married Women's Property laws, tried to widen women's educational opportunities as a way of raising their whole status and helped both Elizabeth Garrett to train as a doctor and John Stuart Mill's 1867 attempt to obtain female suffrage. In the 1850s they succeeded in publishing a newspaper, The Englishwoman's Journal, organised and written solely by women (and, incidentally, highly praised by John Rely Beard) and in establishing the first employment bureau for women. Many Unitarians, for example Clementia Taylor and Frances Power Cobbe, were involved in this group.<sup>1</sup> Unitarians, indeed, had been the first to fight for many women's rights. Matthew Davenport Hill had had women's suffrage as part of his parliamentary platform in 1832, and Harriet Martineau had argued clearly and forcefully for women's rights.<sup>2</sup> In a less dramatic way, Unitarians had slowly and gradually opened up their church committees, especially Sunday school ones, to women, although men often remained in overall control, particularly of the money. Lant Carpenter consistently argued for female representation in such matters.<sup>3</sup>

Both Priestley and Mrs Reid of Bedford College left money to women, specifically stating that husbands were to have no control over it and Matthew and Frederick Hill helped Barbara Leigh-Smith in her fight against the property laws. Harriet Martineau's hero in Deerbrook inveighed against his grandfather's decision to leave money to his grandsons but not his granddaughters and personally sought

<sup>1</sup> Watts R.E., op.cit., 41-8.

<sup>2</sup> Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 113-5; Martineau H., Society in America, (1837), Vol.I, 199-207, Vol.III, 105-22.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Griffith G., History of the Free Schools, Charities, Hospitals and Asylums of Birmingham, (1861), 137-46; Burney L., Cross Street Chapel Schools, Manchester 1734-1942, (1942), 32-3; MSS M.C.O., Wood W.R., Correspondence, 11, (17.1.1830), Christian Reformer, (1836), 203, 583; (1841), 522, but (1840), 543, 549; Marcroft A., Historical Account of the Unitarian Chapel, Oldham, (1913), 26-7; M.R., (1831), N.S.5, 428. Compare Binns H.B., A Century of Education being the Centenary History of the British and Foreign School Society. 1808-1908, (1908), 75.

to rectify this. Serjeant Talfourd was able to secure that wives who were innocent partners in a separation could have custody of children under seven, and access to older children, a small but important breakthrough in the complete control a man had over his household. Later in the century, Unitarians such as Frances Power Cobbe played an important role in securing other rights for women.<sup>1</sup>

This is not to say that Unitarians were successful in all they undertook in this sphere as Mary Carpenter found when she failed to get Red Lodge recognised.<sup>2</sup> Nor were they the only participants. Quakers above all were close to Unitarians on this, as the ethos and curriculum of the York Quarterly Meeting Girls' <sup>School</sup> from 1835, illustrated. However, with important exceptions such as Elizabeth Fry and Priscilla Wakefield, the educationalist, they were not so publicly active in this period.<sup>3</sup> Orthodox Dissenters were affected by some of the ideas which influenced Unitarians and had some good schools, although chiefly after 1853, but did not promulgate such radical views as Unitarians.<sup>4</sup> Neither did Christian Socialists although they established Queen's College. Liberal Churchmen, like Sydney Smith, sometimes had liberal attitudes on the position of women<sup>5</sup> but this was more frequent later in the century. Utilitarians followed the Hartleian philosophy, but, like some individual progressive educationalists, lacked the religious element so

<sup>1</sup> Dixon R.A.M. op.cit., 53-4; Tuke M.J., A History of Bedford College for Women, 1849-1937, (1939), 316-7; Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 265-6, 303; ed. Hill C., op.cit. 305-7; Martineau H., Deerbrook, 74, 466-7; Hollis P., Women in Public: The Women's Movement, 1850-1900, (Allen and Unwin Paperback, 1979), 184-5; D.N.B., 2nd Supplement Vol.I, 378-9.

<sup>2</sup> D.N.B., Vol.9, 160.

<sup>3</sup> Sturge H.W., The Mount School, York, (1931), 35-76; Murray J.H., op.cit., 284-5; e.g. Wakefield P., The Juvenile Travellers, (1808); An Introduction to Botany, (1816).

<sup>4</sup> Binfield C., Belmont's Portias... (Dr. Williams's Trust, 1981), *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Holland Lady, op.cit.; Smith S., Selection from the Writings of..., (1855), 45-73.

essential in nineteenth century society. Many individuals who, like J.S. Mill, George Eliot and Richard Monckton Milnes, helped the Women's Movement, had links with Unitarians.<sup>1</sup> Few indeed, so early and consistently and on such deep principle, advocated such a radical view of womanhood as Unitarians, both men and women, or educated women to such a high extent and thus, by enlarging their self-respect and mental horizons, enabled them to lead a much fuller life and provide important precedents in what women could achieve.

. . . . .

It can be seen therefore, that in the first half of the nineteenth century, Unitarians continued their educational ideals and had some success in reforming and expanding middle-class education for both male and female, young and adult. There were many limitations to their contribution, however. Their own institutions, however brilliant or successful, were impermanent and often small. Institutions in which they combined with others did not always adhere to the original aims or might fail in popularity because Unitarians were involved in them.

Unitarian educational ventures were part of their general radical outlook and were closely bound up with their political and economic activities and were affected accordingly. For instance, Roscoe's vision of beautiful, clean, well-planned cities where commercial and industrial wealth harmonized with morally approved purposes, invigorated by understanding of art and science, was hindered by Unitarian exclusion from the respectable Establishment.<sup>2</sup> In many provincial cities where, after the Municipal Corporations Act of 1836, Unitarians held

<sup>1</sup> Murray J.H., op.cit., 31-5; Kamm J., John Stuart Mill in Love, (1977), passim; Watts R.E., op.cit., 61-2.

<sup>2</sup> Eastell J.K., op.cit., 63-79.

important office out of all proportion to their numbers, it was still difficult to achieve their educational ideals as Leicester found, for example, over the Proprietary School. James Heywood, enthusiastic leader of so many schemes for cultural improvement in Manchester, and other Unitarians had to overcome virulent opposition at the Athenaeum in 1838. The Athenaeum itself, despite huge initial financial backing, found, (much to typical J.W. Hudson disgust) its serious educational programme hard to sustain. It did, however, lead Mancunian culture in the important fields of art, drama and cheap concerts, so the Unitarians did not entirely fail, as Seed suggests.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Unitarians did help promote much educational and cultural activity among an important section of the middle-class. Their ideas were disseminated by the many successful men and women which they produced in abundance. They were an important liberating leaven in the lump of English middle-class education.

<sup>1</sup> Morley J., The Life of Richard Cobden, (1903), 138; Hudson J.W., The History of Adult Education (1851), 110-24; Seed J., "Unitarianism, political Economy and the antinomies of liberal culture in Manchester, 1830-50", Social History, (Jan. 1982), Vol.7, No. 1, 9-10.

## CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the most pressing problems in middle-class education was seen by Unitarians to be the provision of higher education. In the nineteenth century they were determined either to obtain access to and reform educational institutions from which they were debarred or to ensure they had equivalent institutions of their own to supply their needs. They continued to condemn Oxford and Cambridge both for their exclusiveness and for their lack of a curriculum and ethos relevant for the times. George Dyer failed to persuade Cambridge to abolish subscription in 1824<sup>1</sup> but access to the universities was no easier after the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828. William Frend, who knew too well the conservatism which prevented Sir James Edward Smith, a Unitarian and President of the Linnaean Society, from lecturing at Cambridge in 1818 and who had appealed to Parliament for reform as early as 1793, was still fulminating against the necessity of subscription to the "farrago of nonsense, called the Thirty-nine Articles" in the 1820s. He found little more comfort in Cambridge's demanding subscription only on taking a degree than in Oxford's absolute veto, since, he said, the few wealthy Dissenters who attended Cambridge were usually absorbed and converted by the conformist majority. In fact, only a few Unitarians appear to have gone to Cambridge and of those who did many, like James Heywood and the brilliant mathematician and metaphysician Thomas Solly, did not take a degree. Solly thence had to go to Berlin to find exercise for his talents.<sup>3</sup> Some Unitarians, like Edward Strutt, did take a

<sup>1</sup> Yates J., Thoughts on the Advancement of Academical Education in England (1827) 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> Knights F., University Rebel, (1971), 144-165, 168-9, 285-6; Parnaby M.R., William Johnson Fox and the Monthly Repository Circle of 1832 to 1836 (Ph.D. Australian National University, 1979) 18; Frend W., A Plan of Universal Education, (1832), 121-2;

<sup>3</sup> Inquirer (23.10.1897) 689; Solly H., These Eighty Years (1893), vol. I, 274, 294-5, vol. II 4, 69.

degree but most thought it dishonest to take even an illiberal and arbitrary test.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians seized eagerly on any murmurs of discontent from within the universities, for example the Monthly Repository reported the excited ferment in Oxford in 1831 after the Rev. Bulteel's unsparing criticism of the whole establishment of colleges and halls.<sup>2</sup> Frederic Hill quoted derisively traditionalists like the Rev. W. Sewell, an Oxford tutor, who, in opposing the admission of Dissenters, openly denied the "right of liberty of conscience wholly and utterly."<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Unitarians themselves led the fight to stop, as J.J. Tayler said, national institutions being used for one particular class or sect.<sup>4</sup> It was George William Wood, long-time treasurer of Manchester College, M.P. for South Lancashire after the Reform Act of 1832, who, in 1834, introduced the University Admissions Bill which successfully passed the Commons but was decisively beaten in the Lords. John Kenrick, classics tutor at Manchester College and acutely aware of the opportunities denied to Dissenting scholars like himself, eagerly corresponded with Wood over every detail of the passage of the Bill, even dreaming at one stage that Manchester College could move to Cambridge as a theological college, using the scientific and literary facilities of the university if the Bill were passed.<sup>5</sup> Kenrick, however, was left to

<sup>1</sup> E.g. M.R., (1825), XX, 274-5

<sup>2</sup> M.R., (1831), N.S. 5, 285-6.

<sup>3</sup> Hill F., National Education, (1836), vol. I, 235.

<sup>4</sup> Unitarian Chronicle, (1833), 122-3.

<sup>5</sup> Christian Reformer, (1836), 198; MSS M.C.O., J.K.IV, Letters to G.W.W. 17.3.1834 to 7.7.1834. See also MSS M.C.O., Wellbeloved II, C.W. to G.W.W., 16.6.1834.

regret that the Church of England had put "her lock" upon the fountains of knowledge, that is, the ancient universities, in England;

she not only sells us the water at the price of wine, but she will not even allow us to fetch it away except in her own stamped measures, warranted to hold thirty-nine cubic inches, neither more nor less;<sup>1</sup>

The optimism of Unitarians like those on the Committee of Manchester College in 1835 who, aware that many eminent Cambridge men supported the claim of the Dissenters, predicted eventual success, was misplaced; the supporters of the Establishment were furious and this apparently contributed to Wood losing his seat in 1835.<sup>2</sup> In 1836 Oxford rejected "with angry violence" an attempt to have easier subscription - "all the country clergymen coming up to vote!!!"<sup>3</sup> By this time Oxford was already convulsed by the "Popish explosion" as Channing termed it<sup>4</sup> of Tractarianism, a movement which, according to Pattison, effectually "oppressed Oxford for fifteen years" and held back any hopes of liberal reform.<sup>5</sup> In Cambridge, individual reformers achieved little to satisfy Dissenters' claims. William Whewell, from 1841 the influential Master of Trinity, initiated some curriculum and college reform but bitterly opposed external reform of the university.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christian Reformer, *ibid.*.

<sup>2</sup> M.C.Y. Report, 1835,4; Tayler J.J., Discourse... and A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Late George William Wood (1843) 21,38.

<sup>3</sup> H.C.R., vol.II 173.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. le Breton, A.L., Correspondence of Dr. Channing and Lucy Aikin 1826-42, (1874),327.

<sup>5</sup> Pattison M., Memoirs, 1885,236.. See Yates N., The Oxford Movement and Anglican Ritualism, (Historical Association, General Series,105 1983),5-20, for a brief outline.

<sup>6</sup> D.N.B., vol.60,454-8.

By the 1850s, however, reform parties within the universities had been growing; in Oxford, the liberal reaction against the Oxford movement was much influenced by Thomas Arnold, both directly as Professor of Modern History from 1841 and indirectly through his "Christian gentlemen" graduating from Rugby to Oxford (usually Balliol) and holding new ideas of public and social service. Arnold recognised that such a large part of the community was excluded from Oxbridge that, without reform, the "evils" of Dissenting colleges would "continue to multiply."<sup>1</sup> However, liberals were continually frustrated by the power of the Establishment and realised, therefore, that reform could be achieved only by external effort.<sup>2</sup>

Here again a Unitarian made the decisive move. In 1850 James Heywood, North Lancashire M.P. from 1847, successfully moved that a Royal commission be appointed to enquire into the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford and Dublin "with a view to assist in the adaptation of those important institutions to the requirements of modern times."<sup>3</sup> Heywood was backed by other Dissenters in the House, such as John Bright and Edward Miall, and by the Liberation Society, a formal extra-Parliamentary pressure group of Dissenters which, from the mid-1840s, had succeeded to some extent in unifying nonconformist pressure against their disabilities.<sup>4</sup> With the support of the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell,<sup>5</sup> the Radicals set up investigative Royal Commissions whose unsparing

<sup>1</sup> Arnold T., Principles of Church Reform, (1833), 75. Stanley A.P., Life of Thomas Arnold, D.D. (1904) 164-5, 329-31, 341-2, 441-3, 483, 511, 609-37.

<sup>2</sup> Simon B., The Two Nations and the Educational Structure, 1780-1870, (1974), 281-9

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 290

<sup>4</sup> Fraser D., Urban Politics in Victorian England (1979), 268-9. Kenrick had repeatedly stressed the moderation of Wood and the Presbyterians on the 1834 Bill over the more uncompromising Dissenters - J.K. IV, 17.3.1834, 11.4.1834, 28.6.1834.

<sup>5</sup> Russell often attended Martineau's sermons at Portland St. in later years, - Holt R.V., The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England, (1952), 345



criticisms were sufficiently met to effect, as Brian Simon says, "a quiet revolution." The universities changed from ecclesiastical to educational institutions with opportunities to develop teaching methods and the curriculum.<sup>1</sup> Although these reforms even more effectively cut out poorer members of society, one major group, Dissenters, obtained admission - in 1854 James Heywood successfully moved the abolition of religious restrictions on matriculation and bachelors degrees. Still Dissenters, however high their achievements, could not proceed further (except for Masters degrees at Cambridge) and could have no part in university government, a grievous anomaly which earlier conservatives had foreseen would cause trouble.<sup>2</sup> Nor was it always easy to gain collegiate admission, as C.P. Scott's father found in 1865.<sup>3</sup> Partial success, however, had been won. James Heywood was one of the first to profit by this, taking in 1856 the Cambridge B.A. for which he had qualified in 1833 as Senior Optime in the mathematical tripos.<sup>4</sup> Fellow Unitarians such as James Martineau and congregations like High Pavement, Nottingham, backed by their M.P., Edward Strutt, supported his efforts.<sup>5</sup> William Biggs, M.P. for the Isle of Wight,

<sup>1</sup> Simon B., op.cit., 290-9.

<sup>2</sup> Garland M.M., Cambridge before Darwin (1980), Cambridge U.P. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Salter F.R., Dissenters and Public Affairs in Mid-Victorian England (Dr. Williams Trust, 1967), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Carpenter J.E., James Martineau, (1905), 351; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., The Life and Letters of James Martineau, (1902), 197; MSS Nottingham University, HiM2, High Pavement Minute Books, March 26th to April 6th 1854. Strutt wanted admission of Dissenters as a separate bill from Russell's whose government he was in.

eagerly reported his vote to his constituents, concurring in Bright's designation of Oxford "as the seat of dead languages and antiquated absurdities."<sup>1</sup>

Subscription, indeed, was not the only reason why Dissenters, including Unitarians, had reason to stay away from Oxbridge. Unitarian criticisms of the cost and of the aristocratic and licentious spirit of the universities remained, as Dr. Thomas Michael Greenhow's paper at the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society illustrated.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there was a deeply-felt rejection of not only the ethos of the universities but also of their continuation of a narrow, classical curriculum. As John Rely Beard asked scornfully

In how many cases is the receipt of the rich endowments  
of the universities, the only labour they perform..?...  
And in the circle of what they teach, how much that is  
antiquated, how much that is useless, how much that is  
injurious is found and how much of what would be the  
greatest service... is altogether omitted!

Criticising the corrupt influence of an entirely classical education Beard finished bitterly:

Thus does it happen that the universities, which ought  
to be the light and glory of the country, are wrapped in  
the darkness of a barbarous age, stand not as beacons  
bearing the torch before advancing civilization, but as  
monuments of the antique, the obsolete, the disallowed,  
the effete;...<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John and William Biggs Scrapbooks (Leicester P.R.O. 5D61), vol.II, 27.1.1855

<sup>2</sup> Bowery M.M., William Turner's Contribution to Educational Developments in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1782-1841, (M.A. Newcastle University, 1980), 188-9.

<sup>3</sup> M.R., N.S.5, 1831, 830-1.

Their students emerged a century behind other educated people "in liberality of thought and action, in power and information of mind..."<sup>1</sup>

There was some truth in these criticisms. Both English universities were dominated by wealthy and indolent colleges, keeping in comfort many dons, not all teaching nor necessarily chosen for intellectual brilliance. The number of students rose from 1800 to 1810 but a sizeable, though slowly decreasing, proportion still attended as part of the necessary education of a gentleman but with little thought to scholarship.<sup>2</sup> If any did distinguish themselves it was often by their own efforts and through private tutors.<sup>3</sup> The prevailing emphasis, however, was on character development rather than scholastic achievement. Proficient assertive experts were no more encouraged than creative innovators but well-balanced, polite, high-minded, public servants in the classical tradition were at a premium. The introduction and growth of a more vigorous examination system, seen as a reform by progressive academics and middle-class reformers who preferred a meritorious system, interjected an alarming alternative to the aristocratic, easy-going system of the past. Students coped by rationalizing failure, concentrating on health rather than anxious competition, or simply opting out of the contest altogether. To many of the aristocratic clientele of the universities, competitive examinations were alien to the concept of the self-confident gentleman who should not have to prove his competence. There were hard-working (and brilliant) students in this era - Robert Peel, John Newman and Thomas Arnold among them - but they were not the norm. Newman, for example, was even threatened with bodily harm for conduct not befitting a gentleman because he studied too much!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Cardwell D.S.L., The Organisation of Science in England, (1957), 40.

<sup>3</sup> London Magazine, vol. 6. 1822, 166-72.

<sup>4</sup> Rothblatt S., "Failure in early nineteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge", History of Education, (March 1982), vol.II, No.1, 1-21.

There were university professors for non-classical subjects but many never or rarely lectured or attracted few students. Those, especially science lecturers, who did draw considerable numbers, lost them once the obsolete medieval disputations gave way to written examinations.<sup>1</sup> Daily tutorials, concentrating on the classics together with any extra subject their tutor thought desirable, formed the pivot of scholastic life. Both universities were predominantly clerical and Oxford concentrated almost exclusively on classics and theology while the great German advances in historical criticism and philology were all but ignored except by a handful of isolated scholars in the 1820s. James A. Froude said Oxford knew nothing of modern languages or of literature outside England in the 1840s - "Even of English literature it was in almost absolute ignorance..." He believed Oxford was becoming barren intellectually. When he wrote *Nemesis of Faith* it was publicly burnt.<sup>2</sup> Oxford did start paying some attention to mathematics from 1800, but the numbers taking honours in this declined after 1807, whilst the little interest in science quickly evaporated under the consuming wrangles of the Tractarian Movement in the 1830s. Cambridge's long interest in mathematics led to the emergence, at the turn of the century, of a highly specialised training in mathematics and theoretical physics for the Tripos course, culminating in the most prestigious examination in England. In the early nineteenth century some exceptional mathematicians, especially Whewell and Peacock, revived the study of analytical methods and greatly speeded the progressive reform of mathematical studies. Their abilities won some praise from Unitarian critics of the universities.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the course, which included some classics (a classical tripos was also established in 1822) was highly specialised, seeking

<sup>1</sup> Haines G., *German Influence upon English Education and Science, 1800-66*, (Connecticut College, 1957), 13-4; compare *Quarterly Journal of Education*, II, no. IV, 244-5.

<sup>2</sup> Carpenter J.E., *op.cit.*, 96-8; Dunn W.H., *James Anthony Froude 1818-56*, (1961), 74, 137.

<sup>3</sup> Hill F., *op.cit.*, 230.

to train the reasoning powers of future lawyers and statesmen, not to give a professional training for mathematicians or scientists, though it could lay the basis for such.<sup>1</sup>

Science was neglected at the universities, therefore, although there was a serious dearth of technical scientists in England. Advances, in chemistry especially, were revolutionising pathology, medicine and surgery as well as many industrial processes, yet even the medical faculties were now of little importance at Oxford and Cambridge which, furthermore, saw little connection between themselves and the commercial and industrial world. Chemistry's lingering connections with the occult did not enhance its reputation, nor did its links with "inferior" pharmacists or apothecaries.<sup>2</sup> Except as a hobby for amateurs the study of science was linked with classes below the rank of "gentlemen" and with Dissenters. The fear that a greater emphasis on non-traditional subjects might attract "unsuitable" students or induce further dissent had some plausibility. Certainly, on the one hand, many Dissenters used the Dutch, German and Scottish universities, partly because they preferred their more modern curriculum<sup>3</sup>, whilst, on the other, amongst those who studied geology or natural history there appeared (so Lucy Aikin heard in 1829)<sup>4</sup>, some disillusionment with orthodox Christianity. John Kenrick, calling the

<sup>1</sup> Cardwell D.S.L., op.cit., 14-5, 39-45; Simon B., op.cit., 86-7; D.N.B. vol.60 455; Garland M.M., op.cit., 3, 18-24; Whewell W., On the Principles of English University Education, (1838), 38-44, 50-1.

<sup>2</sup> Haines G., op.cit., 19, 22-3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 94-6. Some Anglicans did the same. Henry Roscoe, on the other hand refused a chance to go to Cambridge because of its lack of scientific inducements - Roscoe H.E., The Life and Experiences of..., (1906), 31.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. le Breton A.L., op.cit., 43, 46-7.

Revd. Baden-Powell "liberal to the verge of Unitarianism" in 1834, hoped that a rational reform of theology would start from the geologists, "in the Church at least."<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Lyell, the great geologist, became a Unitarian and a prominent reformer of the universities.<sup>2</sup> This was not necessarily universal: Whewell, for example, Professor of Minerology from 1828 to 1832 at Cambridge and a successful scientific writer in the 1830s, was a loyal member of the Established Church and conservative in politics, although personally tolerant of Unitarians.<sup>3</sup> He saw the modern physical sciences as "highly valuable acquisitions" for the informed, well-educated man and thus suitable for some attention from more advanced students but mathematics should remain the basic study and be taught, not as useful to science, but as an intellectual discipline, "the stable system of a demonstrative science." In fact the mathematical tripos did not remain stable in content and the Board of Mathematical Studies was established at Cambridge in 1848 partly to reduce its "erratic fluctuations", according to D. Wilson. The Natural Science Tripos of 1851 covered a number of sciences, although physics was not treated separately until 1861. Chemistry was but remained a secondary concern throughout the nineteenth century. Many Cambridge men followed Herschel in grading sciences according to their closeness to mathematics and deemed chemistry the most distant.<sup>4</sup>

The question of classics and/or science lay at the heart of the "liberal

<sup>1</sup> MSS J.K.IV, 8.5.1834. Baden-Powell donated three of his own books to M.N.C. in 1847 - M.N.C. Report (1847), M.C.O., 7.

<sup>2</sup> Record of Unitarian Worthies (1876), 313; Simon B., op.cit., 288-9.

<sup>3</sup> D.N.B., vol.60, 455-8; ed. le Breton P., Memoirs, Miscellanies and Letters of the late Lucy Aikin, (1864), xxvi; Somerville M., Personal Recollections... Mary Somerville, (1873), 170-3, 179.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson D., "Experimentalists among the mathematicians: Physics in the Cambridge Natural Sciences Tripos, 1851-1900", Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences (1981-2), vol.12 Part 2, 325-35. Such views also predominated in the British Association - see above Chapter III.

education" debate. Traditionalists complained when Oxford honoured four leading scientists in 1832, Pusey sneering that Oxford had "truckled sadly to the spirit of the times in receiving the hodge-podge of philosophers as they did." Keble was only relieved that a degree was not given to Lant Carpenter "the metropolitan of the Socinians of the West of England."<sup>1</sup> There was widespread consensus that a liberal education was essentially one which "developed all important aspects of the mind and character",<sup>2</sup> enabling the student to become capable of exercising the processes of thought, to take up any pursuit requiring reflection, analysis and judgement and to become cultured and "polished." For traditionalists science could play little part in this, for "modern" people like the Unitarians, a liberal education which excluded science and other modern subjects was unbalanced. In their respective inaugural lectures at Manchester College in 1840, the professor of mathematics stated that the "general spirit of scientific enquiry" was "essential to every educated man" and that a liberal education should develop the "entire mental system"; the professor of physical science and natural history declaimed that the study of nature was the "noblest and most rational employment" of man leading to realisation of the necessity of "a supreme intelligent Author"; and even the professor of classics, Francis Newman, a former fellow of Balliol, argued that, despite the great value of learning classics, especially Greek, it was important to realise that without other studies the student would be incapacitated from judging the modern world. The Greeks after all, he added, had known no tongue but their own.<sup>3</sup> In 1841, Charles Wellbeloved would recommend no subject to the

<sup>1</sup> Haines G., op.cit., 27; Morrell J. and Thackray A., Gentlemen of Science, (1981) 231-2.

<sup>2</sup> Meadows A.J. and Brock W.H., "Topics fit for Gentlemen:..." in ed. Simon B., and Bradley I., The Victorian Public School (1975), 95.

<sup>3</sup> Introductory Lectures M.N.C., 1840 (1841); Finlay R., "Mathematics", 3-4, Phillips M.L., "Physical Science and Natural History", 25-6; Newman F., "Classical Course", 5-7.

students of Manchester College simply because it strengthened the mental faculties - that excellent object could be gained from any "steady, well-directed labour": the Manchester College course was "designed and adapted to fill the mind as well as strengthen it."<sup>1</sup>

Thus classics, or even mathematics, could not take on the exclusive role they played at the old universities. In varying degrees, Unitarians reiterated and developed the strictures on classical education at university level which they had made with regard to the rest of education, seeing the advantages in classics for the education of "polished gentlemen" or professional men but believing that the content of education was also important in a liberal education. Modern subjects were vitally relevant both because of the posts that students would later fill and as an integral part of modern culture.<sup>2</sup> James Yates, for example, although he could find no better employment "to exercise any intellectual power, whether memory, judgement or imagination" than classics (provided they were taught by teachers who were more than mere grammarians or philologists) proposed classics as only part of the four-year course at the new London University.<sup>3</sup>

James Martineau, in 1854, depicted three great departments of knowledge - physical science, literae humaniores and theology. He believed that:

the true principle of perfect mental culture (was) ... to preserve an accurate balance... between attention to matter given (the mind), and reflection on its own processes and laws<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christian Reformer (1841), 476.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Shepherd W., Joyce J. and Carpenter L., Systematic Education (1817), vol.1, 16-7, 19-20; M.R., (1806), I, 354; Roscoe H.E., op.cit., 185, 254;

<sup>3</sup> Yates J., op.cit., 82-3, 87-97.

<sup>4</sup> Martineau J., Essays, Reviews and Addresses, vol.IV, 1891, "A Plea for Philosophical Studies" (1854), 24-33.



If literature was the almost perfect mental culture it was even better if studied with other subjects, especially mathematics and science. In 1856, he predicted that if Christian theology allowed a false division of the secular and spiritual it would abdicate its intellectual function of reconciliation of human pursuits. Science would take its retribution by remaining outside of religion.<sup>1</sup> The Unitarian synthesis of the two, in fact, allowed Unitarians to take scientific developments in their stride. Both Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin were closely involved in Unitarian circles and Unitarians rejoiced in evolutionary theory which gave a rational explanation of man instead of miracle or mystery.<sup>2</sup> Whewell and Adam Sedgwick at Cambridge, on the other hand, were amongst those who challenged such ideas.<sup>3</sup>

Generally, Unitarians such as Robert Brewin of Leicester thought that the ancient universities were neglecting to teach the most valuable subjects.<sup>4</sup> Their commitment to science as a necessary part of a liberal education was a deeply founded principle, therefore, not merely a tool in a political and social struggle as Ian Inkster has suggested.

Other subjects apart from science were seen by the Unitarians as relevant to a university education in changing cultural and political times. Their demand for the study of England's own literature was particularly apt in the period of the Romantic Movement and a revival of Shakespeare. J.J. Tayler's advice to his son in 1845, to read the English classics constantly whilst at University College, London, was symptomatic of a Unitarian interest demonstrated so fully

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., "The Christian Student" (1856), 46-7. See also ed. Thom J.H., Letters of John James Tayler (1872), vol.II, 191-2.

<sup>2</sup> Haines G., op.cit., 39-41;...Unitarian Worthies, op.cit., 313, Lansbury C., Elizabeth Gaskell. The Novel of Social Crisis, (1975), 194-5.

<sup>3</sup> Garland M.M., op.cit., 96ff..

<sup>4</sup> MSS Leicester Mechanics' Institute Minute Book vol.1 (Leicester P.R.O.), 1835 Printed Report 23-4.

by the inspiring university teaching of Henry Morley in London and in University Extension lectures later in the century.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the study of modern history and its related subjects was to be expected from Unitarians with their interest in German historical and Biblical studies and in modern political, economic, social and religious developments. The great Unitarian scholar, John Kenrick, saw the fact that modern history had been neglected at Oxford and Cambridge, despite some admirable professors in this subject, as an illustration of their unaccountability to the public.<sup>2</sup> Other reformers, such as the Arnolds and J.S. Mill, also exhibited a growing interest in modern history.<sup>3</sup>

These subjects, plus modern languages, were seen as essential in a full liberal education by Unitarians. Amongst the various newspaper cuttings stressing all these points kept by the Revd. R.A. Armstrong, for example, was one which castigated the universities for sending out men loaded with honours but:

unacquainted with the history, the literature, we might almost say, the language, of their country... unacquainted with the first principles of the laws under which they live, unacquainted with the very rudiments of moral and political science.<sup>4</sup>

Such criticism of the traditional curriculum of the universities, central to the argument over whom the universities should educate and for what, grew amongst all those in the liberal camp from 1800 to 1850. The brilliant articles

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol.I,233-4; Solly H.S., Life of Henry Morley,LL.D., (1898), 231-4,252,256-7.

<sup>2</sup> Introductory Lectures...1840, op.cit., Kenrick J., "History", 4.

<sup>3</sup> Knights B., The Idea of the Clerisy in the 19th Century, (1978), 10,21-6,81, 117-8.

<sup>4</sup> High Pavement MSS (Nottingham University, HCV3), Rev.R.H. Armstrong, Newspapers Cuttings (c.1819-26), 104,160.

in the Edinburgh Review of the Revd. Sydney Smith and others, 1808 to 1810, put forward arguments not dissimilar. Judging by the criterion of "usefulness" Smith's group found Oxford to be lamentably failing in what should be its prime object. Wanting a truly liberal education they would retain classics but encourage originality of thought and modern subjects, deeming the latter more enjoyable than endless attention to words, as well as more profitable, relevant and enlightening to those going into public life.

The blame for the cramped, sterile curriculum was put squarely on the shoulders of the ecclesiastical instructors in control at Oxford - men who feared so much the scepticism and iconoclasm which might result from the free discussion of "difficult and important subjects" that they annually destroyed an "infinite quantity of talent."<sup>1</sup> Among further criticisms made by the Edinburgh Review was one that the only way to tap the vast wealth of Oxford was to do well in classics, even though its published classical works were a constant disappointment (as the 1809 edition of Strabonis Rerum Geographicarum proved). The journal also argued that it was retrograde to look only to the infancy of science and not the post-Baconian revolution. Criticisms such as these were reiterated in varying degrees by other critics of the universities in this period.<sup>2</sup> Bentham, always against education which preferred words to things "and among words dead languages to living ones", despised the universities for their "useless" education which included the lack of properly applied mathematics (a sentiment with which even Samuel Butler, headmaster of Shrewsbury, agreed). James Mill utterly condemned the clerical domination of the universities as stifling the essential point of education: the progress of

<sup>1</sup> Smith S., Selections from the writings of..., (1855), vol. I, 19-41.

<sup>2</sup> Edinburgh Review, (Jan. 1808), XI no. XXII, 378; (July 1809), XIV no. XXVIII, 429-41; (April 1810), XVI, no. XXXI, 158-187.

man, denoting any educational institution hostile to improvement and change as "preposterous and vicious" beyond everything.<sup>1</sup> Henry Brougham, during the Reform Bill crisis, sarcastically reflected on the aristocratic products of the universities "in all the pride of hexameter and pentameter verse, skill in classic authors, the knack of turning fine sentences" and decided that he preferred to be ruled by the "rational, judicious" middle-classes in any practical matter engaging the statesman or leader in a commercial country.<sup>2</sup> His liberal Whig Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge's new Quarterly Journal of Education replaced its initial very mild criticism of the universities with more stringent attacks from 1832 to 1833, and like the Westminster Review, demanded legislative action. So did the Edinburgh Review in its series of articles in 1831 and 1834 by Sir William Hamilton, Professor of Civil History at Edinburgh, who had attended both Glasgow and Oxford universities and had knowledge of the most advanced German universities. Hamilton, who rejected Whewell's defence of mathematics at Cambridge, although upholding the importance of classics, wished to restore to the universities the primacy in teaching which the colleges had usurped and to open them to all who qualified for entry whatever their religious beliefs.<sup>3</sup>

The universities did not remain quiescent under such attacks. Edward Copleston's damnation, in 1810, of any wider curriculum as leading to a specialised, narrow training became a common defence for university apologists as did his contention that a governing class had to share a common culture and

<sup>1</sup> Burns J.B., Jeremy Bentham and University College, (The Athlone Press, University of London, 1962), 7,10; Simon B., op.cit., 90-1.

<sup>2</sup> Hill F., op.cit., 236.

<sup>3</sup> Quarterly Journal of Education, (1831), vol.I no.1, 9-16, vol.II, no.III,1-29, vol.II, no.IV, 242-50; Simon B., op.cit., 93; Hamilton Sir W., Discussion on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform, (1866), 260 ff.

that that had to be based on the Greek and Latin classics. These, he insisted, brought into play all facets of the cultured human mind and were socially and intellectually a harmonising activity which would expand the mind as a liberal education should. Professorial lectures on any other subjects were permissible provided they remained as trimmings. Copleston opposed materialist liberalism, professionalism (that is self-interested education), the division of labour upheld by the political economists and any intellectual fragmentation which could threaten upper-class culture and unity.<sup>1</sup>

Copleston's reserving of a liberal education for an élite only and basing of it so firmly on a classical education did not suit the Unitarians' vision of education for the new middle-classes. It hardly suited Cambridge either since there the emphasis was on mathematics, also upheld as the basis of a liberal education and claimed as a "permanent" subject, already completely defined, unlike science or literature, an interesting conclusion at a time when continental mathematics were surging ahead. Whewell actually denounced any culture arising from a higher education based on classics alone as "extremely partial and deficient."<sup>2</sup>

An Oxford reply to Hamilton - Apologia Academica - strongly rebutted his constitutional arguments and preferred, as the author saw them the impartial unbiased self-sacrificing tutors to any new system whence would arise:

mountebank lectures, as of old, superficially descanting on  
some popular topic, to impose on a gazing audience of beggarly  
boys; whose parents would be delighted with the prospect of  
cheap education...<sup>3</sup>

whilst the moral state of Oxford declined.

<sup>1</sup> Knights B., op.cit., 10, 190-4 and also 196-7.

<sup>2</sup> Whewell W., op.cit., 38-9.

<sup>3</sup> Apologia Academica, Oxford, (1831), 1-28 passim.

Whewell, Master of Trinity at Cambridge, defended the Cambridge curriculum both against Hamilton and Charles Lyell. His concern for what he called practical rather than speculative teaching was based on his belief in the education of separate faculties, the two chief of which were language and reason. Thus he argued that classics and mathematics would forge deductive thinkers capable of applying clear, precise thought in any field. His preference for active tutorial teaching over passive lecturing was one of the stronger arguments of the traditionalists.<sup>1</sup> (Whewell's contemporary at Cambridge as a student, Augustus de Morgan, whilst upholding mathematics as an essential part of a liberal education, interestingly postulated that imagination was the chief faculty necessary for good mathematicians, noting that that was why the Hindus were better mathematicians than the Romans. Mathematical reasoning, he said, though valuable, was no different from any other type and contrary to common assertion did not teach logic, which should be learnt separately as a basis for all subjects).<sup>2</sup>

The best known defence of a liberal education based on the classics was written by John Henry Newman in 1851. Newman's upholding both of the cultivation of the mind "for its own sake" and of a general culture as opposed to narrow professional studies as being the aim of undergraduate study have been taken as the liberal ideal.<sup>3</sup> Many Unitarians, indeed, could have concurred with this but Newman's ultimate aim for a Catholic Irish university revealed what critics of the Anglican English universities also feared - a desire for a sectarian university education where ultimately liberal education was checked by the power of the religious establishment.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Whewell W., op.cit., 20-5.

<sup>2</sup> De Morgan A., "The Mathematics; their value in education", Central Society of Education, (1837) vol.I, 126-133, 138-9.

<sup>3</sup> Newman J., The Idea of a University, (Image Books, New York, 1959), especially 133-9, 146, 153, 158-60, 174-181, 191-2.

<sup>4</sup> Dale P.A., "Newman's Idea of a University! 'The Dangers of a University Education'", Victorian Studies vol.XVI no.1, 1972, 5-36.

Newman's "idea" in reality was much opposed to liberal reformers of the universities who rose within their walls and whose support was vital to ultimate reform. Baden-Powell's warning that if the higher classes did not acquire the scientific knowledge so "rapidly spreading among all classes", they would not long remain the higher classes, was reminiscent of Sir Thomas Elyot's plea for upper-class educational reform in the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Such a notion underlay the idea of the clerisy which motivated diverse university reformers of the nineteenth century, for although they wished both to draw in and absorb those of the middle-classes who were rising in wealth and power and to use the universities as a training ground for a wider group of professionals (who were also being reformed, especially the civil servants), their aim remained elitist and esoteric. Although some, like Thomas Arnold and H.H. Vaughan, would include subjects like modern history, geography, geology and physiology<sup>2</sup> most retained a preference for highly conceptual and verbal operations, particularly classics (held to cover literature, ancient history and philosophy), at the expense of the phenomenal world and less "intellectual" behaviour. At the same time reformers could use the Arnoldian ideas which flowed from Rugby to inspire a sense of social mission.<sup>3</sup> Such thinking, however, in stressing the liberalising and moral force of secular knowledge was in itself freeing the universities from religious domination, as J.H. Newman rightly perceived.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hill F., op.cit., 231-4; Caspari F., Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England, (New York Paperback, 1968), 171, 189-91, 258, 275, 277-8.

<sup>2</sup> Baker J.N.L., "Mary Somerville and Geography in England", Geographical Journal, (1948) vol.CXI, 210-11. Matthew Arnold emphasised the humanities as the core of university studies - Knights B., op.cit., 204.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 10, 23-5, 180, 184-6, 203, 209-13.

<sup>4</sup> Dale P.A., op.cit., 36.

Internal reformers however, such as the Apostles at Cambridge in the 1830s and Jowett and others at Oxford, all of a Broad Church tendency, held little influence before the 1850s.<sup>1</sup> Some internal reforms portended the gradual changes of later years but before the mid 1850s, and even after, there was much to deter Unitarians from entering the ancient universities. In 1851, Henry Morley, in his satirical "A Defence of Ignorance" found Oxford and Cambridge the easiest of educational institutions to praise - they "did not wear an entire suit of education" although "Cambridge has been lately to the tailors and exults in the notion of appearing more respectable by virtue of a patch." If any educational institution really wished to foster education, continued Morley, it would enable youths at universities to learn to recognise the "outlying boundaries" of the various fields of knowledge whilst especially studying what suits them best. But:

the disciple of Oxford, who has taken the highest honours of the University, unless he should get himself corrupted with knowledge from some other source, might be the warden of your House of Ignorance, and keep you all in safety.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the fact, added Morley, that the Colleges broke their duty in every other way, for example, not saying masses for Henry VI and Archbishop Chichele at All Souls or upholding Roman Catholicism they would not reform because they vowed "a pious duty" to their founders. Cambridge had disturbing features such as the teaching of mathematics, the key to so many tempting sciences, whilst outside activists kept trying to change matters since they knew the colleges of both universities were so wealthy that were these riches

<sup>1</sup> Garland M.M., op.cit., 84-8; see J.R. de S. Honey's review of in H. of E. (Sept. 1982), vol.II, no.3, 225-8.

<sup>2</sup> Morley H., Early Papers and Some Memories, (1891), "A Defence of Ignorance" (1851), 148-50.



redistributed there would be sufficient to have many grand educational establishments in England.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in the period 1800 to 1853 Unitarians looked to educational institutions more congenial in educational ethos and curriculum. Some went to German or Dutch universities but in the first half of this period the Scottish universities were the chief attraction, partly because of the language and of the excellent Scottish university hospitals. Orthodox Dissenters were at home theologically; Unitarians were less so, but not only was there no subscription for students but also a strong liberal movement had much influence, particularly at Glasgow. John Kenrick, for instance, was asked to become an honorary member of its self-improvement society by the orthodox divinity class.<sup>2</sup> Another attraction was the cost or rather the lack of it. Many of the Unitarian students had little money (Benjamin Heywood was an exception). The fees were exceedingly low generally and non-existent for divinity classes and lodgings were very cheap. By the mid twenties, when prices had increased, a Scottish university education could be had for twenty pounds a year and without the expensive distractions common at Oxford and Cambridge. In 1852 the course was only forty pounds a session even for the M.A.. Despite the attendance of aristocrats like Melbourne, debarred from the Grand Tour during the war years, the Scottish universities were largely the preserve of the middle and, increasingly, the working classes, whilst noble and upper class attendance

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 151-8.

<sup>2</sup> Wilbur E.M., A History of Unitarianism, (1945), 249-51; Martineau J., op.cit., vol.I, (1890), 400-1.

sharply declined.<sup>1</sup>

The strictures of the defenders of the English system, particularly against the Arts course at Glasgow - called too philosophical and utilitarian and not sufficiently "calculated to educate gentlemen" - were obviously not heeded by the active classes of the new industrial age. The high standards and broad curriculum of the Scottish universities proved very attractive. The course, as recalled by John Kenrick, extended over five sessions, each occupying six months, the subjects for each session being humanity (Latin), Greek, logic, ethics, and natural philosophy respectively, though in the latter three years much broader courses were tackled than the terms might imply. English students usually began in the logic class as they had already done sufficient Latin and Greek. In the early 1800s there were many outstanding professors remembered gratefully by their Unitarian scholars, for example Jardine in logic, Mylne (one of the few Whigs and liberal theologians in power) in ethics and Young in Greek.<sup>2</sup> As late as 1852 a Manchester College Special Committee commented on the very valuable teaching of classics, logic, moral philosophy, English composition, mathematics and physics.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, in the late eighteenth century a "brilliant flowering of scientific thought and technology" had taken place in Scotland and there were a number of great scientists at Edinburgh and Glasgow universities. Anderson's Institute at Glasgow disseminated scientific knowledge among artisans, befriended the brilliant craftsman James Watt and helped many important students

<sup>1</sup> Matthew W.M., "The Origins and Occupations of Glasgow Students, 1740-1839", Past and Present (April 1966), No.33, 76-94.

<sup>2</sup> Heywood T., A Memoir of Sir Benjamin Heywood, (printed privately), 13-22; Martineau J., op.cit., 400; Carpenter R.L., Memoir of the Revd. Lant Carpenter, LL.D., (1842) 41-4, 72-3.

<sup>3</sup> Printed Papers and Addresses, M.C.O., "Reports for the Special Committee appointed by the Trustees", 8.12.1852., 10.

such as Lyon Playfair. University students like James Keir often became manufacturers in Manchester and Birmingham and other places and played a significant part in industrial development: Scottish professors kept in close touch with some English industrialists, particularly in the chemical and iron industries. Thus an important minority of English manufacturers stood out from their ill-educated fellows as being passionately interested in science and as using new scientific techniques in their industries. Many of these were Unitarians.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, many experimental scientists in England were trained either in the Scottish or continental universities. Out of 240 names of scientists born between 1707 and 1817 and working in England examined by G. Haines, 96 had studied in Scotland, their chief interests being chemistry and medicine.<sup>2</sup> Many English doctors, trained at Edinburgh, played an important part in educational reform including Drs. John Aikin and Thomas Percival in the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> (On the other hand, however, mathematical standards, according to Russell Lant Carpenter, were held back by the low knowledge of the students).<sup>4</sup>

G. Haines has also argued that the Scottish universities, having close contacts with continental universities, partly through Calvinist international affiliations, were important transmitters of Dutch, German and French

<sup>1</sup> Musson A.E. and Robinson E., Science and Technology in the Industrial Revolution, (Manchester U.P., 1969), 178-89

<sup>2</sup> Haines G., op.cit., 18,94-7.

<sup>3</sup> Aikin L., Memoir of John Aikin M.D., (1823) vol.I, 7-9; Nicholson F., "The Literary and Philosophical Society, 1781-1851" "Memoirs and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (1923-4) vol.68 No.9 98,100

<sup>4</sup> Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 50.

educational and scientific influences. Kant's works were known from the 1780s, his denial of a place for natural and experimental science in higher culture not affecting Scottish scientific development any more than German. Educational reforms in England were generated much by men educated in Scotland, for example Scots such as Brougham, Birkbeck, James Mill, Francis Horner and Sir James Mackintosh and Englishmen such as Lord John Russell and Lord Lansdowne. A number of reformist Whigs and Utilitarians connected with Bentham, therefore, were so influenced, as were, of course, the founders, (with the exception of that liberal Anglican Sydney Smith) of the Edinburgh Review. Other educationalists were naturally drawn to Scotland, for example, Richard Lovell Edgeworth sent his son Henry to Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup>

For all the reasons referred to above the Scottish universities had much appeal to Unitarians who used them freely. John Kenrick, for example, was at Glasgow from 1807 to 1810 funded by the Dr. Williams Trust with other Unitarians, including Benjamin Heywood, Henry Crompton and James Yates. Kenrick's distinguished undergraduate career was topped by winning the Gartmore gold medal in history, a silver medal in science and an M.A.. Professor J. Mylne thought the whole group of students, mostly Unitarians, though with some Calvinists, very promising.<sup>3</sup> Lant Carpenter also gained a "distinguished reputation" at Glasgow, 1798 to 1801, and in 1807 he was awarded an LL.D. by the university. In later years his fourth son, William, the eminent naturalist,

<sup>1</sup> Haines G., op.cit., 1,5-7,9,58; Taylor A.J.P., Essays in English History, (1977) 71, says Russell "had been educated: instead of going to Cambridge... or to Oxford..."

<sup>2</sup> Edgeworth R.L. and M., Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, (1821), vol.II, 271-4.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., Letters to Lant Carpenter from Glasgow, 10.5.1810.

did research at the Edinburgh medical school, after an education at Bristol and University College, London.<sup>1</sup>

Many Unitarian ministers studied in Scotland, especially Glasgow, for example Robert Aspland and those in north-east Cheshire mentioned by Sylvia Harrop<sup>2</sup>, John Relly Beard and J.J. Tayler, (who both interrupted their courses at Manchester College), William Turner Junior and J.P. Malleson.<sup>3</sup> It is hardly surprising, therefore, that so many Unitarian ministers were interested in science. Others who did not go were influenced by reading Scottish philosophy, as James Martineau was in 1830.<sup>4</sup>

Many lay Unitarians went to Scotland, too, often as medical students, for example Henry Holland, Thomas Southwood Smith, John Paget and James Currie. Currie was a Scot but became the most outstanding of an important group of Liverpool doctors and a member of Roscoe's circle. He worked hard to make explicit trends of Scottish economic and social thought, especially Dugald Stewart's philosophy which he kept up with when his son studied at Edinburgh.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 34-74; MSS M.C.O., Testimonial on Lant Carpenter from the Professors at Glasgow; D.N.B. vol.9,166.

<sup>2</sup> Aspland R.B., Memoir of the Life, Works and Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Aspland of Hackney, (1850), 73-97; Harrop S., The Place of Education in the Genesis of the Industrial Revolution..., (Manchester M.A., 1976), 119.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, 25.9.1822; D.N.B. vol.55, 399; Unitarian Worthies, op.cit., 383; Inquirer, (3.5.1869) 222.

<sup>4</sup> Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 124-5.

<sup>5</sup> D.N.B., vol.27, 145; Holt R.V., op.cit., 173-4; Wykes D., "John Paget, M.D., of Transylvania (1808-1892)", T.U.H.S. (July 1980) vol.XVII no.2, 55; Checkland S.G., "Economic Attitudes in Liverpool, 1793-1807", Economic History Review, (1952) 2nd series, vol.5, no.1, 69-71.

Other important Unitarian laymen who went to Scottish universities included the Gregs of Styal who attended Edinburgh University before going on lengthy grand tours to extend their cultural and economic education, and James Heywood who studied natural history and geology at Edinburgh before his studies at — Geneva and Trinity, Cambridge.<sup>1</sup>

Much, therefore, in the Scottish type of university appealed to Unitarians, not least the ideal of a "sober, serious-minded and self-improving society."<sup>2</sup> However, suggestions in the 1820s and the 1850s that ministerial students should use scholarships to study at Glasgow met objections over the control of students and the nature of the theological instruction for ministers of the "liberal Dissenters of England." Even so Manchester College students could compete for Dr. Williams scholarships of forty pounds a year to study at Glasgow.<sup>3</sup> Criticisms were also made of the climate and short sessions and, in 1815, of the lack of discipline and overcrowded lectures — there were, for example, classes of 150 in classics. A reply to such criticisms defended the methods of study, examination and discipline in detail adding that it was not likely that young men "initiated in the principles of Unitarianism" would choose bad companions!<sup>4</sup> John Kenrick privately wrote that the chief defect in Scotland was that the professors had to modify their teaching for students from inferior Scottish schools, an interesting point in view of how reformers usually eulogised the Scottish system. J.J. Tayler liked his time at Glasgow, but sadly

<sup>1</sup> Morley J., "W.R. Greg; a sketch," Macmillan's Magazine (1883), XLVIII, 112, 116, Inquirer, (23.10.1897), 689.

<sup>2</sup> Parnaby M.R., W.J. Fox and the Monthly Repository Circle, (Ph.D. Australian National University, 1979), 37.

<sup>3</sup> M.R., (1820), vol.XV, 161 (1821) vol.XVI, 21-2; MSS M.C.O. Letterbook...1824-80, 133; Kenrick's Letter to the Inquirer, 1852, "Reports...Special Committee...8.12.1852-4 10.

<sup>4</sup> M.R., (1815) vol.X, 237-9, 622-9.

reflected, "I cannot, however, feel somehow as if I was treading on Classic ground; I wish I could."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless many Unitarians in their philosophy, their involvement in science and their broad range of interests illustrated the influence of their Scottish education.

One of the most striking illustrations of the Scottish influence was seen in the foundation of London University in the late 1820s, the first new English university since Cambridge was founded in 1209. When, for example, the Unitarian James Yates reissued his Thoughts on the Advancement of Academical Education in England, adapting the wants of the north and west of England to a London university, he continually used his own experience of Scottish university practice, particularly the lack of religious tests, openness to all classes, diversity of subjects, lectures as well as classes, better legal training, professorial dependence on fees, residence in large populous cities, non-resident students, admission to single courses and general democratic character.<sup>2</sup>

The prime inspiration of London University was the poet Thomas Campbell, together with George Birkbeck, Issac Goldsmid, a wealthy Jewish merchant and Henry Brougham, the leading reformer of national education in England at the time and soon to lead the campaign to establish a non-sectarian, inexpensive university "for all classes" (but particularly the middle-class) in the metropolis.<sup>3</sup> Through Brougham (a "deviant aristocratic" according to Neale)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O., J.K.III, J.K. to G.W.W., 14.12.1815; ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., 15.

<sup>2</sup> Yates J., op.cit., passim.

<sup>3</sup> Bellot H.H., University College, London, 1826-1926, (1929), 13-5, 20; Haines G., 15; New C.W., The Life of Henry Brougham, (1961), 359-61.

<sup>4</sup> Neale R.S., "Class and Class Consciousness in early nineteenth-century England:...", Victorian Studies, Vol. 12, (Sept. 1968), 17.

Utilitarians such as Joseph Hume, Francis Place and, eventually, James Mill were involved. As early as 1795 Bentham had fulminated against the universities as educationally useless. Thence both the Benthamite and the Scottish influence on the new university remained very strong with Brougham, Grote and Mill foremost in organising it. Mill was leader of the Education Committee and as such was responsible for the appointment of twenty-four professors of remarkable ability and energy, including the well-known Benthamites McCulloch and Austin. The Benthamite influence was also apparent in the "Crestomathic" curriculum covering ancient and modern languages, English, mathematics, a range of sciences, political economy, law, engineering and medicine. Other chairs in mineralogy and geology, surgery, philosophy, education, arts and design were projected. On the other hand much of the Benthamite influence was disseminated through a Scottish prism, with Brougham, Mill and Mackintosh prominent, and six out of ten of the first Education Committee and a third of the professors appointed by October 1828 educated at Scottish universities. Bentham remained a background figure. Furthermore, neither the chairs of jurisprudence nor of political economy were immediate successes whilst in other aspects of the social sciences favoured by Bentham the chair of moral and political philosophy never materialised and the general philosophy chair was hardly enlivened by the long tenure of the Revd. John Hoppus. Bentham would probably have preferred more science and a greater emphasis on tutorial work than lectures.<sup>1</sup>

Dissenters, for example the Baptists under the Revd. F.A. Cox of Hackney, a graduate of Edinburgh, were drawn into the scheme, too. A provisional committee of the Dissenters and Brougham's group met until they had agreed to support a general "secular" university, Brougham realising that no plan for religious teaching which would satisfy either Dissenters or Anglicans would suit the other.<sup>2</sup> This decision in itself caused antagonism, both Dissenters such

<sup>1</sup> Burns J.B., op.cit., passim; Simon B., op.cit., 121-3.

<sup>2</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 21-2; New C.W., op.cit., 362-3.



as the Revd. Edward Irving and Evangelicals like Wilberforce leaving the project when they realised their own religious views were not going to be promulgated.<sup>1</sup> The new university, however, was intended to cater for men regardless of religious distinction as Issac Goldsmid's patronage proved. (Disraeli later argued that the Jews, essentially a conservative people, were pushed into the ranks of levellers and latitudinarians by ignorant governments excluding them from privileged institutions.)<sup>2</sup>

Some of the founders, for example Campbell and Brougham, were also influenced by their knowledge of German universities.<sup>3</sup> Developments at Jefferson's University of Virginia where professors George Long and Thomas Hewitt Key had taught, were also influential.<sup>4</sup> The examples of the Dissenting Academies were also important. In the nineteenth century many of these had become merely sectarian colleges of a not very high standard, although there were notable exceptions in Homerton (from 1850 New College) where modern languages, science and history were promoted by the distinguished Dr. Pye Smith, and in the third Exeter Academy and Manchester College.<sup>5</sup>

With all these groups and in all these concerns Unitarians already were vitally involved, as has been seen. A number of them were friends with Thomas Campbell whose son attended the Hills' school in Birmingham briefly; M.D. Hill was a promoter of London University.<sup>6</sup> Brougham had various acquaintances

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 366; Howse E.M. Saints in Politics, (1971), 99; Bellot H.H., op.cit., 55.

<sup>2</sup> Disraeli B., Coningsby, (Signet Classic Paperback, New American Library of World Literature, 1962), 260.

<sup>3</sup> Haines G., op.cit., 15.

<sup>4</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 9-10; D.N.B. vol.34, 103.

<sup>5</sup> McLachlan H., English Education under the Test Acts, (1931), 98-9, 104, 195-7, 230-43, 175-87, 202-8, 270-2.

<sup>6</sup> Chandler G., William Roscoe of Liverpool, (1953), xxxiii; Hill R. and G.B., Life of Sir Rowland Hill, (1880), vol.I, 149; Hill R. and F.D., The Recorder of Birmingham. A Memoir of Matthew Davenport Hill, (1878), 77.

amongst the Unitarians, especially the Revd. William Shepherd<sup>1</sup>, although John Bowring and Harriet Martineau had their own reasons for disliking him. Brougham worshipped as an Anglican but praised Charles Wellbeloved's abilities as a theological controversialist and attended W.J. Fox's brilliant sermons.<sup>2</sup> Unitarians also had many contacts with Sir James Mackintosh who had much responsibility for the prospectus of the new university, and with Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia - the latter particularly through the Hills of Hazlewood. Conversely, Thomas Hewitt Key, mentioned above, as joint headmaster of University College School, founded by Campbell, Brougham and Mill in 1831, guided it very much along Hazelwood lines.<sup>3</sup>

It is hardly surprising therefore that Unitarians thought, as Harriet Martineau said, that the establishment of London University was one of the great events of the period, although at first the opposition of the House of Lords prevented a Parliamentary charter and thus a proprietary establishment only was possible.<sup>4</sup> Although, as Henry Morley later pointed out, there were no Unitarians in the first committees, in the following fifty years Unitarians made outstanding contributions financially and otherwise to University College.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Greg Mrs E., Reynolds-Rathbone Diaries and Letters, 1753 - 1839, (printed for private circulation 1905), 126; Holt A., Walking Together, (1938), 161; Shepherd Papers, MSS M.C.O., IV and V passim;

<sup>2</sup> Bowring J. and L., Autobiographical Recollections... (1877), 294-5; Martineau H., Autobiography (1877) vol. I, 311, 220; New C.W., op.cit., 377-8, 126, 372; Kenrick J., A Biographical Memoir of the late Revd. Charles Wellbeloved, (1960), 152-3; Inquirer, 25.6.1864, 419.

<sup>3</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 52; Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 66-7; Hey C., The History of Hazelwood School Birmingham... (Swansea M.A., 1954), 181, 315-7.

<sup>4</sup> Martineau H., The History of England during the Thirty Years Peace, 1816-46, (1849), vol. I, 410; New C., op.cit., 363-4; Yates J., op.cit., vi.

<sup>5</sup> Morley H., A Lecture introductory to the fifty-first session, (1878), 5-22.

Some, like J.T. Rutt were involved in the first meetings; Richard Taylor, W.J. Fox's patron in London, was prominent in the foundation, as was his brother John who became treasurer for many years and the Revd. George Armstrong who was nominated as secretary to the Council in the 1830s. Richard Taylor successfully initiated the City's petition leading to the incorporation of the University of London in 1836.<sup>1</sup>

An ardent supporter was James Yates whose pamphlet in favour of a University of London, Bellot considered was better than any by Campbell and his associates.<sup>2</sup> In arguing the need, in a flourishing country at a time of rapid scientific development, for a university catering for the needs of the middling classes, Yates insisted that any new university, like those on the continent, should be free from religious tests or any particular system of opinions or worship and open to the whole nation. He would leave Oxbridge to train Anglican clergy but would spread their honours and advantages further. (Yates ruefully admitted the "continual propensity" of the Dissenters to join the more privileged Established Church at the very time that they became wealthy enough to support the educational institutions of their former sect). Yates distinguished between the arbitrary acts of monarchs which had established the present religious privileges in education and the much more tolerant attitudes of the House of Commons, manifested at Maynooth and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Yates, preferring a university where many views were allowed and wanting an education to expand the powers of the mind rather than merely fill it, quoted Priestley who said that "the more liberty is given to everything which is in a state of growth, the more perfect it will become."<sup>4</sup> He optimistically

<sup>1</sup> Bolam C.G., Goring J., Short H.L., Thomas R., (hereafter just Short H.L.), The English Presbyterians, (1968) 243, Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 32,39-40; D.N.B., vol.55,457-458. Bellot H.H., op.cit., 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>3</sup> Yates J., op.cit., 1-3,63,viii-ix,5-15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 33.

hoped in 1827 that the two old universities would generously drop their traditional opposition to a third.<sup>1</sup> However, the ancient universities remained united in their utter opposition to any infringement of their privileges, including that of granting degrees.<sup>2</sup> They completely condemned the daring innovations of "factious and evil-minded persons" which might well injure the interests of the Crown, aristocracy and Protestant hierarchy by encouraging the vanity and self-esteem of those destined by God "to move in inferior circles of society."<sup>3</sup> They denied the very name "university" to an institution which excluded religious teaching and therefore did not give "universal" education. Yates, like many others, disputed such etymology, claiming that the term "university" had originally stood for a corporation, many universities, like Paris, for example, not having taught universally, that is giving all types of instruction. He denied that the scheme for the new university ignored religion, since ethics and philosophy covered natural religion and morality. Religion he thought best left to private life anyway, as it could be in a non-residential university.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, of course, the London men could claim that the new university, with its wide curriculum, offered far more of a "universal" education than did Oxbridge.

Other conservative bodies protested, too. The medical profession feared for their own vested interests; John Bull ridiculed the whole idea, especially that of "taking people out of their class"; the Quarterly Review attacked the constitutional basis of the new university; whilst many in established circles feared the popular Brougham. On the other hand, The Times was not unfriendly,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 16-22.

<sup>2</sup> New C., op.cit., 363; Yates J., op.cit., vi.

<sup>3</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 62.

<sup>4</sup> Yates J., op.cit., 164-8.

the Morning Chronicle gave strong support, the Edinburgh Review was wholeheartedly for, with Macaulay, in 1826, leading a wholesale attack on Oxbridge.<sup>1</sup>

The curriculum which Unitarians like Yates looked forward to in the new university was to be useful, teaching manufacturing and commercial men "to understand the principles of the operations, which they perform, and to make philosophy the universal handmaid to the arts." Such a stimulating course would add to the nation's wealth yet not be "a mere trading concern" but a liberal, academic education, enlarging, strengthening and invigorating men's minds.<sup>2</sup> The actual regular four year course at the new university was in line with Yates's proposals except for less emphasis on science in the first two years, although there were many distinguished scientific professors. Yates also proposed architecture, archaeology and special education for intending Indian civil servants, all of which suggestions were followed up from the 1840s, the first two being substantially helped in the 1880s by Yates's own generous bequests.<sup>3</sup> The curriculum's extensiveness and diversity were defended as suiting youthful minds and giving greater opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

The new university had many problems in its first years. Defects in the constitution hampered its efficacy for some years, to the despair of supporters like W.J. Fox who found the "blundering and perversity" of the management "almost incredible."<sup>5</sup> Yates played a part in solving the constitutional difficulties and James Booth (a barrister and in 1833 on the Royal Commission

<sup>1</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 62-3, 66-71, 215-23, 240-8, 143-6, 182, 270-7; New C., op.cit., 367-71.

<sup>2</sup> Yates J., op.cit., 71-4.

<sup>3</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 79, 124-39, 266, 355, 382-3, 424.

<sup>4</sup> Yates J., op.cit., 84-7.

<sup>5</sup> M.R., N.S.6, (1832), 3.

on Municipal Corporations) was largely responsible for the new constitution of 1832.<sup>1</sup> Financial problems lasted longer despite the generosity of some patrons such as the Duke of Bedford, Isaac Goldsmid and the Council of Protestant Deputies whose Unitarian chairman, William Smith, had used his casting vote to ensure that one thousand pounds of its funds would be invested in the new university.<sup>2</sup> The university owed much to the professors who were dependent on fees alone from 1831 and thus were paid very little, especially since numbers declined after the initial flourish of 624 students enrolling from 1828 to 1829.<sup>3</sup>

Sarah Austin complained that the expenditure had been too lavish and "the plans...ill-digested...like all things in which the Whigs have a hand..."<sup>4</sup> Sophia de Morgan, a little more charitably, pointed out that since most Oxbridge graduates held aloof from this rival institution, most of the founders lacked the necessary experience<sup>5</sup> - a truth borne out in fact, by the composition of the Council.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the fervent aim of establishing a non-sectarian university, religious problems remained. Unitarians were much affected by these, a factor which perhaps explained why they were less prominent in the concerns of the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 286; Bellot H.H., op.cit., 210-14; New C., op.cit., 385-7. Inquirer (12.6.1880), 394.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 364-5; Davies R.W., Dissent in Politics, (1971), 208.

<sup>3</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 37, 175-9.

<sup>4</sup> Ross J. Three Generations of Englishwomen, (1888), vol.I, 63.

<sup>5</sup> Knight F., op.cit., 287.

<sup>6</sup> New C., op.cit., 367.

University in its first years than their enthusiasm for it promised. Southwood Smith's nomination for the chair of moral philosophy, for example, led to both philosophy chairs being left vacant (although E.W. Brayley, in 1831, mentioned that Smith did lecture in physiology at the university). When the Revd. John Hoppus was appointed to this sensitive post in 1830, John Kenrick was "thunder-struck."<sup>1</sup> Also, although Dr. John Connelly's introductory lecture as Professor of the Nature and Treatment of Diseases was welcomed because it illustrated the deeply held belief of Unitarians that "the true spirit of religion" could be imbibed at university without the dubious and divisive methods of "direct instruction in technical theology", trouble over three Anglican professors who gave a course of divinity lectures, was exacerbated by the Dissenting ministers Cox and Fletcher deciding to do the same and Brougham apparently agreeing with all five, despite the Council's disclaiming them.<sup>2</sup> Anglican disappointment at the University, however, led to the Tory and Anglican hierarchy's setting up of a rival, King's College, to give a middle-class higher education firmly based on Anglicanism. Brougham led a calm acceptance of this by the original London University.

Further trouble was caused over Bentham's unsuccessful recommendation of Bowring as Professor of English Literature.<sup>3</sup> There were, however, men, Unitarian in sympathy or closely connected with Unitarians, who were among the best of the body of professors who taught in the first years of the college in Gower Street. John Austin, husband of Sarah, accepted the chair of jurisprudence, but despite the great need for systematic legal teaching in London at the time and Austin's high hopes, great knowledge and abilities, his classes dwindled until, in 1835, depressed further by his own exaggerated perfectionism and mental sensitivity, described almost tenderly by J.S. Mill,

<sup>1</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 59; Halevy E., The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism, (Faber Paperback 1972), 482-3; Brayley E.W., The Utility of the Knowledge of Nature Considered, (1831), x; MSS M.C.O., J.K.IV. (7.1.1830).

<sup>2</sup> M.R., (1828) N.S.2., 771-7, (1830) N.S.4., 53-4, 151; Bellot H.H., op.cit., 58; New C., op.cit. 379.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 380-2; 377-8; Halevy E., op.cit., 482.

he finally resigned.<sup>1</sup> Augustus de Morgan, a Unitarian sympathiser, married from 1837 to Sophia (daughter of William Frend, a shareholder, member and auditor of the university), was the first professor of mathematics. De Morgan, a superb Cambridge graduate, liberal, humorous and an excellent teacher, survived quarrels with the Council to serve at University College until 1866 finally resigning over the College's refusal to appoint James Martineau to the chair of mental philosophy and logic because of his Unitarianism.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Anthony Todd Thomson who married Katherine Byerley, great-niece of Josiah Wedgwood, was Professor of Materia Medica. Antonio Panizzi, an Italian barrister, was appointed Professor of Italian through his introduction by William Roscoe to Francis Heywood (the Unitarian translator of Kant) and Brougham - a significant appointment in one sense in that Panizzi opened his lectures to women, who, thenceforth, formed the bulk of his audience, though admittedly the course was at Willis's Rooms and similar to others outside the university open to both sexes. In 1831 to 1832 Miss Rogers and Mrs J.P. Potter were admitted to Ritchie's juvenile course on Natural Philosophy<sup>3</sup> but it was many years before further developments in opening up the university took place, though when they did Unitarians were very much the leaders.<sup>4</sup> Unitarians also attended London University as students from its early days, for example Henry Solly and William Carpenter. The latter, son of Lant, entered University College in 1833 as a medical student and later, after a sojourn at Edinburgh University and much influenced by German developments

<sup>1</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 96-102; Ross J., op.cit., 46,57,63-4,67,71; ed. Austin S., Lectures on Jurisprudence, (1885), vol.I,8-9; Mill J.S., Autobiography, (O.U.P. Paperback 1971), 46-7.

<sup>2</sup> D.N.B., vol.14,331-3; Bellot H.H., op.cit., 80-6,211; Knight F., op.cit., 285-6.

<sup>3</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 204,122-3,367; Chandler G., op.cit., xxxiii.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. see Young R., The Life of an Educational Worker, (1934),47-8; National Association for the Promotion of Social Science Report, (1863), 360, for the prominent part William Shaen, Edward and Henrietta Busk and James Heywood played in this. Inquirer (12.3.1887),172; (23.10.1897) 690.



returned to lecture, became University registrar and helped lead the renaissance of physiology in England. William Shaen's brilliant academic career at University College was followed by a lifetimes service to it as Fellow, Clerk to the Convocation and member of the Senate successively.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians, such as Edward Strutt, who between 1862 and 1879 was to be Vice-President and then President of University College, certainly greeted the foundation of the university with much enthusiasm.<sup>2</sup> Henry Crabb Robinson, a doubting shareholder at first, in 1838 was elected onto the Committee of Management and later was the influential and sympathetic Vice-President of the Professorial Senate, the important promoter of the Flaxman gallery and of University Hall and a munificent benefactor of the College.<sup>3</sup> An associate of his in the Council and in the promotion of University Hall was Philip le Breton, grandfather of Henrietta Busk who, like so many of her family, did so much for the University.<sup>4</sup> These, together with James Heywood, later a member of the Senate, a champion of the admission of women to degrees and a founder of University Hall, and Samuel Sharpe, whose benefactions to University College and its school were considerably over fifteen thousand pounds, are simply outstanding examples of the many Unitarians involved with University College, particularly from the 1840s.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bellot H.H., op.cit., 276-7; D.N.B. vol.9,166; Haines G., op.cit., 37-8.  
Inquirer (12.3.1887) 171-2.

<sup>2</sup> Fitton R.S., and Wadsworth A.P., The Strutts and the Arkwrights, 1758-1830, (1958) 180-2.

<sup>3</sup> H.C.R., II,54,125,208,258,260,285,335,368,399-402.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 369; Young R., op.cit., 1-6.

<sup>5</sup> Inquirer (23.10.1897) 689-90; D.N.B., vol.51,426.

In the earlier years reports and letters in the Monthly Repository indicated the enthusiasm and interest of the Unitarians in the University of London. In 1827, for example, one writer foresaw its foundation as constituting a new era for all humankind, since it would educate the most influential men of the capital of the most prosperous country on earth. His regrets, however, that beforehand "no adequate means of an intellectual education have been provided for the teachers of religion among the Dissenters" were hotly disputed by ensuing correspondents and the claims of Manchester College in particular were upheld for progressive, liberal education, though the editor did affirm that present Dissenting institutions were inadequate for their numbers.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst the regular and detailed references in the Monthly Repository to the developments at London University one issue that stimulated much thought was the foundation of King's College in 1828. Given royal, governmental and parliamentary support, it was, unlike the college in Gower Street, able to obtain incorporation. The powerful body of governors was largely clerical although the curriculum was unusually wide and comprehensive. The first Principal, the Revd. William Otter, was, in fact, a moderate Churchman and a Whig, intimate with the Benthamite circle at Gower Street, but at first the differences between the colleges seemed more apparent than the similarities.<sup>2</sup>

The Monthly Repository's reaction to King's College was, on the whole, cautious, though varied.<sup>3</sup> A Non-Con Club member, distressed by apparent indications at University College of disguised religious distinctions, thought King's was at least straightforward in its principles, but obligatory daily worship for all regular students aroused scathing comment.<sup>4</sup> Henry Morley, in

<sup>1</sup> M.R., (1827), N.S.1, 468-9, 161-171, 254-6.

<sup>2</sup> Hearnshaw F.J.C., The Centenary History of King's College, (1929), 35-93; High Pavement MSS, HCV3, op.cit., 161-2.

<sup>3</sup> M.R., (1828), N.S.2, 411, 632, 786.

<sup>4</sup> M.R. (1829), N.S.3, 129-30.

1851, described the founding of University College as a big stone thrown at the front door of the Castle of Ignorance and left lying on the doorstep. He gleefully added that the Bishops of the Church of England then were constrained to throw another stone, King's College, "a regular boulder."<sup>1</sup>

In fact both colleges had many teething difficulties, not least over finance, in the first decades of their establishment, although once the thorny problem of a Royal Charter had been sorted out and both were able to become constituent members of the degree-granting University of London in 1836 University College (the original London University) especially was able to expand its activities. Theological difficulties at King's and public quarrels of the staff at University College were amongst problems exacerbated by the apparent indifference of the middle-classes to the advantages London University supplied.<sup>2</sup>

It was little wonder, therefore, that John Kenrick insisted that London had to prove itself and that that might take years.<sup>3</sup> Before 1840 certainly, the chief institution of higher education supported by the Unitarians was Manchester College, described by James Yates in 1827 as probably yielding "to no seminary in England, either in the extent or the accuracy of its literary or scientific pursuits."<sup>4</sup> Brian Simon, however, says that in the narrowing of

<sup>1</sup> Morley H., op.cit., 139-40.

<sup>2</sup> Hearnshaw F.J.C., op.cit., 334, 417-8; Bellot H.H., op.cit., 232-98 *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., J.K.IV, 17.3.1834.

<sup>4</sup> Yates J., op.cit., 57.

educational purpose which resulted from the reactions to the Napoleonic era even Manchester College "could not fulfil the functions its original promoters had in mind."<sup>1</sup> A study of the College, the pinnacle of Unitarian educational efforts from 1800 to 1853, shows that there is some truth in both these seemingly contradictory statements.

The difficulties that Manchester Academy had encountered in the late 1790s, coupled with the memory of the fate of Warrington and Hackney, led many Unitarians to believe that no liberal academy would ever succeed. Some believed that such an institution could prosper only if it were near London or Birmingham, but others, especially the Revd. William Wood of Leeds, were sure that having the right man as head was more important. Consequently, the Revd. Charles Wellbeloved, minister of St. Saviourgate, York, a former student of Hackney, a successful private teacher and theological writer, was persuaded to take over. Since Wellbeloved was reluctant to move from York the college moved to him in 1803.

In contrast to Manchester Academy in 1786, Manchester College, York, started with little patronage, low funds, no buildings and only one tutor,<sup>2</sup> but it made no compromise with the high principles Barnes had proudly proclaimed.<sup>3</sup> It remained dedicated to the principles of non-subscription and free enquiry as the Revd. Dr. Toulmin was reported (probably by William Turner) to have emphasised in 1807:

youth, educated for the ministry in this seminary, are not, and ought not, to be considered as pledged to support, in future life, a scheme of sentiments which may suit the taste and views of its patrons.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Simon B., op.cit., 69.

<sup>2</sup> Williams J., Memoirs of the late Thomas Belsham, (1833), 522-3; Cappe C., Memoirs of the Life of the late Mrs Catherine Cappe, (1822), 380-4; Kenrick J., op.cit., 39, 46, 58-9, 66-72, 77-85.

<sup>3</sup> Barnes T., A Discourse delivered at the Commencement of the Manchester Academy, September 14th 1786, passim.

<sup>4</sup> M.R., (1807) vol.II, 283.

Students, he added, should take time to study the arguments on all sides and to decide for themselves in keeping with the general principle of Dissenters and Protestants:

disclaiming human authority in matters of religion, maintaining the sufficiency of Scripture, exercising the right of private judgement...<sup>1</sup>

The 1833 Report stressed that the College provided:

for the education of a learned ministry, without any subscription to articles of religious faith... This recommendation it possesses in common with no Institution of the same kind in England, and on this account alone it is entitled to the support of those who think that the influence of Christianity and just conceptions of its nature and design should keep pace with the rapid increase of knowledge and intelligence on other subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Such principles were proudly and constantly reiterated as constituting the chief glory of the College, as can be seen in letters and articles in Unitarian periodicals, and, above all, at the Jubilee of the College in 1836.<sup>3</sup>

Charles Wellbeloved was highly gratified, in 1809, to hear that some people thought that the College was insufficiently Unitarian in its teaching:

...I considered their censure as the highest praise - I do not, I will not teach Unitarianism - or any ism but Christianism. I will endeavour to shew the students how to study the Scriptures - and if they find Unitarianism there - well - if Arianism - well - if Trinitarianism - well - only let them find something for themselves - let it not be found for them by their Tutors.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> M.C.Y. Report (1833, M.C.O.).

<sup>3</sup> Christian Reformer, (1836), 196-202; Kenrick J., "The Respect due to Christian Liberty in Religious Education", Two Discourses...Cross St. Chapel, Jan. 24, 1836, 3-34.

<sup>4</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, 6.4.1809.

Such sentiments were generally gloried in<sup>1</sup> and any suggestions that the liberal principles of the College might be being broken in any way aroused angry opposition,<sup>2</sup> although John Kenrick, whilst fully upholding the principle of free enquiry, was honest enough to remark drily:

With three Unitarian tutors, supported by Unitarians,  
receiving none but Unitarian students and sending out  
none but Unitarian preachers, we may disclaim as we please  
Unitarianism or Dissent.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, there were at times both non-Unitarian students and tutors and, conversely, some students who later conformed.<sup>4</sup> Although, undoubtedly, the overwhelming predilection of the College, not least in its very stress on non-subscription and free enquiry, was not only Protestant and Dissenting but Unitarian, real efforts were made to avoid the inculcation of any particular system of belief. Wellbeloved, for example, theological tutor until 1840, and his successor, Robert Wallace, adopted Dr. Taylor of Warrington's exhortation to students, counselling them to give no weight to his opinions unless proved by their own examination of the Scriptures.<sup>5</sup> Wellbeloved adhered to critical and philological examination of the texts and was so impartial that, later, James Martineau recalled:

<sup>1</sup> E.g. M.R. VI, (1811), 369-71, 441; MSS M.C.O., York Letters, (1811), G.W.W. to C.W. 8.6.1811.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O., Letter book M.C., 1824-80, 2; Letter book, cuttings, M.C. 1842-53, 177-8.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O. J.K.III, 10.8.1814, Compare 1813 Annual Report in M.R. (1814), vol. IX 250; see also J.K.IV, 15.7.1832.

<sup>4</sup> Roll passim.

<sup>5</sup> Davies V.D., A History of Manchester College, (1932), 39, 76n.2, 111.

the impatience with which, out of very homage to his wisdom,  
we almost resented his impartial love of truth in giving us  
the most careful epitome of other opinions with scarce a  
suggestion of his own... he set up within us a standard of  
Christian scholarship to which it must ever exalt us to aspire.<sup>1</sup>

Such praise echoed the heartfelt sentiments expressed at the first Jubilee  
of the College in 1836 and at Wellbeloved's retirement in 1840.<sup>2</sup>

Wellbeloved had cause to worry that some students took his principles  
to extremes: John Smethurst, for example, apparently openly declared that he  
had been taught at York:

that it was very well to be a Unitarian - but on no account to  
preach Unitarianism - it was advisable to read the bible for  
oneself - but not to inculcate its doctrines upon others.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the College aimed principally at theological students and, as  
the annual report of 1813 stated, for those "among that class of Dissenters  
usually denominated Presbyterian."<sup>4</sup> The importance of the divinity students  
was illustrated in the annual addresses mostly directed at them, given usually  
by the Visitor. From 1808 to 1859 this was the Revd. William Turner of Newcastle  
who was eager to impress that although they would be ministers to the poor as  
well as the rich, their congregations would generally not only comprise well-  
off and "respectable" people but also intelligent, rational and inquisitive ones  
who would expect intelligent well-thought-out, closely reasoned sermons.<sup>5</sup> Therefore

<sup>1</sup> Martineau J., op.cit., IV,54; Kenrick J., op.cit., 99-110.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Reformer, (1836), 196-203; (1840), 542-7; see also Wallace R.,  
Introductory Lectures M.N.C. (1841) ; Critical and Exegetical Theology, 20-1.  
Some scholars did dispute Wellbeloved's teaching of Hebrew without points -  
McLachlan H., Essays and Addresses, (1950), 188-9.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, 2.3.1812.

<sup>4</sup> M.R. (1814), IX, 250.

<sup>5</sup> M.R., vols. (1809), IV, 408; (1811) XI, 440; (1814), IX, 435; (1821), XIV, 429-30;  
(1824), XIX, 426-7.

they should be well-educated.

This theme and those educational ideals of the Priestleian and liberal Dissenting Academy traditions discussed earlier were taken up by many supporters and officers of Manchester College in the nineteenth century. As the 1833 Report said, provided that the intending minister was properly nurtured in character and spirit:

literature and science will furnish new and wider views of the nature and application of religious truth, and enable the faithful teacher to speak with a confidence and authority, which he could not otherwise possess... the understanding of a Christian pastor cannot be too much enriched with knowledge, or too highly cultivated with the most enlarged philosophy...

The characters of the Dissenting minister is mainly determined by the nature of its academic education.<sup>1</sup>

Various tutors reiterated such views.<sup>2</sup> John Kenrick, at the first Jubilee of the College, bitingly condemned the Church of England for having "first of all injured the Dissenters" by excluding them from the universities "and then insulted them for the inferiority in learning which is the consequence of her own injustice." Kenrick wished, therefore, to educate future ministers to the greatest extent possible for, whilst he thought it absurd to try and rival the highest peaks of Oxbridge learning, the College could:

give to those who were educating for the ministry among us, such a portion of sound and accurate knowledge as should prevent their being exposed to the imputation that their faith was the result of their ignorance.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>  
M.C.Y. Report (1833)

<sup>2</sup>  
Christian Reformer, (1841), 473-8, (1834) 571; Manchester New College Addresses 1853-81; Tayler J.J., "Inaugural Address M.N.C. London 1853", 10-11; M.R. (1824), vol. XIX, 427.

<sup>3</sup>  
Christian Reformer, (1836), 198.



Celebrating the same occasion, James Martineau urged that since the professional influence of the priesthood was gone for ever, that influence must go to men of proven intellectual and moral power, particularly when fading belief in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures called for knowledgeable and understanding minds to interpret the Gospels. Besides there were now other disseminators of ideas to compete with the man in the pulpit:

Among those classes which form our worshipping assemblies

... the whole sphere of life and action has become enlarged.<sup>1</sup>

This latter point was constantly stressed by leading supporters of the College, well aware that, despite the growth of Unitarianism amongst some sections of the less well-off, the principal congregations of Unitarianism, and certainly those from which Manchester College drew much of its support, were drawn from the elite of Dissent, socially, economically and culturally.<sup>2</sup> Ministers needed to be educated in the new interests of their age, able to explain their rational religion, and, not least, considering the low salaries such highly educated men were likely to receive, capable also of running a school up to the standard desired by Unitarian parents.<sup>3</sup>

Unitarian leaders were determined to achieve the best education possible at Manchester College. As John Kenrick contended in 1835, intellectual powers were God-given, as were the means of improving them; all subjects could serve religion, for example, natural philosophy showed the simple and comprehensive laws of the universe - "an expression of an Infinite wisdom", whilst history

<sup>1</sup> Martineau J., op.cit., IV,360-8. See also High Pavement MSS, op.cit., HiY7 and HiY5, Sermons by the Revs. John Grundy and James Taylor on behalf of M.C.

<sup>2</sup> Occasional regrets of the low value set on literary accomplishments by Unitarians might have been in reference to the less wealthy congregations - ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol.I,52; MSS M.C.O., J.K.IV, 23.2.1843.

<sup>3</sup> Turner W., A Sermon preached at the chapel in Hanover Square, Newcastle for the support of the New College, Manchester, 1800.

showed the progress of the human race - "the gradual unfolding of a wise and beneficent plan".<sup>1</sup>

If education was so important it was for laymen as well and throughout this period the College asserted its desire to educate them, too. Doubtless the constant advertising for lay students partially stemmed also from the fact that the College was not viable without them. Most of the divinity students (generally expected to be of poorer parentage financially)<sup>2</sup> had their education paid for on the foundation. It was the fees of the lay students which largely raised the otherwise inconsiderable salaries of the tutors.<sup>3</sup> It was the patronage of the laity, stimulated by the respect they had imbibed for learning and culture, which would engender support and status for both the College and the ministers it sent out. Nevertheless, it would be cynical to deduce from this that the College's only interest in lay students was financial. In the tradition of Warrington, and, like Hackney, Manchester College very positively wanted to educate Dissenting laymen. One supporter, at least, even believed that this was "greatly a more important object".<sup>4</sup> From the first College prospectuses offered places to those aiming at professional or civil and commercial life,<sup>5</sup> and annual reports reiterated the College's claim to offer the completion of a liberal education "with more enlarged and varied knowledge than is attainable at school, and guarded by a

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick J., The Union of Religion with Intellectual Culture.. Dublin, 16.8.1835.

<sup>2</sup> Turner W., op.cit., 16-20; M.C. Prospectus 1797, M.C.O., M.N.C. Proceedings, 1853 Petition 14.

<sup>3</sup> M.C.Y. Report, (1829), 4.

<sup>4</sup> MSS M.C.O., J.K.IV, W. Turner to G.W.W. (including letter of S. Heywood to Turner) 7.11.1809.

<sup>5</sup> Though in 1804 the numbers the College could cater for were small - MSS M.C.O. Letters re M.N.C..... early nineteenth century, Advertisement 1804.

superintending discipline from the danger of having morals corrupted."<sup>1</sup>

This emphasis on an education both extensive and moral was not only because of fears such as Wellbeloved's as to the depths of depravity into which untutored youths might fall<sup>2</sup> but also because of the roles which it was hoped a virtuous and enlightened laity might play. Unitarian academics, acutely aware of the new society of which Unitarians were so much a part, appreciated its possibilities, but still feared the impact of the new industrial age on man's moral development. Thus they wished to ensure a modern liberal education not only to educate future industrialists in scientific principles but also to educate future citizens to direct new developments for the good and not the detriment of the individual and society. They were asking, therefore, not for a specifically commercial education but a liberal one which led commercial men, like the other students, to become useful, rational and progressive leaders. In addition, studies in the evidences of natural and revealed religion would enable lay students to sustain and defend rational religion. Educating lay and divinity students together would be beneficial to both.<sup>3</sup>

The curriculum taught at Manchester College remained quite extensive. The basic three year course for all students comprised Greek and Latin classics,

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O., Letter-book, cuttings etc., M.C. 1824-80, Prospectus 1817, 1823 Report, 6; M.C.Y. Reports (1828), 5; (1829), 5; (1830), 5 etc..

<sup>2</sup> Wellbeloved C., Objects of pursuit proper for Young Persons who have received a Liberal Education. Sermon at St. Saviourgate, York, 1810 (1811) 11-12. See also M.R., (1811), VI, 441; (1821), vol. XVI, 428; (1814), vol. IX, 433-4; M.C. Report (1823), 6.

<sup>3</sup> M.C.Y. Report 1831; M.R. (1807), vol. II, 441; vol. IX, 1814, 250; Unitarian Chronicle, (1833), 167; M.N.C. Proceedings, 1853, 32, Affidavits of Wellbeloved, Kenrick, Martineau, Smith, Tayler etc. 39, 41-2.

composition in English and Latin, ancient and modern history, including the history and principles of the English constitution, the whole of the mathematical course pursued at Cambridge, universal grammar, belles lettres, including oratory and criticism, lectures on the philosophy of the mind, ethics, political science, logic and the evidences of natural and revealed religion, and "an extensive course of natural and experimental philosophy and chemistry. "Divinity students also took Hebrew in their first three years. Modern languages were optional extras. With slight variations this remained the basic course between 1803 and 1840. Divinity students continued with their classical studies for a further two years and added other ancient languages and theological studies, including some practical divinity work.<sup>1</sup> Both Charles Wellbeloved and George Wood wanted a three year theological course but the full six year course was not achieved until 1833 and not made mandatory until 1848.<sup>2</sup>

In 1840 the curriculum was redrawn to fit the matriculation and degree requirements of the University of London but this really meant, as the 1840 Report stated, " a more minute division of the departments of instruction" rather than any essential change. Professors were appointed in classics and English language; history; mental and moral philosophy and political economy; pure and mixed mathematics; physical science and natural history; critical and exegetical theology, biblical archeology and the evidences of natural and revealed religion; pastoral theology and the Hebrew, Chaldeen and Syriac languages; and ecclesiastical history. French language and literature were given a lectureship. English

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, 7.5.1807; Letter-book... M.C., 1824-80 (Prospectus 1817), 17, (Prospectus 1827) 35; Kenrick J., Memoir ... Charles Wellbeloved, 1860, 89-90; M.R. (1807), vol. II, 118-9, 441; (1810), vol.V, 605; (1826), vol.XXI,, 497; M.C. Reports (1823), 6 and especially (1834), 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O. York Letters, 1811, 3.1.1813; C.W.II, 21.12.1813; M.C. Reports, (1834) 4-5, (1837), 6, (1839), 5; Letters....1840-53, 1848 Address of Committee to Trustees, 1-3.

literature was not in a distinct department but in 1846, with a reorganisation of some of the departments, this was rectified and a separate chair of English history and literature was established.<sup>1</sup>

The breadth of the course was defended by tutors and supporters of the College as one that would awaken the students' minds to the various subjects that would both sharpen and develop their mental faculties and would prove useful to them in their future lives.<sup>2</sup> As at the universities, many of the students were between sixteen and eighteen on entrance and would not expect to follow a specialised course, though reformers argued that the much narrower Oxbridge curriculum was highly specialised, Charles Wellbeloved defended the "extensive" course as necessary for a liberal education in the contemporary widening state of knowledge and to suit the needs of rational Dissenters and the liberal supporters of the College. Kenrick pointed out that though some criticised them for teaching too much others wanted them to teach more. J.R. Beard later termed the mind of William Turner Junior, ex-student and tutor, as "encyclopaedic" and, as such, illustrative of "the style of education which is imparted in our College."<sup>3</sup> The course was wider than that proposed for the new Bristol College for Classical and Scientific Education in 1829<sup>4</sup> and similar to that at London University (with the addition, of course, of the evidences of religion), though Kenrick did sympathize with the view of a Mr. Matt of Ushaw College in 1842 that the London course had too many compulsory subjects.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.N.C. Reports, 1840, 4-5; 1841, 3, 6, 8-11; 1847, 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. M.R. (1812) VII, 468-9; Christian Reformer, (1841), 476-8; M.C. Report (1834 6.

<sup>3</sup> MSS C.W.II, 7.5.1807; J.K.III, 10.8.1814. C.R. (1854), 431.

<sup>4</sup> Prospectus of a College for Classical and Scientific Education to be established in or near the City of Bristol, (1829), Bristol Central Library 23363, 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> MSS M.C.O. J.K.IV, 10.11.1842, 18.11.1842.

The highest course at the College was that of divinity, deliberately left until the last two of the five year course, when:

the faculties have been opened and enlarged, a habit of close attention has been formed, and materials and principles, by which to draw a just conclusion, have been laid up in the mind by preparatory sciences.<sup>1</sup>

From 1803 to 1840 the divinity tutor was Charles Wellbeloved who was a theologian translator and antiquarian of some repute and, despite his shyness, an effective if reluctant Unitarian controversialist, under the very shadow of York Minster.<sup>2</sup> The leadership that Unitarians gave in England to biblical criticism and rational theology stemmed to some considerable degree from the work of Manchester College.<sup>3</sup> This was further stimulated by awareness of German advances in philological, historical and philosophical scholarship and Manchester College played a significant role in developing such scholarship in England, as the work of tutors such as John Kenrick, John James Taylor and George Vance Smith, all of whom studied for a time in Germany, illustrated. Kenrick, however, whose Essay on Primeval History destroyed the first eleven chapters of Genesis as reliable historical documents did not consider a year in Germany could replace one at Manchester College/or theology.<sup>4</sup> The importance of such developments was accentuated in 1840 by the creation of three distinct chairs in theology instead of one.<sup>5</sup> The students did

<sup>1</sup> M.R. (1812), vol.VII, 505-7.

<sup>2</sup> Cappe C., op.cit., 441-2; Kenrick J., op.cit., 59, 77-9, 117, 145-54, 229-30.

<sup>3</sup> Wigmore-Beddoes D.G., Yesterday's Radicals, 1971, *passim*; Carpenter J.E., The Bible in the Nineteenth Century, 1903, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Wigmore-Beddoes D.G., op.cit., 34-6, 70, 39-40, 55-8, 96-9, 101, 116-9; D.N.B. LV, 399-400. Inquirer, (19.5.1877), 321-3; Letters re M.C. early 19th Century, "Times" 26.5.1877; Martineau J., op.cit., vol.I, 401-6, 412-4, 392-4; ed.Thom J.H., op.cit., 105-69; M.N.C. Report (1853), 4; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., vol.I, 182-9. MSS M.C.O., J.K.III, 16.4.1826.

<sup>5</sup> M.N.C.Introductory Lectures 1840, Theology-Wallace, Tayler and Robberds.

not take the London theological examination, Kenrick, for example, disliking it on principle and insisting that in no sense could it compare with that of Manchester College.<sup>1</sup> When the ambitious Manchester experiment of 1840 to 1853 failed, the College's Committee did not consider that the theological department could be abandoned even if the literary and scientific departments could be provided elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> John James Tayler, the new Principal in London in 1853, firmly upheld the need for "a thorough and scientific cultivation of theology" as the principle of free enquiry.<sup>3</sup>

A similarly high standard was reached in other subjects. Although, as has been shown, most Unitarians derided the exclusive claims of classics in education they valued them as a mental discipline and training in style and taste, and especially for their use in the reading, understanding and accurate criticism of the Scriptures.<sup>4</sup> As the Revd. William Shepherd pointed out to the students in 1826, it was their Principal's "critical knowledge of language" together with "minute acquaintance with the niceties of theological disquisition" resulting from hours of patient and laborious study, which had enabled him to stand up against the many adversaries who, eager to win prizes and Church preferment, hastened to

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O., J.K.IV, 23.2.1841. Since 1838, through the efforts of Thomas Arnold, a voluntary scriptural examination had been instituted at London for candidates for Arts degrees. Arnold, however was so displeased that this examination was not made an integral part of such degrees, he withdrew from the Senate. Stanley, A.P., op.cit., 383-6, 443-6, 449-52, 456-9, 478-9.

<sup>2</sup> Printed Papers and Addresses, 1839-53, Report of the Special Committee M.N.C., 8.12.1852.

<sup>3</sup> Tayler J.J., Inaugural Lecture 1853 especially 7-9, 16-9.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. M.R. (1812), vol. VII, 430-1; (1816), vol. XI, 119; (1817), vol. XII, 497; (1826), vol. XXI, 431, 557; High Pavement MSS Nottingham University, HiY5 and HiY7.

attack the Unitarians.<sup>1</sup> The one subject which was studied daily throughout the three year course and, from 1815, for the extra two years of the divinity course, too, was classics. The ability to read Homer and Horace was an essential part of the entrance requirements for students on the foundation from 1810, requirements which obviously were hoped for from lay students, too, and which were made more stringent in 1825 and actually reduced slightly in 1840 for students entering with a view to a London degree.<sup>2</sup> Classics were also encouraged by various prizes given at the annual examinations.<sup>3</sup>

How high the standard in classics was is difficult to judge. William Shepherd privately had reservations about the students' standard in Greek in 1810<sup>4</sup>, but their general competence and interest was indicated by their letters, orations and essays.<sup>5</sup> In the book of College Essays of 1816 to 1819 preserved at Manchester College, Oxford, for example, three essays out of seven are based on knowledge of the ancient languages, two of them, significantly, linked with biblical studies. The third, written in latin, on Lucretius, was by John James Tayler who acted as classical tutor for one year from 1819 to 1820.<sup>6</sup> Tayler was

<sup>1</sup> M.R., (1826), vol. XXI, 557. Note Shepherd did term Wellbeloved "Principal" here although the title was only officially given in 1840.

<sup>2</sup> M.R., (1810), vol. V, 605; (1815), vol. X, 448; (1825), vol. XX, 375; MSS M.C.O., York Letters, (1815), 12.2.1815 (N.B. J.R. Wreford in Statistics on Dissenting Colleges has the Fletcher brothers entering M.C.C. in 1813); Letters re M.C. early 19th Century, William Holt to his Father 5.11.1822; MSS M.C.O. J.K.III 30.3.1825; M.N.C. Report, (1841), 8.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. M.R., (1816), vol. XI, 119; (1817), vol. XII, 496; (1818), vol. XIII, 462; (1826), vol. XXI, 431; (1829), N.S.3, 584; and the Reports of the College throughout the period here studied.

<sup>4</sup> MSS M.C.O., Shepherd Papers VI, 83; Compare M.R., (1810), vol. V, 605.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. M.R., (1814), vol. IX, 432; MSS M.C.O. Wood W.R., Letters to his Parents, 1829-31, 21, (18.4.1830) to 28 (6.6.1830) passim.

<sup>6</sup> MSS M.C.O., College Essays, 1816-19.



an excellent classicist, although admittedly so even before he had entered the College, a fact true of other Unitarians who had attended his father's school in Nottingham or other schools run by Unitarians, such as Lant Carpenter's.<sup>1</sup> Tayler, who was allowed to concentrate on classics at College, greatly admired his tutor, John Kenrick, whom he described as "a man of excellent talent, and uncommon diligence ... a very elegant and accurate scholar", a "very conscientious and indefatigable tutor", exacting high standards and reaching them himself - sentiments he still endorsed twenty years later.<sup>2</sup> Indeed Kenrick, classical tutor from 1810 to 1840, stands out in the succession of able classical tutors at Manchester College from 1786 to 1853. Charles Wellbeloved was convinced by 1818 that the College's reputation was chiefly due to Kenrick's exertions and talent.<sup>3</sup> In later years James Martineau gave warm testimony to Kenrick's scholarship and teaching, contrasting the dry grammatical pounding so common to contemporary classical teachers with Kenrick's full, clear and absorbing exposition of the literary history of the text and any other related matters, civic, legal, domestic or personal. Furthermore, "Mr. Kenrick was in the front rank of the pioneers of improvement."<sup>4</sup> Following his studies in Germany, Kenrick's highly popular translation of Zumpt's Latin Grammar and other works, culminating in his edition of Matthiae's Greek Grammar, made him widely known, as Edward Tagart, a former

<sup>1</sup> D.N.B., vol. 55, 399, vol. 9, 157-9; ed. Thom J.H. op.cit., vol. I, 3-7, 12, 14, 19-21, 25-6, 233, 299, vol. II, 172; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 339-52.

<sup>2</sup> D.W.L. 24 102 (1) Tayler J.J. to W. Tayler 5.11.1814. See also ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol. I, 14; MSS M.C.O. Wellbeloved Letters 14.12.1836. Those who did not reach Kenrick's exacting standards might suffer from his "keen sarcastic wit" - Wood W.R., op.cit., 35 (14.11.1830).

<sup>3</sup> MSS Wellbeloved Letters, 10.10.1818.

<sup>4</sup> Martineau J., op.cit., vol. I, 408-9.

student of his, boasted in 1829.<sup>1</sup>

Kenrick's successor in 1840, Francis Newman, the radical, lovable and eccentric brother of the future Cardinal, later described by Sir Alfred Wills, as an "intellectual giant", similarly poured a wealth of learning into his classical teaching. His enthusiasm, balanced by his recognition of the vast importance of modern knowledge and of English literature, enabled him to be well received at Manchester College.<sup>2</sup>

Opportunity to take modern languages was always considered necessary, although at first modern languages were extra, usually to be procured from masters outside. John Kenrick taught some French and, after his stay in Germany, from 1819 to 1820, German, too, which was important for advances in both biblical criticism and in chemistry and other sciences. The need for modern languages for those training for commercial life was also increasingly recognised at the College (and by parents such as William Strutt). From 1826, when the Chevalier Pecchio arrived in "high spirits" to teach Italian and French, all lay students were required to take lessons in one or both languages, though expenses for these was charged separately. In 1827 Pecchio added Spanish to his teaching and his reports from 1827 to 1828, indicate a high proportion of divinity students as well as lay taking modern languages. After Pecchio left in 1828 there was no new appointment of a full-time teacher, although Kenrick continued to teach German and approved masters in York were available. In 1840, however, the need to meet London degree requirements led to the appointment of a lecturer (though not "professor") in

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.; Inquirer (19.5.1877), 321-2; MSS M.C.O., J.K.IV 17.11.1839; M.R., (1829), N.S.3, 878.

<sup>2</sup> Sieveking G., Memoir and Letters of Francis W. Newman, (1909), 108-9; Introductory Lectures, 1840, Newman F., Classical Course; M.N.C. Report, (1847), 4.

French language and literature.<sup>1</sup> Modern languages, therefore, were given a respect as yet lacking from the ancient universities<sup>2</sup> but were not a major part of the curriculum.

European literature, however, including English, was always studied under the guise of belles lettres or "polite literature", taught by the classics tutor until 1840 and thence the history tutor. It was considered that the best way to study literature was:

to view every distinguished writer of ancient or modern times in connexion with the circumstances in which he lived and the people among whom and for whom he wrote. Literature is thus exhibited in its proper combination with history, as serving to complete the picture of the people to whom it owed its birth;...<sup>3</sup>

Kenrick, the Professor of History from 1840 to 1850, saw literature as a most important facet of general history:

more intellectual than art, more popular and universal in their (sic) influence than mere science or abstract philosophy...<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.C. Reports 1828, 1829, 1834, 1841, 6-9, 1842, 6; MSS M.C.O. Letters re M.C. early 19th Century, William Holt to his father, 5.11.1822; J.K. III, 6.4.1826; J.K. IV 28.2.1834; Letter-book ... 1824-80, 24, 28, 35, 42-3; Roll 1826.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. an honours course in modern languages was only open to men at Oxford in 1908 after women had pioneered the subject as a university degree - Brittain V., The Women at Oxford, (1960), 90, 122.

<sup>3</sup> M.C. Report (1834), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Introductory Lectures 1840, Kenrick J., History and the History of Literature, 12. See also Martineau J., op. cit., vol. I, 411.

Attention to the English language and composition was always included in the curriculum and from 1846 became part of the new course of English literature and language. The appointment of William Gaskell as the new professor was an apt one by a community which had pioneered the study of English literature in higher education. Gaskell was an excellent scholar and writer with a wide, thorough knowledge and a relish for fine words (and a beautiful reader, too).<sup>1</sup> As a student at Manchester College, York, he had given an oration on Milton, an example of the many orations made by students on literature and drama at the annual examinations.<sup>2</sup>

The College was similarly progressive in education in its teaching of modern history as an academic subject. In the first year ancient history, including a view of the materials and sources of history and the principles of historical criticism, was studied, and in the second, modern history, which particularly compared the development of England and France, and which emphasised the history and principles of the English constitution.<sup>3</sup> From 1810 John Kenrick taught history and in 1840 he became the new professor. His chief reason for visiting Gottingen in 1819 was to inaugurate its history lecture system at York. He wrote many historical articles and books, including his Egypt of Herodotus which earned him fame at the ancient universities despite their ostracism of "heretics".<sup>4</sup> In 1840, although circumstances and the regulations of London demanded a chronological outline for the two year course, Kenrick wanted to teach his students a

<sup>1</sup> Gerin W., Elizabeth Gaskell, (1976), 45-52, 63.

<sup>2</sup> M.R., (1826), vol. XXI, 430-1; e.g. M.R., (1827), N.S.I, 625-6, (1828), N.S.2, 569.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II 7.5.1807; Letter-book...1824-80, 17, 28,; M.C. Report, (1834), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Inquirer, op.cit., 321-3.

philosophical view. He did not claim to be completely impartial but hoped to be fair.<sup>1</sup> Yet James Martineau said of him:

More than anyone we have ever met in life, he surrendered himself unconditionally to objective evidence; would accept anything, where this was cogent; nothing where it failed.<sup>2</sup>

Martineau termed Kenrick's lectures a "model of selection, compression and proportion" and greatly respected the largeness, the depth and rare balance of his mind. Others fortunate to study under him affirmed their admiration and respect.<sup>3</sup> No wonder the Revd. Charles Wicksteed said of Kenrick in 1877:

he became at length one of the most exact and accomplished scholars in England, and certainly without a rival or a compeer, the first in the ranks of English Nonconformity.<sup>4</sup>

This sentiment was echoed by perhaps a more objective critic, The Times.<sup>5</sup>

Kenrick's students surely could only have benefitted from such an outstanding scholar, as the subsequent career of one of them, John James Tayler, illustrated. His great enthusiasm for the study of history, especially as a source of the principles of morals, jurisprudence, politics and political economy<sup>6</sup> must surely have been caught from his former tutor. Convinced of the importance of history in the understanding of Christianity, he became Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Manchester New College in 1840 - the first instance of such a chair in a Nonconformist College.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Introductory Lectures, op.cit., 3-20.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau J., op.cit., 413.

<sup>3</sup> D.W.L. Letters to Kenrick 24.81 (15) J. Martineau to Mrs Kenrick 24.5.1877; Wood W.R., op.cit., 4, (1.11.1829); Wellbeloved Letters, 14.12.1836.

<sup>4</sup> Inquirer, op.cit., 322-3.

<sup>5</sup> Letters re MNC... early nineteenth century, The Times, 26.5.1877.

<sup>6</sup> MSS M.C.O., Wellbeloved Letters, J.J. Tayler to J.K., 14.12.1836.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol.I, 28; MSS M.C.O. Wellbeloved Letters, 14.12.1836; D.N.B. vol.55, 399.

The study of science was recognised by tutors and supporters of the College as important to all, but vital to the lay students and very important if lay patronage was to be won. Apparatus was secured, particularly after the return to Manchester in 1840.<sup>1</sup> Both in York and in Manchester repeated references were made to the use students could and did make of the scientific lectures at the local philosophical societies, societies in which Unitarians, not least the tutors of the College, figured so prominently.<sup>2</sup> The College's dedicated Visitor, William Turner, was used to stressing at the New Institution, Newcastle the importance of science for "commercial youth" who could apply it, particularly chemistry and mechanical philosophy, to local industry.<sup>3</sup> His son, William Turner Junior, was tutor in mathematics and science from 1809 to 1827, with some success in the latter apparently,<sup>4</sup> and was followed by William Hincks who was to become an eminent botanist.<sup>5</sup> Hincks's likely appointment was welcomed in 1824 by Kenrick as important to those who went on to study medicine as apparently ten did between 1803 and 1840.<sup>6</sup> From 1842 to 1845, James Heywood liberally provided for a chair in civil engineering.<sup>7</sup> It does seem, however, that science received much more precise

<sup>1</sup> E.g. MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, 25.1.1810; 11.4.1810; M.R. (1810), vol. V, 605; (1811), vol. VI, 558; Letter-book...1824-80, 125; Letter-book...1842-53, 153; Introductory Lectures 1840 Preface vi.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. MSS M.C.O. Letter-book...1824-80, 35.

<sup>3</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 227-45.

<sup>4</sup> MSS M.C.O. Letters re early 19th century, op.cit., William Holt to his father, 5.11.1822.

<sup>5</sup> D.N.B. vol. 26, 441.

<sup>6</sup> MSS M.C.O., J.K. IV, 22.10.1824; MSS M.C.O. Loudon J. Medical Students at Warrington and Manchester College.

<sup>7</sup> M.C. Report (1842); Printed Papers and Addresses 1839-1853, M.C.O. Advertisement for civil engineering course and evening courses in practical chemistry; M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, Report, 43.

attention from 1840 when separate chairs were established in mathematics and science, and one of the great advantages seen in moving to London in 1852 was the outstanding reputation which University College had by this time in chemistry and science.<sup>1</sup> From the 1843 to 1844 session, however, science was taught by the Professor of mathematics - this change welcome financially, was facilitated by changes in the London University regulations.<sup>2</sup>

The recognition of the value of science in higher education showed that those who developed the curriculum at Manchester College were in the forefront of educational thinkers, many years ahead of the endowed and public schools, the colleges of the ancient universities, and many industrialists and businessmen of the day who, unlike enlightened Unitarian industrialists, were not convinced of the need for such an education for their sons. William Strutt, for example, delighted in his son Edward's chance to gain "real knowledge", to have his curiosity gratified, to learn what had already been discovered and then be in a position to think and discover for himself:

then you will undoubtedly stand in the ranks of those by whose powers of mind we have been so much elevated in the scale of being..<sup>3</sup>

Strutt also sought to tap Edward's tutor, William Turner Junior's knowledge for his own inventions.<sup>4</sup>

Unitarians' interest in science was also stimulated by their realisation of the implications of scientific discovery for rational theology, implications which John Kenrick was delighted to see troubled Anglican theologians.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Printed Papers and Addresses, M.C.O., Reports... 8.12.1852, 11.

<sup>2</sup> M.C. Report (1844), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 172.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>5</sup> MSS M.C.O. J.K.IV, 8.5.1834.

The entrance requirements at York did require a certain amount of mathematical knowledge - admittedly not a great amount - but the syllabus covered the whole Cambridge mathematical course from Euclid to Newton's Principia, as James Martineau gratefully remembered.<sup>1</sup> Other students were not always so keen: Wellbeloved commented in 1817: "The students generally speaking lose themselves in the beginning of the course and never recover themselves afterwards."<sup>2</sup> It would seem a certain amount of learning by heart took place - questions in the 1823 examination for example, included: "Demonstrate the forty-seventh proposition of the first Book of Euclid."<sup>3</sup> Turner, an able mathematician himself, was a patient teacher but probably kept too long to the methods he had learnt in the Scottish Universities, according to Kenrick. William Wood was somewhat dubious about Hincks's mathematical teaching but Hincks was, of course, primarily a botanist.<sup>4</sup> The course was obviously like that at Cambridge, reformed by 1830, although Wood found little advantage in using Legendre instead of Euclid. The course was little changed in 1840 and therefore must have suited London requirements.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 34; see also MSS M.C.O. Shepherd Papers VI, 83.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O., York Letters, 13.2.1817.

<sup>3</sup> Letters re M.C. early 19th century, 1823 Mathematical Papers.

<sup>4</sup> C.R. (1854), 137; MSS M.C.O., Wood W.R., op.cit., 4 (1.11.1829) 14, (7.2.1830) 22, (25.4.1830), 25 (16.5.1830), 33 (31.10.1830). In the second year, however, Wood gave his attention principally to mathematics - ibid., 62 (19.6.1831). In 1833 when the maths class was not doing very well, Robert Philips was allowed to take political economy instead - MSS M.C.O. J.K.IV, 7.3.1833. The difficulty of expecting one tutor to be expert in both mathematics and science was recognised in 1841 - M.C. Report, (1841), 6.

<sup>5</sup> Compare M.R., (1814), vol. IX, 250 and M.C. Reports (1834), 5 (1841) 8-9; Wood W.R., op.cit., 14 (7.2.1830).



From 1809 the mathematical and science tutors at York were also responsible for mental philosophy, logic and ethics, and political economy, subjects which had previously been taught by the theological tutor.<sup>1</sup> Lectures in mental philosophy covered the English and Scottish schools whose moral philosophy, including Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart, was more akin to Richard Price than Joseph Priestley and, by 1834, the "leading doctrines of the most eminent philosophers of Germany and France."<sup>2</sup> The chief concentration, however, was on David Hartley, and the latest thoughts on Hartley, including the careful and clear analysis of Hartley's philosophy by Thomas Belsham, were keenly followed, James Mill's Analysis of the Human Mind being purchased for the College library in 1829, the year it came out.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that the students were much influenced by these environmental and associationist ideas, a factor which reinforced the progressiveness of Unitarian education.<sup>4</sup>

Many orations were given at the annual examinations on mental philosophy and on education,<sup>5</sup> as they were, indeed, on political economy which was considered

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, 7.5.1807; M.R., (1810), vol.V, 605.

<sup>2</sup> Carpenter J.E., James Martineau, 1905, 34-5; M.C. Report (1834), 5. See also M.R., (1812), vol. VII, 625, (1829), N.S.2, 31-40.

<sup>3</sup> Letterbook ... 1824-80, 52. See C.R. (1854) 13.2-7 for a detailed description of the courses in maths, science, mental philosophy, logic, ethics and political economy under William Turner Junior.

<sup>4</sup> Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 35, 119-20, 123; Connell J.M., "Dickens" Unitarian minister: Edward Tagart", T.U.H.S., (1944), vol. VII, no. 2, 78; MSS M.C.O., Letterbook ... 1824-80, 50. See also Wood W.R., op.cit., 39, (16.1.1831).

<sup>5</sup> E.g. M.R., (1811), vol. VI, 439, (1815), vol. X, 448, 450; (1816), vol. XI, 416; (1817), vol. XII, 496; (1818), vol. XIII, 462; (1821), vol. XVI, 427; (1825), vol. XX, 420; (1826), vol. XXI, 430; C.R., (1834), 415, 570.

vital by the tutors for future leaders of commercial, industrial and civic life. It was described as an important part of political philosophy, that is "the theory of the social union considered as having for its object the production of the greatest possible sum of diffused happiness." Examination questions debating how political economy could be vindicated against its detractors illustrate how seriously the College took this subject, as did orations, such as William Wood's paper at the College's Literary and Scientific Society in 1830 on "The tendency of machinery to increase the product of human labour and the sum of human happiness as exemplified in the manufacture of cotton" and another in 1831 on "The effect of commerce in promoting the civilization of mankind." <sup>1</sup>

In 1840, mental and moral philosophy and political economy were elevated to a separate department under James Martineau who justified these studies on the ground that only men "thoroughly acquainted with the facts and laws of their own intellectual and moral being" could resolve the deep problems of speculative philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Metaphysics was hardly a new subject in higher education but Martineau, whose own philosophical views were steadily changing from the mid 1830s, was so in the vanguard of nineteenth century philosophy that he had some difficulty in retaining the lectureship in these studies after 1853.<sup>3</sup> His inaugural address in 1840 so impressed John Stuart Mill that he offered to publish any article

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O., Letters re M.C. ... early 19th century, 1823 Examination Paper; Political Philosophy; Wood W.R., op.cit., 23, (2.5.1830), 51, (24.4.1831); M.R., (1825), vol. XX, 420; (1826), vol. XXI, 430; (1831), N.S.4, 567.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau J., op.cit., vol. IV, 1-17.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 147-314 passim M.C. Report (1854), 9. Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 252-60.

written by Martineau on the free teaching and learning unique to Manchester College in the Westminster Review.<sup>1</sup>

This progressive curriculum was strengthened by many societies - Shakespeare, Charles Lettres, History, Modern Languages, and Debating, for example.<sup>2</sup> The last is significant as oratory was considered of prime importance not only because of the continuous pressure put on the College to produce eloquent and inspiring teachers (not always common among the more academic Unitarians apparently) but also of its use to future leaders in public life.<sup>3</sup> Actors from Covent Garden or Drury Lane were occasionally appointed to teach elocution.<sup>4</sup> In 1823 an outstanding group of divinity students gained permission to practise preaching in the villages near York. Their ensuing establishment of a Unitarian chapel at Welburn, designed by their "architect" James Martineau, won doleful approval even from the incumbent, the Revd. Sydney Smith - "the Smith of Smiths".<sup>5</sup> J.R. Beard

Ibid., 111. Significantly, the London examination in mental philosophy concentrated on those problems familiar in Unitarian education and had questions on Hartley and James Mill - Printed Papers and Addresses 1839-53, 1843 Mental Philosophy Examination, Junior Class.

MSS M.C.O. Letters re M.C. ... early 19th century, William Holt to his father, 1822; Wood W.R., op.cit., 5, (8.11.1829), 23; (2.5.1830).

E.g. ibid., 50, (17.4.1831), 59, (29.5.1831); M.C. Report (1833), 4; MSS M.C.O.

C.W.II passim; J.K.III passim; J.K.IV 1.7.1825. C.R. (1836), 555, 582;

Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 172-3.

Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 30.

Letters re M.C. ... early 19th century, Missionary Project; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 35-6; M.R., (1824), vol. XIX, 375; (1825), vol. XX, 421-2, (1827), N.S.1, 628; (1830), N.S.4, 558; (1831), N.S.5, 501.

remembered this as the most satisfying part of his college life.<sup>1</sup> Pole-leaping, cricket, boating, walking, political and other activities provided lawful relaxation and change from constant study.<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that the curriculum was very wide and as such it was open to criticisms similar to those received at Hackney and other Dissenting academies.<sup>3</sup> John James Tayler, when first a student, believed it impossible for students to master either the wide variety of subjects or the "enormous quantity" of material within them that tutors, even the "very judicious and sensible" Kenrick, taught:

in order to get done, they are obliged to gallop through so fast,  
that most of them drop behind at every step, what they picked up,  
at the preceeding; so that when they come to their journey's end,  
most of them are as light as when they set out.<sup>4</sup>

Tayler, admittedly, had previously had a classical education. He became sufficiently converted to the curriculum at Manchester College to become a professor there in 1840 and Principal in 1853, but remarks by other students, such as William Holt in 1822 and William Wood in 1829, on the amount of time they needed to copy out lectures<sup>5</sup> do raise the question of how far students could be learning

<sup>1</sup> C.R., (1826), 82.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O., Letters re M.C. ... early 19th century, W. Holt to father, 1822; Wood W.R., op.cit., 9, (13.12.1829), 46 (27.3.1831); McLachlin H., Essays ... 200, 207.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Wakefield G., Memoirs, (1792), vol. I, 352-375; but compare Turner W. (Jun. Lives of Eminent Unitarians, (1840), 263.

<sup>4</sup> D.W.L. 24 102 (1) J.J. Tayler to cousin 5.11.1814.

<sup>5</sup> MSS M.C.O. Letters re M.C. ... early 19th century, W. Holt to father, 5.11.1822; Wood W.R., op.cit., 4, (1.11.1829), 6, (14.11.1829), 22, (25.4.1830), 36, (28.11.1830). But see also ibid. 20.3.1831 (45).

to think for themselves amidst their efforts to get down another person's words - the very drawback critics saw in a modern curriculum. The fact that some lay students did the three year course in two did not help.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand students' complaints of being overloaded with work are hardly rare. The lack of a variety of suitable books (due more to these not being available than to their not being in the library which was ever increasing)<sup>2</sup> made the lecturer's words precious and shorthand was often used to help note-taking.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it was not the intention of the tutors to encourage mere note-learning, as Newman's letter to the Committee on behalf of the professors in 1841, showed. Also, there were many encouragements to self-expression through essays and orations and students had the advantages of class-teaching, too, an advantage J.J. Tayler advocated in conjunction with professorial teaching once the College had moved to London.<sup>4</sup>

One of the chief difficulties of the extensive curriculum, however, was having the requisite number of tutors to teach it competently. Robert Wallace, in 1840, lamented that in the past, Dissenting colleges, limited to the support of "a small section of the Christian community" had had to expect one man to do the work of many.<sup>5</sup> It was true that Walker's weariness of 1800 was echoed by

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O., J.KIV, Dec.1830; Letter-book ... 1824-80, 28; M.R., (1813), vol.VIII 482.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., M.R., (1820), vol. XV, 432; MSS M.C.O. C.W.II 10.8.1813; York Letters 1814, J. Manning to G.W.W. 15.1.1814, 5.3.1814, Richard Tottie to Robert Philips, 2.4.1814.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Wood W.R., op.cit., letters 15 ff..

<sup>4</sup> MSS M.C.O. Letters re M.C. ... early 19th century, Newman to Committee, 20.10. 20.10.1841. M.C. annual Reports; ed. Thom J.J., op.cit., vol.II, 39.

<sup>5</sup> Introductory Lectures 1840, Wallace R., Theology, 6-9.

Charles Wellbeloved in the early years at York, complaining in 1808 - " I have really been fagging with never less than five and twenty lectures a week." His repeated illnesses from over-exertion made the appointment of three tutors vital.<sup>1</sup> With improved finances the situation was never so bad again but, even so, up to 1840, the workload remained heavy.

These difficulties of the tutors were exacerbated by the periodic disciplinary and financial crises of the College. Disciplinary problems, especially among lay students, (although it was of the divinity students that Wellbeloved remarked in 1817 that they were thinking "more of the outside than of the inside of their heads.") caused Wellbeloved to "fear the fate of Warrington and Hackney", nearly led the young John Kenrick to resign, eventually caused William Turner Junior to leave, and dogged the work of William Hincks when he was resident tutor.<sup>2</sup> For a college that distinguished itself from the "corrupt" universities by the moral care of its students, and, in the York period, its domestic character, such interruptions were far from satisfactory.<sup>3</sup> George Wood, having been personally upset by a noisy drunken party and an illicit, night-time theatre-goer,

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O. C.W.II, C.W. to Revd. W. Wood 14.8.1805, 30.11.1807, to T. Robinson 10.4.1807, 5.5.1807, 5.3.1808, to G.W.W. Feb. 1809, 6.4.1809, 10.6.1809, 19.8.1809, 14.12.1809; M.R., (1807), vol.II, 117-120.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O. York Letters 1816, 1.4.1817, 4.6.1816, 15.3.1817; Wellbeloved Letters, W. Turner Jun. to C.W., Nov. 1818, divinity students to C.W. 4.12.1818, G.W.W. to C.W. 19.4.1819, John Tayler to C.W. 19.12.1818, G.W.W. to C.W. 20.10.1827; J.K.III 18.1.1817, 2.3.1817, 2.4.1819; J.K.IV 21.11.1827; Letter-book ... 1824-80, 32, 33, 35; Wood W.R. op.cit., 12 (24.1.1830) 28, (6.6.1830) 35, (14.11.1830) 39, (16.1.1831) 43, (13.2.1831) 60, (5.6.1831); M.R. (1816), vol.XI, 419, (1819), vol. XIV, 449.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O. Wellbeloved Letters, W. Turner Jun. to C.W. 7.8.1818, W. Turner to C.W. 3.12.1818.

understandably feared that the rumours of such carryings-on would frighten away would-be patrons.<sup>1</sup> This was by no means the whole picture and often the difficulties were caused by one or two students only, as in 1818 (when Mark Philips and Edward Strutt were students) when fears that nearly all the lay students were stealing out at night to indulge "their vicious propensities as freely as in any of the universities" were proved unfounded.<sup>2</sup> Such problems are hardly uncommon in colleges or universities at any time, as Wellbeloved reassured George Wood in 1827, saying that "young men at College are great fools...".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the tutors, whatever their principles and desire to make rational, enlightened and moral leaders of the middle-classes, could hardly regard lay students as an unmixed blessing.

Yet, like the need for a steady inflow from subscription and congregational collections, lay students were vital for the financial stability of the College, a stability which, despite a permanent income from an increasing estate, sometimes failed and was thus a major cause of the various moves of the College. Thomas Fletcher wondered why with:

the excellence of the plan of study, and the acknowledged qualities of the tutors ... so few, so very few, of the youth of an opulent body of Dissenters should be found to take advantage of them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., G.W.W. to C.W. 7.1.1828, 17.1.1828, 23.1.1828, 19.11.1828. See Lucy Aikin's comment in MSS M.C.O. Shepherd Papers vol.II, 221.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O. Wellbeloved Letters, W. Turner Jun. to C.W., Nov. 1818, W. Turner Sen. to C.W. 3.12.1818, divinity students to C.W. 4.12.1818, G.W. to C.W. 19.4.1819.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II 23.10.1827.

<sup>4</sup> MSS M.C.O., York Letters 1815, T. Fletcher to G.W.W. 11.1.1815. See also M.R. (1815), vol. X, 237.

According to the College Roll 235 students were educated from 1803 to 1839, and 50 from 1840 to 1853; of these 113 and 32 respectively were lay students. There were also occasional students from 1840 to 1853.<sup>1</sup> There was a periodic lack of lay students, possibly caused by rumour of disciplinary lapses or, in the 1840s, by economic depression and certainly by the rivalry of London University from the 1830s. The ostracism of Unitarians by other Dissenters, particularly over the Lady Hewley case, cut off grants which would have assisted students as well as ensuring that the College remained primarily Unitarian.<sup>2</sup> This was an important factor: Unitarians did give substantial amounts to fund Manchester College, but the Unitarian body was comparatively small in number and not always firmly united, and many congregations had their own educational concerns to support, although, admittedly, some, like the New Meeting, Birmingham, were outstanding for their contributions.<sup>3</sup>

All these factors affected support for and numbers at the College. Decline in either could seriously depress the remuneration of the already underpaid tutors and decrease the number of students on the foundation.<sup>4</sup> York was not the ideal

<sup>1</sup> Roll. There are one or two discrepancies between this and other Rolls e.g. Kenrick's in his appendix to his biography of Wellbeloved. For reference purposes here the College Roll is used.

<sup>2</sup> Kenrick J.,... Memoir ... Charles Wellbeloved, 178-94; M.C. Special Report, 1844, 4; For Lady Hewley's Charity Fund and M.C. see MSS M.C.O. C.W. II 14.8.1805, 3.4.1807, 5.3.1808, 25.8.1808, 5.8.1809, 3.10.1810, 8.8.1826, 22.12.1830, 10.12.1833; Letter-book M.C. ... 1824-80, 69.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O. JK.IV, 17.6.1838; MSS High Pavement, (1823) Him2, 22.11.1840, 25.3.1849; M.R. (1807), vol. II, 283; (1809), vol. IV, 301; (1816), vol. XI, 118; (1823), vol. XVIII, 553; M.C. Reports (1823), 13, 14; (1847), 24-5. MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, 1812 passim, 23.12.1813, 14.12.1815; Letter-book ... M.C. 1824-80, 48, 49, 54-5, 63, 64, 65, 71, 72; M.R. (1821), vol. XVI, 59-60; (1823), vol. XVIII, 411; (1824), vol. XIX, 373, 375; MSS M.C.O. J.KIV, J.K. to W.R. Wood, 18.1.1836; M.C. Report, (1845), 5-6.



situation to attract large numbers of students, particularly before the railway opened up the country. This might account for the fact that commercial families like the Potters used the College chiefly in the two Manchester periods.<sup>1</sup> York, of course, was seen as forbidding also because of the strength of the Establishment there, a factor which certainly made Kenrick's heart sink on first taking up his appointment, yet both he and Wellbeloved worked easily with liberal Anglicans in many local concerns and the students had a great affection for the Minster.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the huge increase in donations and subscriptions and the enthusiastic propaganda generated by the move back to Manchester in 1840 did not attract the expected increase in lay students, thus leaving the College dependent on resources too slender to support its high ambitions.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, the very lack of lay students could be self-perpetuating, as parents doubted there could be any type of emulation. On the other hand, some students apparently worried that the standard of public examination was too high.<sup>4</sup> Some Unitarians obviously believed that the College was really for intending ministers, not laymen.<sup>5</sup> Also the College costs (eighty guineas at York rising

<sup>1</sup> Roll - Thomas Henry Potter attended 1815-17.

<sup>2</sup> Inquirer, 19.5.1877, 322; Letters re M.C. ... early 19th century, William Holt to father, 1822.

<sup>3</sup> M.C. Reports (1840), 6; (1841), 28-30; 1844 Special Report; MSS M.C.O. Letter-book ... 1824-80, 137-51. Between 1840-4 9 new divinity students registered and 15 lay. There were also 37 one year students but 25 of these were 1840-2 - Roll; MSS M.C.O. List of Students M.C. 1840-9.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. MSS M.C.O., York Letters 1815, T. Fletcher to G.W.W., 11.1.1815; 12.2.1815; J.K.III, 25.2.1815.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. M.R., (1823), vol. VIII, 633-4.

to one-hundred in 1817, and somewhat less at Manchester.<sup>1</sup>) were prohibitive for the less wealthy, especially many ministers, unless their sons followed in their fathers' footsteps, whereby they could have all their board and tuition fees paid on the foundation - another heavy expense for the College.

Fortunately, the College was enthusiastically supported by a number of wealthy commercial and industrial Unitarian families, for example the Philips, Crompton, Strutt, Shore, Yates, Lee, Ashton, Potter, Hibbert, Kenrick, Paget, and Heywood families, both by their money and their presence.<sup>2</sup> James Heywood's continual generosity in the second Manchester period included endowing a chair of civil engineering.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that for many wealthy Unitarian families the type of liberal education at Manchester College was what they wanted. But not all Unitarian industrialists and businessmen used the College. The Gregs did not, for example, although they had connections with the College. In preference they chose Lant Carpenter's school in Bristol and Edinburgh University, other institutions giving a similar liberal and scientific education. Other Unitarian industrial and commercial families similarly patronised Unitarian schools and sympathised

<sup>1</sup> MSS M.C.O., York Letters 1816, 25.5.1816; Letterbook ... 1824-80, 17. Fees at Manchester were £22 for a divinity student, board and lodging £35-40 - M.C. Report (1847), 14, 17.

<sup>2</sup> MSS B.L., 24, 442. Hunter J., Collectanea Hunteriana, "Memoirs to serve for a History of Protestant Dissenters. Manchester New College - York". Roll passim; M.C. Reports (1823), 11-2; (1841), 28-9; (1847), 21. Note too that many appeals for funds were quickly answered, e.g. M.C. Reports 1821, 1833, 1834, 1840.

<sup>3</sup> M.C. Report (1842), 6; M.N.C. Proceedings 1853. Affidavits 43.

with the College to the extent of giving money and service.<sup>1</sup> It is true, as the 1844 Special Report of the Committee of the College pointed out, that the middle-classes generally took their time to be persuaded of their need of such an education as that given at Manchester College, preferring one of a more immediately practical use and ending at fourteen. Schools of this type abounded in Manchester.<sup>2</sup> Although many Unitarians had more ambitious aspirations, however, they increasingly chose to send their sons to London University for their higher education, so much so that, in 1839, trustees proposing a move to London as a theological college in conjunction with University College, lost by only two votes.<sup>3</sup> At that date it was considered that affiliation with London, opening up, as Mark Philips said, "the path, so long closed... to proceed to academical degrees and university honours", was sufficiently advantageous to the College.<sup>4</sup> As the Manchester College Committee itself said, University College might well be expected to have greater superiority than could be looked for "in a comparatively secluded institution, resting mainly on the support of one religious community". But, it added it remained to be seen:

<sup>1</sup> Morley J., op.cit., 112,116; M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, Petition 32; M.C. Reports (1840),2; (1841),28,29; (1853),3. R.H. Greg was married to Mary Philips and this might have stimulated his interest in the College. A number of powerful Manchester industrialist families also had members serving on the Committee of the College but no students in the first half of the nineteenth century, e.g. the Kennedy, McConnell and Ewart families.

<sup>2</sup> M.C. Special Report 1844, 4; Musson A.E. and Robinson E., op.cit., 115.

<sup>3</sup> Introductory Lectures 1840, Preface iii-iv; M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, Petition 26-36; ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., 231-237.

M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, 27; D.W.L. Letters to Kenrick, 24.81 (13), J.J. Tayler to J.K., 10.5.1838; MSS M.C.O. Letter-book...1824-80,113.

how far the English Dissenters, belonging principally to the middle-class, and imbued with the mercantile spirit, are likely to enforce, in the Institution which must take its complexion from their character, the high order of literary attainment which the English Presbyterians have always prized in their ministers of religion.... in relation to the strength and whole extent of the English Presbyterian body, Lancashire is more really central than London... ...dissenting institutions in the country often exhibit a spontaneous vigour, which painful exertion in London can hardly maintain.<sup>1</sup>

However, the excited hopes (backed at first by vastly increased resources) that Manchester College would become the focus of higher learning in the north, were disappointed. The College not only failed to attract many men from outside Unitarianism, despite a deliberate separation of the theological department from the rest, but also still lost lay students, not least northerners, to London. Unitarians, such as William Rathbone (VI) used the German universities, although in many cases, for example those of Charles Beard, W.H. Herford and Henry Enfield Roscoe, this was after taking London degrees through either Manchester College or University College.<sup>2</sup> In no year at Manchester did divinity students exceed 13 or lay students 23 and many of the latter were amongst the new occasional students.<sup>3</sup> This made a large staff expensive and worried many who believed it vital that lay and divinity students should be educated together.<sup>4</sup> From 1844,

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Christian Reformer (1841), 525.

2

Printed Papers and Addresses, M.C.O., Letter of the Committee of Council, 30.10.1839, 2-3.

3

M.C. Report (1840), 3-6; Special Report 1844; MSS (Liverpool University)  
William Rathbone VI, XI.2.1-56; D.N.B. XXII Supplement, 154-5; 2nd Supplement II, 255; Roscoe H.E. op.cit., 45ff.,

4

M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, 29-31. See also M.N.C. Reports 1844-53.

therefore, there were successive suggestions for and detailed investigations into the possibility of a move to London.

However, although University College, in following the same free principles as Manchester College, might seem to obviate the need for the latter, it could not, in Unitarian eyes, supply the complete education of their ministers, nor, incidentally, afford continuing opportunities for academic Unitarian ministers to advance knowledge and thus impart "to Nonconformist history a share of intellectual and social dignity." On the other hand, by the late 1840s, University College was, in Henry Roscoe's words, "at the heyday of its usefulness and prosperity", open to men of all religious persuasions, having an excellent staff (including, incidentally, Francis Newman, who moved there from Manchester College in 1846) and some outstanding students, such as Roscoe himself and Lister. Manchester College witnesses, with some reservations, reported steady improvement at the College.<sup>1</sup>

From 1847 there were two further conflicting factors. In London, in gratitude for the 1844 Dissenting Chapels Act which they had helped secure, Henry Crabb Robinson, Edwin Field and others promoted the establishment of University Hall, a residence for students at University College, where the free study of theology and instruction in any subject not taught or not fully taught at University College, could be given.<sup>2</sup> This further draw to Unitarian lay students offered obvious possibilities for an amalgamation with Manchester College. The Council of University Hall suggested this in 1848, but Manchester College Committee were not ready yet to pull up their roots in the north of

<sup>1</sup> Printed Papers and Addresses, M.C.O., Report of the Special Committee, 8.12.1852, 4-6, 11; Report of the Committee of Inquiry, 30.6.1848; Roscoe H.E. op.cit., 24-33.

<sup>2</sup> H.C.R., op.cit., vol.II, 276, 281, 282, 289, 307. University Hall is now Dr. Williams Library. Frances Power Cobbe and Philip le Breton were other prominent London Unitarians involved - ibid. 369, 373; Unitarian Worthies, op.cit., 118, 90; Cobbe F.P., Life of..., 1904, 524; Tarrant W.G. and Worthington J. "University Hall, London", T.U.H.S., (1927), vol.IV, no.1, 2-4.

England. Nor, especially with the bitter memories of past failure both of domestic residence and of London, were they satisfied that any union with the immature and unproved University Hall would be easy.<sup>1</sup> Some, too, such as Robert Aspland, feared that University Hall was casting "a longing eye on the broad acres and funds of M.N.C. (sic)."<sup>2</sup> In fact it was the scholarship and eloquence of men such as Kenrick, Martineau and Tayler, that Crabb Robinson coveted.<sup>3</sup> There was some conflict of interest amongst Unitarians at this time but this was partly a reflection of its usual individualism and partly a clash between older Unitarianism and the new, as illustrated by the social concern of Bache to remain in the north and the intellectual hunger of Martineau and Tayler to move to London.<sup>4</sup>

A further complication arose in 1846 in the bequest of John Owens of one hundred thousand pounds to found in Manchester a college free of religious tests. The opening of this college in March 1851 on the same principles but on a wider footing and backed by greater resources than Manchester College, ended, as James Martineau's biographers have said, the hopes of Manchester College to be the "centre of the highest educational influences in the district."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Printed Papers and Addresses, M.C.O. Report of the Special Committee, 8.12.1852, 11. Report of the Committee of Inquiry, 30.6.1848, 5-20; Letters, Papers etc. re. Second M.N.C., 1848-9, Address of Committee to Trustees 16.3.1848.

<sup>2</sup> D.W.L. Letters to J.K., 24.81 (26), 23.11.1852.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O. (Showcase A3 Box B.5.4) H.C.R. to Harmer Stansfield, 5.4.1847. Note Stansfield was from the North as were other supporters of University Hall such as James Heywood.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., MSS M.C.O. J.K.IV, 17.6.1838; Short H.L., op.cit., 266. The latter disunity led to bitter opposition to Martineau's appointment as professor in 1857 - ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol. II, 60-5; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit. 292-322.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 246-7.

Similar suggestions and investigations were made for Manchester College's becoming a theological college in connection with Owens as with University College, especially as once again Unitarians were actively involved in the establishment of the institution.<sup>1</sup>

A major difficulty, however, lay in the fact that the viability of Manchester College was becoming very uncertain before Owens had proved itself. Owens's shaky first years only appeared to confirm growing Unitarian cynicism about the compatibility of Manchester and "higher learning".<sup>2</sup> It was not until the 1860s when, chiefly through the work of two Unitarians, Henry Enfield Roscoe and Thomas Ashton, that Owens's flagging fortunes began to revive.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in 1852, John Kenrick and Mark Philips, both so long connected with the College in the north, successfully moved that it should be moved to London "as a theological institution, in connection, for literary and scientific purposes, with University College."<sup>4</sup> William R. Wood's legal moves against the

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Printed Papers and Addresses, Report of the Committee of Inquiry 30.6.1848 22-31, Report ,8.12.1852,7-9; M.N.C. Reports (1847)5, (1848)5, (1851)5, (1852)5 . James Heywood, Alexander Kay, Samuel Alcock and Mark Philips were educational trustees for example, and John P. Aston was secretary - 1850 Owens College Report on General Character and Plan, 4,38; Letters, papers re Second M.N.C., 1848-9, Extract from John Owens will.

2

Printed Papers and Addresses, Report...8.12.1852,7-8; ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol.I,251; Letters...1848-9, James Heywood 9.3.1848 to J.A. Turner and Rev. F. Baker; Roscoe H.E., op.cit., 103.

3

Ibid., 102-12,127,148,244-7; Cardwell D.S.L., op.cit.,71; Haines G.,op.cit.,51 R.D. Darbishire also did much for Owens from 1846 but broke with the College when it refused the admission of women - Ramsden G.M., A Record of the Kay Family of Bury, Lancs., (Gift to M.C.O. 1979) 60.

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M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, 32-3; Letter-book...1824-80, J.K.'s Letter to the Inquirer, Nov.1852.

removal as being against the College's original foundation were prevented by many of those most closely connected with the College successfully arguing that the College was keeping to its basic "Warrington" tradition of giving a liberal education to young men with no test of faith and that it had never been tied to any particular place or district.<sup>1</sup> James Heywood, grandson of one of the three original founders, Thomas Percival, who was closely involved in Owens's College, University College, University Hall and not least, in Manchester College and who, with S.D. Darbishire and others, had unsuccessfully tried to open a university college in Manchester in 1836, bitterly reflected that "the public of Manchester, are not at all interested in the maintenance of the College" and that much greater support would come from the Unitarians themselves if the College followed its laymen to London.<sup>2</sup> Negotiations with University Hall overcame many difficulties and, in 1853, Manchester College moved its theological department to London, together with a lecturer in mental and moral philosophy, and was co-operating with and using University Hall although not amalgamated with it.<sup>3</sup>

The affiliation with London University, from 1840, did give an opportunity to test the standard of Manchester College, albeit that there were problems in judging the standards at London. Prior to this, apart from taking entrance requirements seriously, the College's summer examinations were open to supporters of the College and publicly reported. The examinations, in tune with developments elsewhere, changed from being entirely oral to largely written. There is much evidence - William Wood's letters to his parents being a particular

<sup>1</sup> M.N.C. Proceedings 1853, 6, Report 9,30,38,39,41,42.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 43; Ramsden G.M., op.cit., 58; MSS M.C.O. J.K.IV,18.1.1836.

<sup>3</sup> Report of a Special Committee of the Trustees of M.N.C., 4.5.1853.



good example - to show that competition, both in these examinations and for the various prizes donated by patrons of the College, was keen.<sup>1</sup> That the College was certainly on a par with London was shown in 1840, before the new structure was established, when three students gained B.A. degrees in the first division. Two successes followed in 1841. By the time of the move to London in September, 1853, thirty more students had followed suit, together with one, R.H. Hutton, who obtained his B.A. two years before entering the College (he took his M.A. one year after), and one, G. Heap, who graduated fourteen years after leaving. Four, including John Adyess Scott, grandson of Charles Wellbeloved, moved onto M.A.s and won University Gold Medals, and two gained their LL.D. From the students of this second Manchester period, three took London B.A.s in 1855 and two in 1854. Thirteen of the thirty-five B.A. degrees gained were taken by laymen. In the same period twenty-eight divinity and thirty-two laymen were regular students.<sup>2</sup>

The College was clearly up to London standards. How far it fulfilled its liberal aims can be further judged by the type of men its students turned out to be and what their achievements were. That the College did produce ministers who were capable of defending and extending rational theology and earning esteem for their learning is amply proved, not least in the examples of its successive Principals to 1885, all of whom apart from Wellbeloved and Kenrick were educated at the College in the period between 1800 and 1853, three of them having been first prize students.<sup>3</sup> The Principals, in order, were Charles Wellbeloved, 1803-40, Robert Wallace, 1840-46, John Kenrick, 1846-50, George Vance Smith, 1850-53, John James Tayler, 1853-69, James Martineau, 1869-85. Tayler was an outstanding scholar in German, Latin and ecclesiastical history, as Martineau was

<sup>1</sup> M.C. Reports; Christian Reformer, (1836), 554-5, 581; Wood W.R. op.cit., 11 (17.1.1830), 22 (25.4.1830), 26-8 (22.5.1830 to 6.6.1830), 61 (12.6.1831).

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O. J.K.IV, 11.6.1840; M.C. Report (1854), 25 plus Roll, 1835-55. Before 1840 many students took degrees in other countries, particularly Glasgow, often before they took the divinity course at M.C., e.g. J.J. Tayler.

<sup>3</sup> M.C. Report (1847), 22. The term "Principal" was not officially given until 1840.

in philosophy. Together they formed half of that "quarternion" of Unitarians who, according to Ian Sellars, "stood out as the intellectual elite of Dissent."<sup>1</sup> George Vance Smith, a son of a working joiner, was an excellent student at Manchester College. He proved to be an outstanding New Testament scholar, republishing and finishing Charles Wellbeloved's translation of the Bible and serving with John Scott Porter, on Dean Stanley's New Testament Revision Committee in 1870. However, he was too gentle and perhaps too young to cope as Principal.<sup>2</sup> Robert Wallace, although a conservative Unitarian in theology, pioneered German critical research in his teaching and published a three volume Anti-Trinitarian Biography in 1850.<sup>3</sup>

Other students from Manchester College similarly exemplified its high standards in progressive theology: for example, Edward Higginson, in 1853 published a clear, thoughtful account of modern Biblical scholarship for the enlightenment of the more general reader.<sup>4</sup> Considering the influence that must have emanated from Manchester College's educated ministers it is little wonder that Unitarians generally became such pioneers in this field.

Smith's work took into account recent archeological discoveries. James Yates became a noted and prolific scholar on Greek and Roman antiquities,<sup>5</sup> a fact which must have delighted his old tutor, Charles Wellbeloved, who himself loved antiquities and did so much to promote and preserve them at York, especially

<sup>1</sup> Sellars I., Nineteenth Century Nonconformity, (1977), 6; D.N.B. vol.55,399.

<sup>2</sup> M.C. Reports (1838)4, (1839)5, (1841)4; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., vol.I 297; Davies V.D., A History of Manchester College, (1932), 115-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>4</sup> Wigmore-Beddoes D.G., op.cit., 37-8.

<sup>5</sup> D.N.B., vol.63,296.

in writing an excellent history of St. Mary's Abbey, York.<sup>1</sup>

Tayler was praised by Martineau for his lectures on English literature in Manchester in 1822 which illustrated:

not only his ample reading but the largeness of his comparative criticism, and his versatile susceptibility to beauty of thought, expression and character.<sup>2</sup>

William Gaskell did much to inspire a love and understanding of English literature not only amongst his students at the College, 1846 to 1853, but also among the ordinary people of Manchester. Gaskell enjoyed Shakesperian evenings with another ex-student, his senior minister at Cross Street and fellow tutor at Manchester College, the eloquent, witty and genial John Gooch Robberds, and, like him, gave many years of service in Manchester to both rich and poor. He was a highly popular, clear, magnetic preacher who won respect from Churchmen of all creeds by his courtesy and reasonableness. Keenly and prominently involved in the Portico Library and the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, an interested member of the British Association, close friends of outstanding engineers such as William Fairbain and James Nasmyth, from 1854 first the English tutor and then Principal of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board, Gaskell exemplified the wide intellectual and social interests of the cultured ministers emerging from Manchester College. One thousand people attended the soiree in Manchester Town Hall in 1878 to celebrate his fiftieth anniversary at Cross Street. Significantly enough, at Gaskell's request, £1,750 of the money raised in his honour was used to found a Gaskell scholarship to Owens' College for third year students at U.H.M.B.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick J., op.cit., 134, 162-5; Orange A.D., Philosophers and Provincials; The Yorkshire Philosophical Society from 1822-44, (Yorkshire Philosophical Society, 1973), 23, 46, 51-2, 56-7.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau J., Essays..., 384; see also ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol. I 43-9.

<sup>3</sup> Brill B., William Gaskell 1805-84 (1984), passim. Robberds J.G., Discourses, (1855) with "Memoir" by J.J. Tayler, 2-18.

Though many different types of scholars were educated at Manchester College there do not appear to have been any eminent scientists apart from William Hincks who became Professor of Natural History, first at Queen's College, Cork (1849-53) and thence at the University College, Toronto (1853-71). At York, when tutor, he also lectured at the Medical School and was the first curator of botany at the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, a society in which Wellbeloved, Kenrick and William Turner Junior were also prominent and which encouraged the newly formed British Association for the Advancement of Science to gather at York for its first meeting. The Genesis and geneology controversy in the British Association, 1839 to 1840, fermented particularly by the Dean of York, was most radically defended in York by Kenrick's cogently argued Essay of Primeval History. A.D. Orange, indeed, has attributed Manchester College's presence in York until 1840 as a major reason for the city's intellectual pre-eminence at that time.<sup>1</sup>

The College did turn out many men interested in science, as evinced by the numbers who became members of scientific societies, not least the many Literary and Philosophical Societies they did so much to promote. A good example is Hincks's son Thomas who, whilst minister of Mill Hill, Leeds from 1855, was so important in the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society and, in association with another Unitarian, George Busk, achieved a high reputation for research in zoophytes. He gave a series of lectures each year from 1855 to 1858 to the Society.<sup>2</sup> The Chair of Civil Engineering did attract some specialist students including John Fairbairn and Sabas Antonia Paes, son of the President of Venezuela.

<sup>1</sup> Orange A.D., op.cit., 23-4, 41, 51, 54-5, 59-63.

<sup>2</sup> Kitson-Clarke E., Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society (1924), 132, 174-5.

Many influential and powerful business, industrial, professional and political men were educated at Manchester College. Edward Strutt and Mark Philips, for example, both sons of wealthy manufacturers became M.P.s in 1830 and 1832 respectively. Strutt, a friend of both Robert Owen and John Stuart Mill, held various important posts and in 1856, became the first Baron Belper and, in 1860, F.R.S. (thus fulfilling his father's hope of 1817 that Edward's education would lead him to such an honour.) Amongst other things, he supported Lancasterian education, the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes and London University.<sup>1</sup> Philips fought hard to extend civil and religious liberties and made munificent gifts to Manchester, such as a public park.<sup>2</sup> Other examples of civic leadership include William Enfield who became the solicitor and Town Clerk of Nottingham, was a manager of the Mechanics' Institute, a promoter of the School of Art, of decent homes for the poor and of healthful places of recreation, and was a governor of the Institutes for the Blind, the lunatic asylum and the Town and Country Hospital.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, H.W. Crosskey, minister of the Church of the Messiah in Birmingham from 1869, was a foremost promoter of both popular education and a new civic gospel.<sup>4</sup>

Unitarian social concern was tempered by adherence to political economy, also fostered at Manchester College. Mark Philips, like many Unitarians, opposed factory legislation, though Samuel Fielden, another ex-student, upheld his father's eager fight for such reforms.<sup>5</sup> Laissez-faire in economic and industrial

<sup>1</sup> Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 171-3, 189; Mill J.S., op.cit., 48, 63, 72

<sup>2</sup> Briggs A., Victorian Cities (Pelican 1968) 135; Unitarian Worthies, op.cit., 244.

<sup>3</sup> Armstrong R.A., In Memoriam, William Enfield, 22-7, privately printed.

<sup>4</sup> Briggs A., op.cit., 198, 202, 206. Crosskey was also a keen geologist - Bushrod E., op.cit., 246.

<sup>5</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 196.

matters would come easily to many merchants and manufacturers, yet belief in the economic "truths", often so harsh and uncompromising in their effects, had to be balanced by their Unitarian humanitarianism and equally firm belief in social service. The difficulties in reconciling these divergent tendencies will be discussed in Chapter V.

Among those who modified their ideas on political economy was James Martineau who turned to more paternalistic ideas reminiscent of Disraeli. His political economy lectures at Manchester College in the 1840s were so popular they were repeated in evening classes.<sup>1</sup> There were many, however, who worked tirelessly to help the working-classes, especially by way of education, William Gaskell and John Relly Beard being prime examples. Students of Manchester College, during the bitter years of the early forties, helped the enthusiastic but poor congregation at Oldham and, in 1852, Charles Robberds became minister there on £50 a year.<sup>2</sup>

Educational activities of all kinds, indeed, as will be seen in the remainder of this thesis, were fostered by ex-Manchester College men for middle and working classes of both sexes - S.A. Steinthal, for example, did much to advance women's rights. At the end of the century Manchester College was the first English college to open its doors to women theological students.<sup>3</sup> Many of those otherwise connected with the College evinced similar attitudes to those described, for example, William Turner, the College Visitor for fifty-one years, ex-Warrington, a man involved in many educational activities, whose long endeavour to ensure that liberal Christians should have "clear insight, and large and

<sup>1</sup> Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 155; Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 287-9.

<sup>2</sup> Marcroft A., Historical Account of the Unitarian Chapel, Oldham, (1913), 86-94.

<sup>3</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 152, 245; Holt A., A Ministry to the Poor, (1936) 62-3.

(Written on Nov. 15th 1984, the day the Synod of the Church of England decided the principle of the ordination of women priests was permissible).

generous culture" and leaders "who were prepared to take up their position fairly before the world", was feelingly remembered by Gaskell in 1859.<sup>1</sup>

In London, the College (significantly perhaps having James Heywood as President from 1853 when he was so busy securing Dissenters rights and reform at Oxbridge) kept to its original principles, upholding:

the character and power of liberal Christianity in this country, and the supply of its Churches with Ministers of Religion rich in learning and in culture.<sup>2</sup>

The College provided for lay students at University College:

the religious and ethical instruction which is indispensable to the completeness of a liberal education, and which University College cannot supply.<sup>3</sup>

Taylor, the new Principal, claiming that "Our old Universities,...represent the interests of the Church and Aristocracy", saw the University of London, particularly University College, as "a fitting response to the new demands of a more advanced age", working "for the special benefit of those classes, containing so much of the freedom and vigour of our national mind..." If other religious communities followed Manchester College's example, he said, University College would grow in intellectual stature and become "a fitting expression of the rich and manifold religious life which is a fruit of our English freedom;" Nonconformity - "a great and stirring element of our national life" - would be able to develop its "vast resources of intellectual power..." Manchester College, with its lack of dogmatism and principles of free enquiry into the Scriptures and its deep education of ministers, was peculiarly fitted to lead the way in

<sup>1</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., passim; Inquirer, 25.6.1859, 552.

<sup>2</sup> Report of a Special Committee...M.N.C., 4.5.1853.

<sup>3</sup> M.N.C. Addresses 1853-81, J.J. Taylor, Inaugural Address 14.10.1853, 4.

this and would welcome "men of every creed...the Catholic and the Jew" if they wished to come.<sup>1</sup>

The College, therefore, did not narrow its educational purpose<sup>2</sup> during the period 1800 to 1853. Despite recurrent difficulties and the loss of its laymen to University College, an institution which Unitarians themselves had helped promote, the College achieved some success in its aims. As John Kenrick drily remarked on its fiftieth anniversary, its very survival to that age was "an event, not of frequent occurrence in the history of Dissenting academical institutions."<sup>3</sup> In its very existence as an institution of higher education open to all regardless of creed, it was unique for many years. In its curriculum and methods it pioneered a new type of education for the modern world. As late as 1883 Anna le Breton claimed the College:

still retains the old Warrington characteristics of a freedom quite unshackled, a fearless daring in the cause of truth, and a clear and penetrating glance into the deepest problems of theology.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 5,6-7,10,19. Compare Tayler's later views - ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol.II, 163,168,220,279-80; Ross J., op.cit., vol.II,53,138.

<sup>2</sup> See Simon B., op.cit., 69.

<sup>3</sup> Kenrick J., "The Respect due to Christian Liberty...", 7.

<sup>4</sup> Le Breton, A.L., Memories of Seventy Years (1883),113.



This chapter has so far been concerned with Unitarian struggles for university education for men. Women, of course, received no type of formal higher education, a vacuum all the more keenly felt by some Unitarian women who, to that point, had been educated as equally, or almost so, as their brothers. It was true that many Unitarian homes provided their daughters with the stimulus and sympathy of a keen intellectual and cultural environment but serious study on one's own was neither fully satisfying nor easy. Young women like Harriet Martineau studied very early and late in the day to achieve their ends. Frances Whitehead managed to go to bed when wishing to read undisturbed. Sarah Taylor worked systematically through a reading list to fit her for marriage to John Austin.<sup>1</sup>

In this field too, however, Unitarians were amongst the foremost pioneers of change. John Relly Beard, for example, saw no reason why women should not experience the highest university learning. Lant Carpenter enthusiastically taught history, language, philosophy, general grammar and composition to young ladies in Liverpool in the 1800s.<sup>2</sup> In 1831 his course of lectures in Manchester led William R. Wood to write home from Manchester College, hoping that Dr. Carpenter:

may succeed in making Mental Philosophy more popular with the ladies of Manchester than it is with the students of York College.<sup>3</sup>

James Martineau was also amongst the first to give formal higher education to women, his lectures on mental and moral philosophy foreshadowing those of later University Extension lectures and giving a welcome mental stimulus to such

<sup>1</sup> Martineau H., Autobiography, (1877), Vol.I,100-2; Malleon E., Autobiography, 1926, private circulation, 6-7; Ross J., op.cit., Vol.I,30-1.

<sup>2</sup> Beard J.R., Self-Culture, (3rd ed., no date given), 256, Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 99,105.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., Wood W.R., op.cit., 39 (16.1.1831).

talented students as Anna Swanwick, Susannah Winkworth and Julia Wedgwood. William Gaskell provided private advanced studies to females, including the gifted Winkworth sisters. All these three were outstanding teachers of males, including working-men.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians did not establish the first college in England for women: that was done in 1848 by F.D. Maurice, the Christian Socialist, though he had originally been a Unitarian. Maurice led a group of lecturers and professors from King's College, London in establishing Queen's College, the first institution in England where a young woman could get advanced education and from first class minds. The College was set up with governesses and teachers in mind in the hope that better qualifications would bring higher status and pay. However, all "ladies" over twelve could attend since reality taught that any middle-class lady might suddenly find herself teaching - the only "respectable" work, apart from sewing, for ladies. Maurice had long denounced the rote learning, inferior books and lack of imaginative training in female education, all designed to inculcate submissiveness. Thus, at Queens the emphasis was on raising the mental culture of girls especially through offering a wide range of subjects including mathematics, mechanics, natural philosophy and pedagogy as well as languages, history, geography and music. Queen's, indeed, was to become a unique educational establishment, a cross between a school and college, which educated many pioneers in female education, for example Miss Buss and Miss Beale.

Yet, although teaching women to think might be revolutionary, Queen's was conservative in keeping the government and teaching of the College firmly under the control of men, Maurice initially being against women taking degrees or entering the professions.<sup>2</sup> The only comparable college for many years, Bedford

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 160, 271-4; ed. Shaen M.J., Memorials of Two Sisters, (1908), 18-23; Brill B., op.cit., 78-9; ed. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A. Letters of Mrs Gaskell, (1966), 185, 190.

<sup>2</sup> Kaye E., A History of Queens College, London, 1848-1972, (1972) 20-4, 39, 87, *passim*.

College for women, established only one year after Queen's, was markedly different. Bedford offered the same full and liberal higher education together with an art school, the only one in England in which women could work from life (one student, the Unitarian Laura Herford, was the first woman artist to be admitted to the Academy School). Unlike Queen's, however, Bedford was aimed at all middle-class women. It was founded by a woman, the Unitarian Mrs Reid, had both women and men in a single governing body and, later, the 1860 Reid Trust was controlled by three women trustees. Trustees were to be women to ensure that Bedford remained a College not a school, and to be unmarried so that no husband could assert a right to control the money or property. Two of the first trustees, Eliza Bostock and Jane Martineau, were Unitarians, as were many of the students, lady visitors and staff in the early years. The le Breton, Busk and Martineau families and William Shaen were fervent supporters and a number of prominent Unitarian women - Barbara Leigh-Smith, Anna Swanwick, Sarah Austin - attended as mature students. In later years, Samuel Courtneid, Samuel Sharpe and Henry Tate and his wife were major benefactors. In the early days Francis Newman, William Carpenter and Augustus de Morgan, all professors at University College, taught at Bedford.<sup>1</sup>

Bedford's links with secularist and radical educationalists, indeed, (unlike Queen's royal and upper-class support), probably was a factor in its initial difficulties. Some Unitarians too were not so keen on higher education for women as for men: for example, Henry Crabb Robinson reluctantly gave fifty pounds to Bedford, a sum of money he would cheerfully give for a dance at University College.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the College, and from 1853, its school, flourished, and, again unlike Queen's, from 1878 when London opened its degrees

<sup>1</sup> Tuke M.J., A History of Bedford College for Women 1849-1937, (1939), passim; Inquirer (12.3.1887), 172.

<sup>2</sup> Morley E.J., The Life and Times of Henry Crabb Robinson, (AMS Press, New York, 1970), 118-20; H.C.R., vol.I, xii.

to women, became a university college and in 1900 became a constituent part of the University of London.

It is fitting to end this chapter on the admission of women to London University, since Unitarians, not least James Heywood, so actively involved in the whole struggle to reform and open up liberal higher education for males, were also prominent leaders in this achievement.<sup>1</sup> In general it can be seen both that by the mid 1850s the middle-classes were beginning to gain those opportunities in higher education demanded so insistently by Unitarians and that the latter had played no small part in this achievement.

<sup>1</sup>

E.g. Young, R., op.cit., 47-8; *Inquirer* (12.3.1887) 172; (23.10.1897) 690.

## CHAPTER V

EDUCATION FOR THE WORKING-CLASSES

An environmentalist educational philosophy could hardly be confined to one section of society. In arguing for educational reforms for the middle-class, other minority religious groups and women, Unitarians were bound to include the "lower classes." James Silver, in the Monthly Repository, for example, stressed that it was the bounden duty of anyone "who felt the importance of reason and knew it was the introduction to greater happiness and enjoyment" to impart knowledge to all.<sup>1</sup> John Beard argued consistently and forcefully that the capacities of the minds and hearts of the poor were no less than those of the rich and could, indeed, be developed even further since their minds were robust and impelled by necessity. Why should knowledge be "doled out... with a parsimonious spirit" and those "with greater wants...have less supplies"?<sup>2</sup>

Beard declared:

I am a friend to unlimited education, the widest possible education to all of all ages and of all ranks. I have no fears of the effects of knowledge. Ignorance is man's bane, and ignorance is my dread. I have no wish to confine knowledge to any class; the more each man has the better for each and for all. If it is pleaded that should the lower classes get knowledge they will get power, then I say let them have power, and enjoy it.--- I see not why any class should keep their seats, if they can be kept only by holding others in the degrading vassalage of ignorance.<sup>3</sup>

James Reilly of Birmingham, in 1830, reaffirmed the importance and value of working-class education against attacks from the local bishop and Sir Oswald Mosley and taunted the enormously rich Church with obstructing the spread of

<sup>1</sup> M.R. (1819) XIV, 245-6.

<sup>2</sup> M.R. (1832) N.S.VI, 161-3.

<sup>3</sup> U.C. (1834) 8-9 (not 1833 as McLachlan H., Records of a Family, (1935), 2 says); also Leicester P.R.O. 5D61, MSS John and William Biggs' Scrapbooks, vol.1, J. Hollings Speech to Boston M.I., 1852.

knowledge and thus virtue.<sup>1</sup> A different emphasis was sounded by the Revd. John Kentish who, although desirous of good and liberating public provision of popular education, wished such to teach the poor their "right" relations not only to God but also to man.<sup>2</sup>

This subject and the extent and quality of Unitarian involvement in some salient aspects of working-class education in the period from 1800 to 1853 will be examined in this chapter. The problem of defining what is meant by the "working-class" has already been discussed in chapter 1. The working-class was not an homogenous group but its members held in common a shared financial insecurity. It will be seen that the varying layers of poverty engendered different educational responses from the Unitarians, though the latter did not always make explicit whether they were referring to any specific section. The writings of some of their educationalists were obviously directed to the artisan class, the working-class elite admired deeply, for example, by Harriet Martineau and William Johnson Fox. The latter directed the thrust of his reforming zeal towards the middling-classes to which both he, the clerical son of a Norwich weaver, and the artisans he saw as natural aristocrats, belonged. His model was Francis Place, a successful working-man, moulded by intellectual self-discipline.<sup>3</sup> John Beard, son of a poor carpenter in Portsmouth, directed much of his educational writings, for example Self-Culture, to mechanics.<sup>4</sup> From the 1830s an increasing concern was felt by some middle-class reformers for the

<sup>1</sup> Reilly J., Address delivered to the Brotherly Society, January, 1830 (Birmingham, 1830), 3-14; see also M.R. (1830) N.S.4, 714-5.

<sup>2</sup> Kentish J., Sermons (1854) 216-26.

<sup>3</sup> Parnaby M.R., William Johnson Fox and the Monthly Repository Circle, (Australia National University, Ph.D., 1979), 94-104; Martineau H., Household Education (1870) 41-3.

<sup>4</sup> Beard J.R., Self-Culture, (3rd ed., undated; 1st ed. 1859); McLachlan H., op.cit.

truly destitute poor and delinquents, and Unitarians took the initiative in many towns in confronting these problems.

Deep understanding of the poor was sometimes difficult for the more wealthy Unitarians. Henry Solly pointed out, for example, that in his father's rich mercantile home servants, although treated justly, were always regarded "de haut en bas" and whilst individual instances of gross injustice to the poor aroused fury, such sympathy generally "did not form any special feature in [our] life and thoughts." Later the Sollys' butler's son became a much-esteemed Nonconformist minister like Henry Solly himself. Ministers, however, were often in the same income bracket as artisans: J.R. Beard, for example, went to Salford on a salary of £120 p.a.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians were not universally all middle-class, many of those coming from the General Baptists, in particular, were from humbler origins. Such recruitment and missionary work led to a growth of Unitarian congregations in the factory towns and country districts dominated by the middling or upper working-class ranks but with humbler members also. How to serve these led to another academy being established in 1812, a new "Hackney Academy" whose moving spirit and divinity tutor for its life of six years was Robert Aspland, ex-General Baptist and editor of the Monthly Repository until 1826. The aim of the Academy was to give a respectable degree of knowledge, including reading the scriptures in the original tongues, to young men, aged eighteen to twenty-five, "of good character and piety and of promising talents", in a two-year course (later increased to four for those doing classics). The founders made it clear that Hackney was a different type of institution from Manchester College, giving a purely theological education for those intending to minister to poorer congregations only. The Academy, though unusually designated "Unitarian", encouraged the freest enquiry. Neither its designation nor its limited ministerial

<sup>1</sup> Solly H., These Eighty Years, (1893) vol.I,36-9,50,53 (Solly's income was £70 p.a. at Tavistock in 1842 - ibid.402). D.W.L. Beard James, Duplicate typescript for Life of John Relly Beard,D.D. (no date), 1825.

education, however, gained wide Unitarian support<sup>1</sup> and the tutors at Manchester College, recently struggling themselves, watched the progress of the Academy anxiously and somewhat superciliously.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the Academy was able to employ a number of good tutors in its short life, including Jeremiah Joyce, W.J. Fox and Dr. John Morell. Aspland encouraged a wide general knowledge and culture, elocution, the best authors in particular subjects and missionary excursions in the vacations. There were only nine permanent students altogether but some did well, for example, Ben Goodier, a weaver's son whose precocious educational enthusiasm (he was using Darbshire's Dob Lane Chapel Library by the time he was six years old and established his own when eleven) led Manchester Unitarians to fund his studies at Hackney. Goodier's abilities and zeal were shown at Oldham before tuberculosis cut his life short. Thomas Walker Horsfield became a vigorous and effective preacher, established an excellent Mechanics' Institute at Lewes, lectured in science, enjoyed landscape painting and wrote about local antiquities.

Donations did come in for the Academy, even from the York students. The general lack of support, combined with Aspland's own bad health, however, led to the demise of the college in 1818. Attempts to establish a similar institution did not succeed until the Unitarian Home Missionary Board (U.H.M.B., later College) opened in Manchester in 1854 through the agencies of J.R. Beard and

<sup>1</sup> Aspland R.B., Memoir of the Life, Works and Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Aspland of Hackney (1850), 302-17; Wilbur E.M., A History of Unitarianism. (Boston 1945), 335, 369; M.R. (1811) VI, 364-5, 371-5; (1815) X, 325; MSS M.C.O., York Letters 1811, G.W.W. to C.W., 8.6.1811.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, C.W. to G.W.W., 14.11.1814; J.K.III, J.K. to G.W.W., 1.2.1816, 16.10.1816.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., Wreford J.R., Statistics on Dissenting Colleges; M.R. (1812) VII, 741-6; (1813) VIII, 417-8; (1814) IX, 373; (1817) XII, 703; (1819) XIV, 69-74; Aspland R.B., op.cit., 317-30.



William Gaskell, both alumni of Manchester College.<sup>1</sup> U.H.M.B. was instituted after the growth of Methodist Unitarian congregations in Lancashire and the spread of the Christian Brethren Movement had proved that Unitarianism could appeal strongly to people of humbler status.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, within the limits of this thesis, it has not proved possible to delve into the records of the smaller, more obscure congregations. Hopefully R.K. Webb will be casting more light on these in his forthcoming volumes on the social history of the Unitarians.

Some of the richer congregations also drew in poorer members: for example, although hardly any poor members attended Lewin's Mead when Lant Carpenter first went to Bristol in 1818, by means both of his personal encouragement and sympathetic, practical ministry and of the provision of cheaper seats and a Sunday school, Carpenter gradually filled the galleries and free seats of the huge chapel.<sup>3</sup> Some congregations like those of J.J. Tayler's in Manchester and James Martineau's in Liverpool had few poor, Tayler's new chapel in Upper Brook Street, 1839, not even having provision for those unable to pay high pew rents,

<sup>1</sup> M.R. (1813) VIII,418; (1814) IX,373; (1820) XV 161,623; (1821) XVI,11-2,21-2; Aspland R.B., op.cit., 408; MSS M.C.O. J.K.III, J.K. to G.W.W., 3.5.1817; McLachlan H., The Unitarian Home Missionary College, (1915), 7-8,20-7; Inquirer, 21.6.1884,401; MSS M.C.O., Presbyterian Chapels, V Prospectus Unitarian Herald.

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan H., op.cit., 11-12; The Story of a Nonconformist Library (1923), 152-82; Essays and Addresses (1950) 213-29.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter R.L., Memoir of the Rev. Lant Carpenter LL.D. (1842),474-6; J.K.III J.K. to G.W.W. 24.7.1822; MSS Bristol Reference Library B19534 Letters of Dr. Carpenter, Dr. C to Edward Hasley, 25.9.1823; to Alfred Estlin 26.8.1828; C.R. (1836),580.

an omission later rectified to the disgust of the architect, Sir Charles Barry.<sup>1</sup> Henry Solly, however, found that as a result of urban change, Carter Lane in London had increasing numbers of the poor.<sup>2</sup>

The lack of education and provision for the masses, described previously, was partially diminished in the period 1800 to 1853 by the adoption of the monitorial methods of Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell respectively by the Lancastrian (British and Foreign Schools) Society and the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. Thus began cheap schooling on a scale hitherto unknown in England. The rivalry of the Nonconformists and Anglicans for the control of education at least stimulated provision, although simultaneously, helping to prevent the growth of a state system. In any event, many of the working-class preferred their own ephemeral, non-inspected schools. It is difficult to ascertain reliable figures for the numbers who did receive schooling in this period but it is clear that many working-class children received little or no formal schooling. Fears of "over-educating" the poor still often prevailed and the quality of elementary education, a separate system from middle-class education, left much to be desired, often being no more than drilling in very basic knowledge and the inculcation of religious dogma and social discipline. This meagre education gave little basis for any advanced or adult studies and was always totally dependent on private funding.<sup>3</sup> Unitarians, through their religious, educational and social ideals had a natural interest in wishing to reform this state of affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Thom J.H., Letters Embracing the Life of John James Tayler, (1872), vol.I, 87,190-1; MSS M.C.O. James Martineau to Mary Carpenter, Feb.1841; McLachlan H., ...Nonconformist Library, 125.

<sup>2</sup> Solly H., op.cit., vol.II,83; Herford B., Travers Madge A Memoir, (1867),7-8.

<sup>3</sup> Lawson J. and Silver H., A Social History of Education in England (1973), 238-50,260-2,267-72,276-81,287; ed. Stone L. Schooling and Society, (1976), Laquer T.W., "Working-class Demand and the Growth of English Elementary Education,1790-1850", 192-201.

The chief form of education for working-class children in which Unitarians were involved was Sunday schooling, whose origins have been described previously. Although Anglicans ran many Sunday schools, in certain major cities such as Manchester and Birmingham there was far greater provision by Dissenters before the 1830s.<sup>1</sup>

Sunday schools had been established ostensibly to teach the poor to read their Bibles and thence become good Christians<sup>and</sup> law-abiding folk. Thomas Laqueur has hailed the Sunday school as a half-way house between the highly-regulated, patronising provided schools of the various religious groups, especially Anglican and the ephemeral, often very inferior provision of the working-class themselves. In Laqueur's opinion the Sunday schools, even if established by middle-class patrons, became central institutions in the religious and recreational life of the working-class community, with both teachers and ethos drawn from the working-class itself. As such they could create a working-class culture of respectability and self-reliance, a pattern seemingly affirmed, for example, by Frederick Hill's assessment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maltby S.E., Manchester and the Movement for National Elementary Education 1800-70 (1918), 130-1. See also Wadsworth A.P., "The First Manchester Sunday Schools", Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, (1950-1), vol.33, 318-22; Frost M.B., The Development of Provided Schooling for Working-Class Children in Birmingham, 1781-1851, (Birmingham M. Litt.1978), 40-6, 58; Greenwood M., Education and Politics in Leicester, 1828-50 (Leicester M.Ed., 1973) 15; Wardle D., Education and Society in Nineteenth Century Nottingham, (1971), 39-40.

<sup>2</sup> Laqueur T.W., op.cit., 192-201; Hill F., National Education, (1836), Vol. I, 102. See also Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 325.

Malcolm Dick, however, has ably refuted this thesis, stating that Sunday schools, at least in the period 1780 to 1833, were essentially conservative patriarchal and evangelical institutions, promoted by the middle-class. Dick's examination of Laqueur's thirty-eight cases of supposedly working-class Sunday schools shows that most of them were not so and even if they began as such, the promoters left both the working-class and/or its culture. Furthermore, Dick demonstrates that Laqueur's very use of Stockport as an example of the non-political stance of Sunday schools in fact shows the opposite.<sup>1</sup>

Dick's thesis is an important and salutary correction to a viewing of the establishment of Sunday schools as the result solely of religious and humanitarian endeavours, although it is difficult to ascertain how far teachers had any sustained or internally created commitment to such conservative values. Dick appreciates possible contradictions of intent and results, but views Sunday school essentially as a means to guard against change, particularly libertarian, anti-authoritarian doctrines generated by revolutionary movements and to keep working-class children, from vicious influences and to convert them from sin by hymns and other means.<sup>2</sup>

Dick accepts that this is a generalised view and that the situation was probably modified after the 1830s, but how far is it borne out by the Unitarians, whom he does not distinguish from other providers? Unitarian churches took a

<sup>1</sup> Dick M., "Religion and the Origins of Mass Schooling: The English Sunday School c.1780-1840", History of Education Society, The Churches and Education, Conference Papers (Dec.1983),42-6; "The Myth of the working-class Sunday school" History of Education, (March 1980) vol.9,no.1,27-41.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Dick M., review of F. Booth's "Robert Raikes of Gloucester", History of Education, (March 1981) vol.10, no.1,70-2; "Religion and the Origins of Mass Schooling" 33-48. Compare Thompson E.P., The Making of the English Working-class (Pelican 1968), 412-6; Gilbert A.D., Religion and Society in Industrial England, (Longman Paperback 1976),82-93

varied interests in Sunday schools: statistics on Unitarian and General Baptist congregations in the 1832 Unitarian Chronicle (although not comprehensive) and by Samuel Wood in the 1834 Christian Reformer indicate that over half of the English congregation had Sunday schools, but about thirty-nine had no schools at all and the movement spread only slowly in the west and east; facts deplored by some Unitarians. It would seem that some Unitarian congregations felt no urge to Christianize or "civilize" the poor, although in other areas, particularly industrial ones, there were very large Unitarian Sunday schools, for example Hanover Square, Newcastle, had 750 children, Hyde 300, Birmingham Old and New Meetings 1,257 between them, Belper 700, Milford 400, Leicester 200 and Salford 300. The Manchester Unitarian Village Missionary Society found that most villages visited in 1834 had flourishing Sunday schools.<sup>1</sup>

In the nineteenth century Unitarians were rarely found in the various Sunday school unions, partly because they were considered "dangerous", and partly because they were so independently-minded. They had their own Associations, particularly the London one of 1833 which joined the British and Foreign Unitarian Association (B.F.U.A.) but some congregations would not even join this.<sup>2</sup> Certain Unitarian ministers were ardent advocates of Sunday schools,

<sup>1</sup> U.C., (1832), 145-7, 197-9; M.R. (1810) V, 587-8; (1824) XIX, 201-2; (1829), N.S.3, 585; C.R., (1834), 542-3, 725; Greenwood M., op.cit., 15; Beard James, op.cit., (1833).

<sup>2</sup> C.R. (1825) 246-7; Bowery M.M., William Turner's Contribution to Educational Developments in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1782-1841, (Newcastle M.A., 1980), 67; M.R. (1830) N.S.4 245-6; Wilbur E.M., op.cit., 351-2; Broadbent A., The First Hundred Years of the Sunday School Association (1833-1933), (1933), 5-9; U.C. (1834) 216.

for example J.R. Beard, Francis Bishop and Lant Carpenter who praised them as spiritual parallels of steam engines.<sup>1</sup>

Even where support was keenest, however, Unitarians kept their schools non-denominational and did not promote their own religious views, although they certainly hoped to inculcate general sentiments of religion and morality. A few saw no reason why they should not spread the truth as they perceived it among the poor as a long correspondence in the 1824 Monthly Repository showed, but generally such orthodox practice was scorned. At the New Meeting, Birmingham, those invited to preach at the annual service included a Roman Catholic priest and a Calvinist. Such openness earned Unitarians little popularity, however: in Cheltenham Unitarian Sunday school scholars were publicly insulted and "Evangelical ladies" paid for some to go to a non-Unitarian school in preference.<sup>2</sup> Lant Carpenter expected no more than that Sunday school scholars might not, as adults, share in the common bitterness against Unitarians. He wanted them to be taught to think for themselves.<sup>3</sup> At Birmingham, where Frost says that the Unitarians were the only ones not fighting for denominational prowess, Old Meeting teachers strongly resisted even Thomas Eyre Lee's suggestion that pupils should learn at least what Unitarian principles were before they left.<sup>4</sup> In 1834 an opponent of Unitarianism noted that Unitarian

<sup>1</sup> For Beard see below *passim*. Carpenter R.L., *op.cit.*, 10, 110, 117, 188-9, 242-3; U.C. (1834) 216-8; Solly H., *op.cit.*, vol. I, 428, 431; Holt A., A Ministry to the Poor, being the history of the Liverpool Domestic Mission Society, 1836-1936, (Liverpool, 1936); See also Inquirer, 23.10.1897, 690.

<sup>2</sup> M.R. (1824) XIX, 201-2, 391, 549-50, 606-8, 730; (1825) XX, 33; (1830) N.S. 4, 137; C.R. (1841), 714; McLachlan H., ... Nonconformist Library, 167; MSS Birmingham Reference Library, New Meeting Sunday School Reports 1817-46, 2.11.1817, 7; Luckcock J., Moral Culture, (Birmingham 1817) iv-x. See also Herford B., *op.cit* 106-9.

<sup>3</sup> U.C., (1834) 217-8.

<sup>4</sup> Frost M.B., *op.cit.*, 324-7. See also Bushrod E., The History of Unitarianism in Birmingham. (Birmingham M.A. 1954) 189

Sunday schools were flourishing and gave an education superior to that of others but 50% of their pupils were Anglicans.<sup>1</sup> The Unitarians own serene conjunction of faith and knowledge, however, did give them an implicit belief that Unitarianism would at least not be harmed by the spread of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

With their lack of proselytising, denial of original sin and abhorrence of enthusiasm, Unitarians hardly fitted into the evangelical mould. The environmentalism which Tholfsen says became more prominent even in Evangelical thinking (and which M. Dick grants to William Turner) was always part of Unitarian thinking, as was their general but unusual wish to give much more education than merely reading the Bible.<sup>3</sup> John Beard, for example, scorned other religious bodies who gave the "mere rudiments of an education" to the poor, denying the teaching of writing and arithmetic on a Sunday. He asked "...Why should we give knowledge with a grudging hand?", expounding the common Unitarian argument of how many forms of knowledge lead to understanding of the good and of God. Necessary moral and religious improvement would be gained not by repressing and narrowing minds by sectarian teaching but by clear exposition of subjects such as geography, history (though ordinarily, "little more than a lengthened course of instruction in heathenism"), science, the evidence of religion and basic Christianity. Since the most useful means of conveying moral and spiritual good was the Bible, it should be read, but neither "indiscriminately and consecutively" nor as merely a reading tool. Properly used, it was full of

<sup>1</sup> U.C. (1834) 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> Harrop S.A., The Place of Education in the Genesis of the Industrial Revolution with particular reference to Staley bridge, Dukinfield and Hyde, (Manchester M.A., 1976) 118.

<sup>3</sup> Dick M., H. of E. Conference Papers 1983..., 42-3.

history, poetry and a "well-spring of genuine English." Reading and writing were the necessary keys to such knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Burney points out that humanist rather than religious motives inspired the schools at Mosley Street and Cross Street, Manchester. In Dukinfield the Unitarian Sunday school took the place of morning service since the educational level of the inhabitants of the village was so backward.<sup>2</sup> Dickens' later critique of Sunday schools with their uniformity and autobiographies of "swaggering sinners" could not have applied to those conducted by contemporary Unitarians.<sup>3</sup>

Many Unitarian Sunday schools offered rare opportunities for learning at least the three Rs and often grammar and geography and others, too. The curriculum of the Birmingham Sunday schools, for example, included drawing, geography, natural, civil and sacred history, singing and morals. High Pavement in Nottingham was popular because it taught writing thoroughly, a subject given extra time in the week at schools like Carter Lane. The excellent Oldham Sunday school, despite its congregation's great poverty, taught the three Rs, geography, grammar and elementary natural philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Above all, Unitarians such as James

<sup>1</sup> M.R. (1832) N.S.2, 234-7; Mineka F.E., The Dissidence of Dissent The Monthly Repository 1806-1838, (University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 404; U.C. (1834) 10-2, 14-5.

<sup>2</sup> Burney L., Cross Street Chapel Schools Manchester 1734-1942, (Manchester 1977), 15; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 61.

<sup>3</sup> Hughes J.L., Dickens as an Educator (New York, 1905) 271-5.

<sup>4</sup> Luckcock J., op.cit., Narrative of the Old and New Meeting Sunday Schools Established in Birmingham, 282; Bushrod E., op.cit., 187; Marcroft A., Historical Account of the Unitarian Chapel, Oldham, (Oldham 1913) 89; Broadbent A., op.cit., 12; H.P., MSS University of Nottingham, HiS 45/1, W.S., Plan of Boys' School 1844; M.R. (1831) N.S.5, 792.



Luckcock taught their pupils to think and he asserted:

A poor man with learning is company for a prince, -  
and an ignorant gentleman is not half so respectable  
as a poor scholar with a general fair character.<sup>1</sup>

A number of schools had evening classes in the week for boys who were at work, for example Hanover Square and Lower Mosley Street, John Curtis at the latter running a music class for young men also. By the late 1840s he had an evening department running four nights a week.<sup>2</sup> John Beard explicitly recommended evening classes for higher and more directly useful education; the Old and New Meetings in Birmingham, however, tried these unsuccessfully.<sup>3</sup> They also made constant efforts to attract those not attending on Sundays. It was quite common for Sunday schools to have adult classes: Unitarian ones, as at Dukinfield, were often for the Sunday school teachers themselves and made a very valuable contribution in the field of adult education.<sup>4</sup> Unitarian Sunday schools, for example at Welburn, York and Hanover Square, also provided valuable libraries for their scholars, the one at Dukinfield being so popular that separate sections were added for the teachers and for the public. This library inspired Samuel Robinson to found the Dukinfield Village Library in 1833, the first of its kind in the country.<sup>5</sup>

There was great concern over providing for the Sunday schools "a sufficient variety of proper books", that is, clear, interesting and simple ones. Unitarians

<sup>1</sup> Luckcock J., op.cit., 3-14; see also M.R. (1825) XX,33.

<sup>2</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 80; Burney L., op.cit., 38,43.

<sup>3</sup> M.R. (1832) N.S.6,238; Bushrod E., op.cit., 188.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Harrison J.F.C., Learning and Living 1790-1960 (1961) 195; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 107-8.

<sup>5</sup> M.R. (1830) N.S.4,558; Bowery M.M., op.cit., 83-4; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 94.

themselves wrote many of the books that were used.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. John Holland, for example, wrote his own books for Bank Street Chapel Sunday school, Bolton, all of the question and answer type, encouraging children to give their own answers.<sup>2</sup> Great care was often taken to suit the learning to the capacity of the pupils and much was offered beyond the ordinary lessons. In Nottingham, for example, allotments and outings proved very popular, Sunday school prizes might take the form of tickets for science lectures or for an entertainment, while sometimes money was given to the poorest boys to attend the Mechanics' Institute exhibition. Whitsuntide excursions took off in the real "age of the train." Savings banks were often attached to Sunday schools, it being questioned whether savings should earn extra or otherwise according to good or bad behaviour. At Swinton, at least, the children's funds purchased them clothes and at Lewins Mead there was a dispensary.<sup>3</sup> As at most Sunday schools the anniversary was a big occasion in Unitarian chapels, with entertainments and tea-parties, sometimes at the homes of wealthy benefactors: for example, 200 had tea at John Nash Belcher's Prestbury Park, at Cheltenham in 1841.<sup>4</sup>

The custom of tea-parties served an extra service, namely that women could attend Sunday schooling offering them a rare field of warm, personal, yet public service. Unitarian Sunday schools had women teachers, women visitors to both scholars and parents, as at Lewins Mead, and women superintendents, such as

<sup>1</sup> E.g. M.R. (1814) IX, 221-2; (1824) XIX, 608; (1829) N.S.3, 119; (1830) N.S.4, 411; (1831) N.S.5, 59, 201-3, 681-3; H.P. MSS, HiSuI, HiSu3, Sunday School Account Books; HiS 45/1, *op.cit.*

<sup>2</sup> M.R. (1826), XXI, 430.

<sup>3</sup> Broadbent A., *op.cit.*, 15-7; H.P. MSS HiSuI, *op.cit.*; Burney L., *op.cit.*, 42-3; M.R. (1829) N.S.3, 119; U.C. (1834), 60-1; Holt R.V., The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England (1952), 253.

<sup>4</sup> C.R. (1841) 181, 593, 714; M.R. (1831) N.S.5, 791; U.C. (1834) 60-1.

Mary Carpenter and Catherine Turner.<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Gaskell had the older girls of Cross Street and Mosley Street Sunday schools to her house once a month to read and talk to them and for a time she taught them geography and English history on Saturday evenings.<sup>2</sup> Often, as at Birmingham Old Meeting and High Pavement, women effectively ran the girls' schools, although men had the overall control: for example, at High Pavement the male vestry stopped the Ladies Committee from helping in the homes of distressed poor scholars, saying this would produce evil not good. On the other hand, the teachers appeared to have prevented the "impropriety" of girls sitting in the choir; a rather dubious victory.<sup>3</sup>

In some of the large urban areas, for example Manchester and Birmingham, it seems that Unitarians educated far more boys than girls. At the Old Meeting, for example, the average in 1817 was 250 boys to 150 girls, whilst the New Meeting averaged 400 and 200 respectively. In a Unitarian Chronicle survey in 1832, out of 19 schools which returned numbers of boys and girls separately, one had equal numbers, eleven (chiefly smaller schools of less than 130) had more girls and of the seven with more boys, three had twice as many and four (all with 140 or more pupils) one-third as many.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 322; U.C. (1833) 115; D.N.B., vol.9, 159; Inquirer 19.5.1894, 319; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 242-3, 474; Turner W., A Short Sketch of the History of Protestant Nonconformity and of the Society Assembling in Hanover Square, Newcastle (1811), 39; Carpenter J.E., James Martineau, (1905), 330.

<sup>2</sup> Brill B., William Gaskell, (Manchester Literary and Philosophical Publications Ltd., 1984), 61; Inquirer, 18.11.1865, 742.

<sup>3</sup> New H., Centenary of the Chapel of the Messiah (formerly New Meeting) Sunday Schools (Birmingham 1888) 13, 15, 16, 19; H.P.MSS, HiM, Minute Books, 9.1.1803; 28.9.1823; 12.5.1816; HiW24, J.C. Warren's Papers, Written History of H.P.1815.

<sup>4</sup> Maltby S.E., op.cit., 130-1; Luckcock J., op.cit., 274-5; U.C. (1832), 145-7. 197-9.

Men like John Beard and James Luckcock also saw the Sunday schools as an important means of training both girls and boys to become skilful, moral and trustworthy servants and labourers. Dr. Hutton hoped that Sunday school children would learn that the rich were not unkind and evil as Leeds Trade Unionists seemed to think. Lant Carpenter believed that the effects of Sunday school education were shown in 1832 when no children from Lewins Mead joined in the riots.<sup>1</sup> Middle-class Unitarians appeared to have added reasons for supporting Sunday schools which certainly were substantially helped by rich individuals and families.<sup>2</sup> Some of the Unitarian Sunday schools were so popular that they needed very large premises for which the congregation had to find similarly large funds; for example, in the 1820s, for the "spacious and commodious" buildings at Lewins Mead, the new schoolrooms at High Pavement in 1845 and the large schools at Birmingham in 1823 (already too small by 1832). Lant Carpenter and William Enfield were among the generous donors, as was Thomas Gibson who gave £1,000 in 1841 for Newhall Hill's new schoolrooms.<sup>3</sup>

Extra funds were usually supplied by donations and loans or else further expansion might be limited, as at Salford in 1827.<sup>4</sup> The regular funding of Sunday schools depended on subscriptions and the stimulus of the annual sermon, often preached by visiting leading Unitarians such as James Martineau or W.J. Fox,

<sup>1</sup> M.R. (1820) XV, 294-6; (1832) N.S.6, 238; U.C. (1833), 310-1; Carpenter R.L. op.cit., 362.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Harrop S.A., op.cit., 114, 161-2.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 275-9, 292, 471; MSS, Letters of Dr. Carpenter, op.cit., 1.5.1822-1.2.1830 passim; H.P.MSS, HiA2, Printed General Statement of the Accounts; M.R. (1823) XVIII, 9-10; U.C. (1832) 12.

<sup>4</sup> Broadbent A., op.cit., 13-4; M.R. (1827) N.S.1, 137-8; C.R. (1841) 521-2.

and important also as a social event.<sup>1</sup> In 1817, for example, the expenditure of the New Meeting Sunday school in Birmingham was £190 for which £70 was raised by subscriptions, £70 by the sermon and £50 from renting out the premises in the week. Costs were also helped by the fact that teachers, often past scholars giving up their only free day, were unpaid.<sup>2</sup>

Supporters were persuaded to give generously to the schools by appeals to both their humanitarian instincts and to their desire to "civilise" the lower classes, maintain law and order and safeguard their material interests.<sup>3</sup> J.G. Robberds, for example, told the congregation at Upper Brook Street, Manchester in 1839 that the provision of education in Sunday schools for those who otherwise might grow up ignorant and without knowledge of God, was the first means by which his audience could be the "centre and source of moral and religious benefits to society at large."<sup>4</sup> The Old and New Meeting Brotherly Society included in its rules teaching obedience to masters and parents and whatever was useful to manufacturers.<sup>5</sup>

1

E.g. Gittens E., The Centenary Book of the Great Meeting Sunday Schools (Leicester 1883), 8-9; H.P.MSS HiM. 12.4.1840.

2

Luckcock J., op.cit., 275-6; M.R. (1824) XIX, 549-50, 730; Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 320-2; Bushrod E., op.cit., 178; see also Venables E.J.W., Education in Leicester, 1780-1816, (Leicester M.Ed., 1968), 289-90.

3

E.g. Bolam C.G., Goring J., Short H.L., Thomas R., (hereafter referred to as Short H.L. only), The English Presbyterians, (1968), 263; Turner W., An Address ... at the...Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne... - Sept.6th 1825, (Newcastle 1825), 20; C.R. (1841) 47; Hill F., op.cit., 113-28.

4

Robberds J.G., "The Duty of a Christian Church in relation to the World." Sermon... Upper Brook Street (1839), 6-7. See also New Meeting Sunday School Reports, 1817-46, 2.11.1817, 5; 18.11.1821, 6-9.

5

Luckcock J., op.cit., Brotherly Society Rules and Declarations, 282-3.

Unitarian factory owners were strong supporters of Sunday schools. At Belper, for example, all millhands under twenty were obliged to attend on pain of forfeit of their quarterly gift money.<sup>1</sup> One of Samuel Greg's first steps towards building what he hoped would be an Utopian industrial community at Bollington was to establish a Sunday school where he spent part of every Sunday afternoon. The anniversary was held in his garden each year and school activities expanded into drawing and singing classes for the boys and girls respectively and games and winter evening parties in the comfortable schoolroom which was "fitted up handsomely and furnished with pictures, busts etc. and a pianoforte."<sup>2</sup> At Hyde, Thomas Ashton and his family liberally provided Sunday schools even for other denominations, including Roman Catholics.<sup>3</sup> John Fielden taught personally in the school at Todmorden and James Luckcock, a Birmingham manufacturer, was long one of the moving spirits in the Birmingham schools and taught both pupils and teachers. John Ashton Nicholls, a cotton manufacturer of Manchester, was an esteemed teacher at Mosley Street.<sup>4</sup>

Many Unitarians believed that a particularly important function of Sunday schools was to afford opportunities for middle and working classes to meet, both

<sup>1</sup> Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., The Strutt and the Arkwrights (1958) 186, 254-6. See also M.R. (1831) 791; C.R. (1841) 384.

<sup>2</sup> Greg S., "Two Letters to Leonard Horner Esq. on The Capabilities of the Factory System" (1840) in Conditions of Working and Living Five Pamphlets 1838-44 (Arno Press New York 1972), 6-11.

<sup>3</sup> Harrop S.A., op.cit., 161-4.

<sup>4</sup> D.N.B. vol.18,1279; MSS M.C.O. Presbyterian Chapels, Vol.I,179, Todmorden. Luckcock J., op.cit.; Matthews W., A Sketch of the Principal Means... employed to ameliorate the Intellectual and Moral Condition of the Working-classes in Birmingham (1830),13,14,22-26; Wade R., The Rise of Nonconformity in Manchester (1880) 63-4; Nicholls and Greg were both ex-pupils of Lant Carpenter and Nicholls also attended M.C., 1840-4.

through anniversary tea-parties and through middle-class members teaching in the schools, as at Exeter and Chesterfield, for example.<sup>1</sup> Many notable Unitarians devoted their Sundays to teaching poor children. At High Pavement, William Enfield, a devoted teacher, deeply cognizant of the importance of early education and holding a "simple, hopeful, happy Unitarian faith", gave fifty years' service to the Sunday school. His wife, Anne, long superintendent of the Girls' school, promoted music and the "costly provision of gardens for the scholars."<sup>2</sup> Joseph Chamberlain taught at Carter Lane Sunday school, London, along with (Sir) James Clark Lawrence, Henry Preston (solicitor) and his wife.<sup>3</sup> John Withers Dowson, having with four of the Martineau brothers and sisters established the Octagon Sunday school in Norwich in 1822, despite the opposition of the elderly deacons, long remained a teacher and superintendent, taking mid-week walking parties of boys into the country.<sup>4</sup>

Manchester College students had helped in Sunday schools since the days of the missionary society at York. In Manchester, from 1840 to 1853, many staff as well as students, such as Henry Crosskey, taught in the Lower Mosley Street schools whilst Mancunions like Brook Herford (an ex-pupil of Beard's) first

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Hill F., op.cit., 118; Burney L. op.cit., 15; C.R. (1836) 580-1; (1841) 181; M.R. (1810) V, 590; (1830) 278-9; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 188-9; Robson D.W., The Origins and History of Elder Yard Chapel, Chesterfield, (1924) 33-4.

<sup>2</sup> H.P.MSS Hu2Su1, Registers 1852-3, Boys; Armstrong R.A., "In Memoriam William Enfield", 23-4; Rev. P.W. Clayden, "An Address...on...Mrs Enfield; His 45/1 Plan of Boys School, 1844.

<sup>3</sup> Solly H., op.cit. vol.II, 83-8.

<sup>4</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 253; Inquirer, 19.7.1879, 467.

taught in the schools and thence were inspired to go to the College to train as ministers. Herford was there at the time when Travers Madge, "A Unitarian Saint" according to the Spectator, was their chief inspiration.<sup>1</sup> Madge had taught at Carter Lane when at University College, London from 1838 to 1840 and when he was at Manchester College from 1840 until 1845 he so enthused the Lower Mosley Street schools that in 1848 his return as Home Visitor was ecstatically welcomed. An eccentric perfectionist, but a loving, warm joyous personality, Madge was at home amongst the independent, outspoken, orderly working-class he met at Lower Mosley Street. In 1840 the schools had already been "large and admirably organised", with numerous teachers of both sexes drawn from the scholars, "many of them the pick of the factory class." Madge spent all his leisure time visiting, entertaining or walking with his scholars, his incomparable influence, according to Brook Herford, immediately introducing a more informal and religious tone. Mutual Improvement and evening classes added to his Sunday duties whilst the week was spent chiefly in pastoral work, although between four and six in the morning he took classes of factory boys and men. Members of leading Unitarian families, such as Mrs Dowson, Miss H.M. Rathbone, Harriet Martineau and especially Mrs Gaskell, "always a willing helper of Travers in all his good work" according to Herford, wrote for his Sunday School Penny Magazine, a 24 page monthly which Herford believed unique for the day.<sup>2</sup> Lower Mosley Street, of course, had a wealth of talent of all kinds to draw on for its teachers, for example Russell and J.E. Taylor, both editors of the Manchester Guardian in turn.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C.R. (1826) 202-3; MSS M.C.O., Wood W.R., Correspondence M.C.Y. 1829-31, (11) 17.1.1830, (41) 30.1.1831 etc; Burney L. op.cit., 40; D.N.B. 2nd Supplement II, 254; Solly H., op.cit., vol.II, 38-9,16; Robberds M., Recollections of a Long Life (Typescript of notes for her grandchildren in the Church of the Divine Unity, Newcastle upon Tyne).

<sup>2</sup> Herford B., op.cit., 7-15,20-1,51-65; Burney L., op.cit., 21,40.

<sup>3</sup> McLachlan H., "The Taylors and Scotts of the Manchester Guardian", T.U.H.S. (1927) Vol.IV, No.1,33. See similarly H.P.MSS His 45/1 op.cit.; Burney L., op.cit., 21.



There is little doubt that many of these middle-class promoters of Sunday schools were enthusiastic teachers, helping energetically in all their multifarious activities, sure, as William Enfield said, that this was the only respite for many working-class children from "vice and wretchedness", the only chance for moral progress.<sup>1</sup> Great interest in Sunday schooling was also evinced by the Unitarian periodicals such as the Monthly Repository and especially the Unitarian Chronicle and the Christian Reformer.<sup>2</sup>

Not all Sunday school teachers were middle-class, however. The co-editor of the Sunday School Magazine was Thomas E. Poynting who, although working-class, by dint of arduous self-education was teaching Latin, French and mathematics at the age of twenty. From 1841 to 1843 he was the Master of Thomas Ashton's Flowery Field School, Hyde, after which having spent a brilliant studentship at Manchester College from 1843 until 1846, he became, among other things, a writer on education.<sup>3</sup> John Wilson, the printer on the Manchester Guardian who taught in Beard's thriving Sunday school, having taught himself ancient languages in Chetham's Library and so having enabled himself to become a public defender of Unitarianism, showed that working-class people also were involved in Unitarian educational ventures. At the Salford anniversaries, Wilson outspokenly told successive audiences, including many Unitarian ministers, that although Sunday schools could, thankfully, help raise the poor above merely being "hewers of wood and drawers of water", it was a mockery to offer educational institutions as a panacea for all the evils of destitution. The first need was for food, clothing and decent homes. Wilson's solution however, like that of his minister, John Beard, lay in urging a better moral education for all classes.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>  
H.P. MSS HiI3, Mutual Improvement Society, 6.11.1822.

<sup>2</sup>  
E.g. M.R. (1811) VI, 577-85; C.R. (1841) 389,522,533.

<sup>3</sup>  
MSS MCO., Presbyterian Chapels, Vol.I,11 Vol.2,303; McLachlan H., U.H.M.C...,57-8.

<sup>4</sup>  
McLachlan H., Records...,22; For Beard's Sunday school at Greengate, Salford see e.g. U.C. (1833) 115-19,308-11; C.R. (1841) 118,177-81,714-9.

Many Unitarian Sunday schools were run by working-class members, for example the admirable one at Oldham and Samuel Greg's at Bollington where the moving spirit was the Girls' School Superintendent, a dresser at the mill, who, according to Greg, metamorphosed on Sundays into a Methodist minister and the "most important and honoured man in our whole community."<sup>1</sup> Henry Solly found his new congregation at Yeovil in 1840 to be mostly "an exceptionally fine set of working-men," some of the best of whom taught in the "excellent little Sunday school." The Superintendent, John Bainbridge, "a very clever journeyman upholsterer, became one of Solly's most valued friends. Another teacher, Stevens, a house-decorator and painter, "a born gentleman", according to Solly, could have been a very good artist. At Shepton Mallet, a working woman in Solly's congregation, Jane Stallard, taught in the school and on weekdays taught older girls Shakespeare at five in the morning before they went to the mill.<sup>2</sup>

Methodist Unitarians were enthusiastic promoters of Sunday schools, but, unlike many orthodox Methodists who opposed secular instruction on Sundays, they taught history, geography and elementary mathematics as well as the three Rs. Joseph Barker's Christian Brethren, in particular, developed libraries and reading-rooms also. The leaders were strong, courageous men, opposed to smoking and alcohol and keenly interested in all aspects of education. One of the people who attended their meetings in Etruria was Francis Wedgwood.<sup>3</sup>

Amongst the most successful Unitarian Sunday schools were those in Birmingham, established by wealthy middle-class congregations but with the teachers, mostly working-class, effectively in control of the curriculum and

<sup>1</sup> Marcroft A., op.cit., 89; Greg S., op.cit., 7.

<sup>2</sup> Solly H., op.cit., vol.I, 334-5; vol.II, 30. Jane Stallard became the Sollys and their daughter's servant and nurse. Another such example was the autodidact John Mason's school at Welburn where Manchester College students helped - M.R. (1827) N.S.1, 628-9.

<sup>3</sup> McLachlan H., Essays..., 226; Nonconformist Library..., 164-183.

internal administration. Gradual conflict over what the teachers saw as unwarranted interference did eventually lead in 1834 to nearly all the New Meeting teachers seceding to form new Sunday schools which eventually led to the establishment of a new Unitarian chapel in Newhall Hill in 1838, which is interesting for the fact that it was the only Unitarian society in Birmingham to commit itself to the name.<sup>1</sup> All these Sunday schools flourished both numerically and in the extent of their educational and social activities. A chief reason for this undoubtedly lay in the Brotherly Society, described before, which continued as an exceedingly popular benefit society, at 2d to 4d a week, for the boys and teachers off work (apparently it was considered not suitable for the girls). It was also an important link between the teachers in all the Birmingham Unitarian Sunday schools. By 1832 its savings stood at £1,151. An annual subscription of two guineas ensured medical assistance in cases of emergency. Attempts were also made to provide employment for unemployed members and in the 1830s loans of £5.10s were given to those needing such things as tools to start a business. J. Reilly spoke glowingly of the superiority of the Society's schools in organisation, management, effective discipline and the regulation of the teachers and of the fact that in 1830 there were so many pupils (552 boys with 53 teachers) that the New Meeting had to suspend admissions temporarily. The Society's superior class, training future teachers for a year, was a necessary requirement for being either a teacher or a member of the Society. Every candidate had to be properly scrutinized and approved and two monthly visitors were appointed to undertake the necessary investigation. The Society prided itself that it was constantly revitalised by the zeal of new members.<sup>2</sup> After the secession of 1834 the New Meeting set up its own Provident Society with a medical fund, savings fund and annuities for the over-sixties.

<sup>1</sup> M.R. (1823) XVIII,9-10. New Meeting Sunday Schools Reports...4.1.1836, 4-9; New H., op.cit., 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> Reilly J., op.cit., 15-22; Luckcock J., op.cit., Narrative...269,273-4; U.C. (1832).

Within a year there were 400 members. From 1810 the Old Meeting had a Friendly Society whose minutes show its frequent involvement in educational and social change, and which organised the school and instructed its members, like the New Meeting's Teacher's Society of 1818 had done. At both Meetings ephemeral mutual improvement societies were frequently founded and ministers sometimes taught in these.<sup>1</sup>

Frost states that the Birmingham Unitarians were much closer to working-class needs and demands than the "Establishment" Anglicans and that their schools at least were not E.P. Thompson's "dreadful exchange" for village dame schools. They had democratic control and were the only Birmingham Sunday schools on Laqueur's model, although the middle-class controlled finance. As early as 1801 the Old Meeting had to limit numbers (whilst Anglican schools were declining) and again in 1842. In 1844 ability to read was made a condition of entry. The school deliberately set out to refresh the pupils' minds and teach them to form their own judgements. Formal classes, for example for elocution and discussion, many visits to lectures and exhibitions at adult educational institutions, and the general care of its pupils added to the school's attractions.<sup>2</sup> The minutes of the Friendly Society show great understanding of working-class problems and disadvantages, including that of low status, and a determination that their education should differ from the patchy instruction doled out by the "privileged few" who wanted their "selfish prosperity" kept from the "neglected many". They were happy to help the working-class gain, through knowledge, "true possession of [its] physical - - moral and intellectual rights."<sup>3</sup> There was a consciousness, at Newhall Hill for example, that Unitarian education, in the hands of men like Beard, was not

<sup>1</sup> Bushrod E., op.cit., 190-1, 183-5; Frost M.B., op.cit., 209-14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 151-63, 304-7; Thompson E.P., op.cit., 414.

<sup>3</sup> Frost M.B., op.cit., 338-43.

like evangelical instruction which was

debasing, instead of improving the people, and --training up the young and preparing the poor for mental degradation; ---the greater part of popular education tends to stunt the growth of the mind; --- much of religious teaching and writing is adverse to moral truth and real virtue, and keeps down instead of exalting the intellect, and poisons instead of nourishing the heart.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians, however, saw education as "the only sure preservative and extender of civil and religious liberty, and means of "the elevation of the human race to a fuller conception of their intellectual and moral capabilities as sons of God."<sup>2</sup>

Others, like the atheist George Holyoake, preferred Unitarians amongst Christians because they taught more and turned out youths "very superior to Evangelical youths, who had merely spiritual information". Former pupils too, showed gratitude for the education they had received, not least by many of them becoming teachers in the schools.<sup>3</sup> How far parents appreciated Unitarian Sunday schools can be surmised from the fact that so many were full, even, as at the Lower Mosley Street in the 1840s, overflowing, and not necessarily with children of Unitarians.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes possibly, as at the Leicester Girls' School, admission was eagerly sought partly because people from well-known local families were involved in the schools.<sup>5</sup> Lant Carpenter personally won the love, veneration and financial generosity of the poorest of his congregation.<sup>6</sup> According to Hickey,

<sup>1</sup> C.R., (1841), 519-20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 720-1.

<sup>3</sup> Easson A., Elizabeth Gaskell (1979), 18. E.g. Bushrod E., op.cit., 195-6.

<sup>4</sup> Burney L., op.cit., 42-3.

<sup>5</sup> Gittins E., op.cit., 8-9. See also e.g. C.R., (1841), 592.

<sup>6</sup> Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 473-6.

chronicler of Dukinfield Old Chapel, Unitarians were close to the people, although their ministers were highly educated, as they believed this education to be a precious commodity to be shared and to act as a liberalizing force.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, the wide curriculum at Unitarian schools was attractive, although this sometimes entailed difficulties:- in 1849 the Lower Mosley Street girls refused to do callisthenics because the Bible said, "Do not thy alms before men!"<sup>2</sup>

Standards may well have been lower in some smaller schools, however: for example, Henry Solly found that although many children attended the Shepton Mallet school neither the attainments of teachers nor scholars were very high.<sup>3</sup> Yet all Sunday schools could provide something for those of the poor who were thirsty for knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Tholfsen believes that gradually all Sunday schools became imbued with the progressive, optimistic rationalism and more genial views of mankind long the hallmark of Unitarianism and turned, as Unitarians most enthusiastically had, to develop those virtues which would "gentle" and advance the people whilst England basked securely in peace and economic greatness.<sup>5</sup> This meant reward for the middle-class but many pupils from Unitarian Sunday schools gained, too, for example John Ashworth, the son of a poor handloom weaver, educated in the Newchurch Sunday school. Teacher of the Young Womens' Class for 57 years and Superintendent of the school for 55, he became a cotton manufacturer, member of the Town Council and School Board.<sup>6</sup>

Despite such successes, however, many Unitarians realised that Sunday

<sup>1</sup> Harrop S.A., op.cit., 118-9.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., Letters of Mrs Gaskell (1966), 89.

<sup>3</sup> Solly H., op.cit., Vol. II, 10.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Shaw C., When I was a Child, (Caliban Paperback 1980), especially 7-11, 207; ed. Burnett J., Destiny Obscure (1982), 140-4.

<sup>5</sup> Tholfsen T.R., "Moral Education in the Victorian Sunday School" History of Education Quarterly (Spring 1980), 77-95.

<sup>6</sup> McLachlan H., Essays..., 227. See also e.g. M.R. (1814), IX, 671; Holt R.V., op.cit., 252.

education was not enough: after all, only a minority of the working-class attended and then for only one day a week. An analysis of the New Meeting pupils in 1842, for example, shows that 192 of 219 boys were at work and 68 of 120 girls (two of whom attended the night school).<sup>1</sup> In "The Scholars of Arneside" Harriet Martineau depicted Sunday school children struggling to read or make any intelligible sense of the Bible even whilst they were at school.<sup>2</sup> J.J. Tayler, William Biggs, the Monthly Repository, even John Beard, the ardent advocate of Sunday schools, saw such education as inadequate.<sup>3</sup>

Thus many Unitarians desired more education of all forms for the working-class, especially as it became apparent, partly through the work of the new statistical societies, that Sunday schools were not reaching the very poor. Most of those boys in employment at the New Meeting were in skilled or semi-skilled trades. Many poor children lacked the clothing to attend. Some Sunday schools tried to bring the very poor in, for example at Cheltenham in the late 1840s Thomas Carter, the Superintendent, encouraged "little reprobates" from the slums, but once he left to train for the ministry no-one could control them.<sup>4</sup> It was easier to provide for the badly-clothed, often disorderly destitute, elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> Bushrod E., op.cit., 193.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau H., Illustrations of Taxation V, "The Scholars of Arneside", (1834), 2-4, 7, 43, 132.

<sup>3</sup> C.R., (1834), 192; MSS Leicester P.R.O.,... Biggs' Scrapbooks, Vol. I, Lecture on National Education, 1849, U.C., (1833), 117-8; Beard J.R., Schools, (1842), 25-6. See also Hill F., op.cit., 3-10, 102-4, 256; M.R. (1830), N.S.4, 412; (1831) N.S.5, 681-3.

<sup>4</sup> Bushrod E., op.cit., 193-5; Adshead J., "Distress in Manchester 1840-2" (1842), in Conditions of Working ... op.cit., 39; Solly H., op.cit., Vol. II, 35-6. See also Dick M., Conference Papers 1883..., 48; Hurt J.S., Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918, (1979), 42-3.

Mary Carpenter, for example, established a Working and Visiting Society for the homes of the poor children connected with Lewin's Mead, but realised that still they were not reaching the very poorest. From 1838 she endeavoured to establish a Domestic Mission: in 1846 she set up a Ragged Sunday school.<sup>1</sup> Teachers from the New Meeting, Birmingham, Domestic Mission Sunday school often gathered the children in from the streets. In 1846 there were 30 pupils, by 1848 there were 300. The teachers included two rag and bone collectors.<sup>2</sup>

Such work led people like Beard to understand the overwhelming moral devastation that extreme poverty commits ... How much of this is fairly attributable to the misconduct of individuals, and how much to a system of government that has sought, all but exclusively the interests of a few to the detriment, the fearful and lasting detriment of the many, - it is not now my object to inquire ...<sup>3</sup>

To Beard, more interested in moral than in economic analysis, the best "charity" for the poor was to give them education.<sup>4</sup>

An examination of Unitarian Sunday schooling, therefore, does not fully bear out Malcolm Dick's thesis although in many respects it contradicts Laqueur's. Most Unitarian Sunday schools were established and financed by the middle-class who might also be involved in teaching. Working-class teachers sometimes gained democratic management and, in Methodist Unitarian chapels particularly, were sometimes in complete control. Unitarian Sunday schools were rarely evangelical or proselytising but they could be patriarchal and certainly conveyed "respectable" values, although this was as much the wish of the working-class teachers as of the

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter J.E., The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter, (1879), 37-8, 80,87.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O. Presbyterian Chapels, Vol. 2, 284, Birmingham (Inquirer 9.3.1895.)

<sup>3</sup> M.R., (1832), N.S.6, 236-7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



middle-class. On the other hand these schools usually were interested less in deferential attitudes than in explicitly teaching working-class people to think for themselves and in giving them unusual opportunities to do so. The Unitarians themselves were hardly "respectable" according to many other sections of the middle-class and their attitudes were either different from or anticipated those of others. It is therefore hard to categorise their Sunday schools. This dichotomy between patriarchalism and a genuine wish to give the working-class a full, satisfying education as of a right will be seen in an examination of other educational activities.

. . . . .

Unitarians, therefore, wished to provide day education for the working-classes. Several congregations already did so, indeed. Apart from those at Cross Street, the charity schools described previously continued, although, from 1813, the Birmingham one was for girls only.<sup>1</sup> There is no space to describe them in detail. Suffice it to say that these and others flourished in this period, a number expanding into new buildings, as at Leicester in 1813 and Nottingham from 1845 to 1849. The boys' side at Leicester increased and improved, especially after a

<sup>1</sup>

Bushrod E., op.cit., 156, 167-75; Adey K.R., "Birmingham Boarding Charity Schools, 1724-1870," H. of E. Occasional Publication No. 3, Studies in the Local History of Education, (Autumn 1977), 6; Turner W., A Short Sketch..., 40; H.P. MSS HiS11, Admissions Girls' Day School; Burney L., op.cit., 5-6; McLachlan H., "Cross Street Chapel in the Life of Manchester", Memoirs and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, (Feb. 1941), vol.84, 33. The girls finished 1805, the boys 1815: in 1820 Thomas Potter founded a new school at Irlam-o'-th'-Heights.

government grant was successfully applied for in 1849.<sup>1</sup> At Nottingham, the girls' school only was put under government inspection. In 1848 free admission ended, as did free clothing for the girls in 1849.<sup>2</sup> Favourable reports on those schools which were inspected proved their comparative educational worth, the one at Birmingham, for example, being perceived as "even lavishly sufficient" and having to curtail the curriculum, intensify the industrial training and keep the girls to the level of good, plain domestic servants.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Matthew Arnold found the governess untrained and her arithmetic "only moderate" in 1852, but the Committee had difficulties in finding a reliable one even after applying to Borough Road.<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to find much detail about the teachers, although some appear to have been good.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MSS Leicester P.R.O., Great Meeting Vestry Book, Book I, 7.9.1829 - 5.12.1853 passim; Thomas A.H., A History of the Great Meeting, Leicester and its Congregation, (1908), Notes by E. Clephan "The Great Meeting Day Schools", 65-9. See also Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 470-472; Holt A., Walking Together (1938), 167; Tiffen H.J., A History of the Liverpool Institute Schools, 1825-1935 (1935), 15-6; Ruston A.R., Unitarianism and Early Presbyterianism in Hackney, (Privately printed 1980), 24; Unitarianism in Hertfordshire (Privately printed 1979), 10; Inquirer, 27.2.1937, 99; 10.4.1937, 171; MSS M.C.O., Shepherd Papers, X, 33-7.

<sup>2</sup> H.P.MSS, HiM Minute Books passim; HiS54 Charity School Anniversary Services; William Hugh, The H.P. Day Schools, Nottingham and Mrs Fisher's Bequest (1889) - compare Wardle D., op.cit., 121.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., HiS54...; Bushrod E., op.cit., 157, 168-9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>5</sup> Wardle D., op.cit., 165; see also MSS ... Great Meeting Vestry Book, 25.3.1827.

The schools were strictly non-denominational, as High Pavement proudly proclaimed at each anniversary celebration and William Hughes cogently illustrated. Parents of other denominations appreciated this and eagerly sent their children.<sup>2</sup> In 1839, of ninety girls at Manesty Lane, Liverpool, for example, only fifteen were Unitarians and of 85 boys only 10. The rest were chiefly Anglicans, with a variety of Non-conformists and some Roman Catholics.<sup>3</sup>

The curriculum was commonly the three Rs, with sewing and knitting for the girls. The latter and housework counted as industrial training. Sewing could provide funds, admittedly very variable, for the school, as they did at High Pavement Girls' School and Birmingham.<sup>4</sup> This was a fairly basic offering, therefore, although one not widely available to the poor at the time. Clothing might be provided, as for the Great Meeting boys until 1831.<sup>5</sup> Corporal punishment was eschewed, discipline perhaps being easier because the children were nominated to the schools by subscribers, for example at Leicester at the subscription of 10/6 per child.<sup>6</sup> Money was raised for the schools through these subscriptions, donations and again through prestigious anniversary sermons. Some of these

<sup>1</sup> H.P.MSS William Hugh ...; (compare Wardle D., op.cit., 121-2); HiS54 ...; see also Bushrod E., op.cit., 158.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Williams D., Leicester and Education before 1870 (Leicester and Leicestershire Schoolmasters Association, 1970), 36.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O. Shepherd Papers X, 33, 37, 39, 41, 43; Inquirer, 10.4.1937, 171.

<sup>4</sup> H.P.MSS Hi57 Account of Garments made and sold H.P. Girls Day School, Oct 1835-June 1848. HiS54 .. Anniversary Services; Bushrod E., op.cit., 157.

<sup>5</sup> MSS .. Great Meeting Vestry Book, 5.12.1831.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.; e.g. Bushrod E., op.cit., 172, 159; Inquirer, 6.2.1937, 63.

congregations had other educational commitments to meet and could not afford extravagance; for example, the High Pavement Committee stopped the girls' overnight fire because it was costly as well as dangerous.<sup>1</sup>

There was much interest shown over charity schools, for example, the long correspondence in the Monthly Repository over Catherine Cappe's Thoughts on Charitable Institutions in 1814.<sup>2</sup> Patrons often showed a paternal interest in their charity school pupils; one Rev. John Yates, for example, used to invite all 3-400 to parties in his ample grounds in Toxteth Park.<sup>3</sup> Although, as charity sermons and school hymns illustrated, the schools provided opportunities for the wealthier to reap an "abundant harvest of good works" for which the poor should be duly grateful, they were also to provide opportunities for the exercise of the equal capacities for enjoyment, happiness and religious development which Unitarians recognised in every person.<sup>4</sup> A more democratic society than the Anglican hierarchical, deferrent one,<sup>5</sup> with greater emphasis on freedom and self-determination, was upheld.

The response of the pupils is difficult to ascertain, although the boys at Stoke Croft, Bristol, obviously venerated Lant Carpenter. Some pupils obviously made the most of their opportunities. Several of the Manesty Lane pupils rose to respectable positions, according to the Monthly Repository, and later became

<sup>1</sup> MSS Great Meeting Vestry Book passim; Aspland R.B., op.cit., 202, 250; H.P.MSS, HiM Minute Books, 12.4.1840, 20.11.1812; HiS54 .. Anniversary Services.

<sup>2</sup> M.R., (1814), IX, 424-7, 542-6, 673, 686-8.

<sup>3</sup> M.R., (1827), N.S.1, 69.

<sup>4</sup> Wood W., Sermon preached at Birmingham Old and New Meetings for the Protestant Dissenting Charity School, June 9th, 1905 (Leeds 1805), 4-26. H.P.MSS HiS54 Advertisement for the Anniversary Sermon 12.6.1831; Adey K.R., op.cit., 2-4.7.

<sup>5</sup> Frost M.B., op.cit., 138-41.

subscribers to their own school.<sup>1</sup> William Hughes reports similar success at High Pavement: for example, J.C. Robinson was sent on from there by his patron to France to study art. He later rose from being master of the Stoke School of Design to Inspector of Pictures for the Sovereign and a knighthood.<sup>2</sup> Charles Reece Pemberton, educated in Birmingham, survived being press-ganged for six years to become a successful lecturer and reader of Shakespeare and poetry at Mechanics' Institutes. A fiery radical, Pemberton wrote the lively "Autobiography of Pel. Verjuice" for Fox's Monthly Repository from 1833 to 1834, bitterly attacking aristocratic privilege, social pretensions and injustice, and parsons who taught the poor that salvation lay in obedience to Church and state. Pemberton, at least, was not repressed by his education.<sup>3</sup>

Not all Unitarians liked charity schools or believed they justified their cost. They were patriarchal institutions firmly within the class system, although they could offer pupils opportunities unavailable elsewhere. William Biggs, for example, objected to them on principle, maintaining that education was a right for all and should be provided by the state if necessary and not as a charity.<sup>4</sup>

Some Unitarian congregations, particularly larger ones, did provide ordinary day schooling, too, although they did not have the resources to do this on a large scale and, like other Dissenters, concentrated more on Sunday school provision.

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 472n.; M.R., (1827), N.S.1, 69.

<sup>2</sup> H.P.MSS, William Hugh, Some notes historical and educational relative to the H.P. Higher Education School (Privately printed, 2nd edition 1905), 3.

<sup>3</sup> M.R. (1833), N.S.7, 323-39, 392-403, 475-88, 529-45, 623-44, 631-705, 816-29, (1834), N.S.8, 21-39, 212-27, 666-75, 786-98, (1835), N.S.9, 415-29; Mineka F.E. op.cit., 345-7.

<sup>4</sup> M.R. (1822), XVII, 273-4; ... Biggs' Scrapbooks.. Vol.I. Lecture on Education Education 1849.

In the Unitarian Chronicle returns of 1832 only 12 of the 118 chapels analysed were recorded as having day schools and some of these, for example Leicester, were certainly charity schools.<sup>1</sup> These schools were financed in the same way as the charity schools, although most charged fees as well. They were non-denominational even J.O. Curtis, the head-teacher of Lower Mosley Street Boys' School from 1836-5 for example, being non-Unitarian.<sup>2</sup> The basic curriculum comprised the three Rs but could extend further, Curtis's three higher classes, for example, taking geography, history and especially English to overcome the "poverty of language" which corresponded to "paucity" of ideas and lowered people in "the standard of thinking, intelligent beings".<sup>3</sup> Curtis also dropped the monitorial system as soon as possible and, with government inspection starting with the one from 1843 to 1844, began taking pupil-teachers. In 1847 the Inspector reported the higher classes to be far more advanced than was usual in British schools. The girls's school followed suit in the 1850s.<sup>4</sup> From 1850 the boys' charity school at the Great Meeting, Leicester, became a fee-paying school under government inspection and flourished so much that from December 1853 the numbers had to be reduced to 220.<sup>5</sup>

Individual Unitarians, especially factory owners, also established elementary schools. Thomas Ashton, for example was one of the first manufacturers in

<sup>1</sup> U.C., (1832), 146-7, 197-9; Wade R., op.cit., 66; Burney L., op.cit., 32-3; Maltby S.E., op.cit., 38, 130, 134.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Burney L., op.cit., 35.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 36-7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 41-2.

<sup>5</sup> MSS... Great Meeting Vestry Book I, Dec. 1849 - Dec. 1853.

north-east Cheshire to do so. In 1830 he opened the inter-denominational, spacious, excellently-lighted and ventilated Flowery Field School, Hyde. Fees were 2d a week. Apparently, however, only a few attended, but the buildings were used for evening classes for the more advanced pupils and for musical poetry and discussion evenings for small groups of workmen, particularly those who, as a result of being the best educated men in the district, became overseers. These also taught in the Sunday schools. Some indication of the effectiveness of the schools is that in 1833 only 7.4% of Ashton's workforce were illiterate. The Hibberts of Hyde and Boston Mills, the Strutts of Derby and Belper and the Gregs of Styal likewise provided and maintained elementary schools for the whole industrial community. Once the Strutts' day schools were open, no child who could not read was employed by them.<sup>1</sup>

After the 1833 and subsequent Factory Acts compelled textile manufacturers to educate their child employees for part of the day, the Strutts also established factory schools at their Belper and Milford mills, offering reading and writing with the girls sewing and knitting for 50% of their time, although parents, as elsewhere, were less than enthusiastic.<sup>2</sup> The Strutts and McConnel have been picked out by both Harold Silver and C.M. Brown as examples of good factory owners in this respect, Brown also noting the work of other Unitarian industrialists such as Salis Schwabe and Samuel Greg. J.F.C. Harrison picked out only two good factory schools in Leeds - one run by the Unitarian Marshall. It would seem that Unitarian industrialists took a genuinely educational approach to the Factory Acts

<sup>1</sup> Harrop S.A., op.cit., 161-165, 220-1; Rose M., The Gregs of Styal (The National Trust 1978), 24-8; Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 186, 226-7, 254-6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 257-8.

one which was not generally held before the 1850s.<sup>1</sup>

Many Unitarians were naturally attracted to the ideal of infant schooling, as were others out of line with orthodox religion:- liberals, Swedenborgians, Pestalozzians, phrenologists. Unitarians such as M.D. Hill, Frederic and Martha Hill, J.R. Beard, Thomas Potter, the Strutts, Charles Bray, W.J. Fox and most Repostitaires, Elizabeth Rathbone, Lady Byron and many Leicester Unitarians had been deeply impressed by the aims of practical, moral and spiritual development in a healthy, happy, non-doctrinal atmosphere and many of them were involved in the establishment of infant schools. Infant schools were set up at Unitarian chapels such as Salford, Lower Mosley Street and Hanover Square.<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Leigh-Smith shouldered the whole burden of the Westminster Free Day Asylum after Brougham and the Benthamites had abandoned it. This school, complete with large playground and baths, was run by James Buchanan and in 1854 inspired Barbara Leigh-Smith's Portman Hall. Both Buchanan and these infant schools were products

<sup>1</sup> Brown C.M., "Lancasterian Industrialists and their Schools", Journal of Educational Administration and History, (Jan. 1983), XV no. 1, 10-19; "Industrialists and their Factory Schools", H. of E., (June 1980), vol. 9, no. 2, 117-24; Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 18-19; Silver H., Education as History, (Methuen U.P. Paperback, 1983), 35-8.

<sup>2</sup> De Guistino D., Conquest of Mind Phrenology and Social Thought, (1975), 174-7. Hey C., The History of Hazelwood School, Birmingham and its influence on educational developments in the Nineteenth Century, (Swansea M.A., 1954), 53n.1, 139; Hill F., op.cit., 170-96; U.C., (1833), 117; M.R., (1832), N.S.6, 237; (1827), N.S.1, 138; Beard James, op.cit., 1832, 1833; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 376-7, 381-4, 570; MSS Liverpool University, Elizabeth Rathbone Correspondence with Lady Byron, 1839-1859, VI.I.263, (1851); Patterson A.T., Radical Leicester, (1975), 161-2; Greenwood M., op.cit., 65-6; Burney L., op.cit., 30-2; Bowery M.M. op.cit., 269. Harriet Martineau thought differently - Martineau H., Biographical Sketches, 1852-68, (1870), 311.



of Robert Owen's ventures at New Lanark and retained his informal, unorthodox emphasis, developing children through the affections, play, singing and dancing, and fostering their curiosity and independent thought through much illustrative material. Through Benjamin Leigh-Smith and his erstwhile Unitarian relatives, the Nightingale family, Buchanan also established two infant schools for the rather reluctant poor in Derbyshire.<sup>1</sup> Buchanan was an important influence on Samuel Wilderspin, a fellow Swedenborgian, (and thus a member of a rationalist religious group akin to Unitarians in educational ideas). Through Wilderspin's work and that of the Mayos, infant schools for the poor spread until there were over 270 in Great Britain by 1836. Evangelicals, however, gradually took over the movement and by the 1840s the schools were more formal and more limited in curriculum and emphasised doctrinal religious instruction. This, together with a lack of resources and an increasing reliance on very cheap teachers, effectively ensured that the original ideals of the movement were lost.<sup>2</sup>

It was generally too expensive for individuals to establish infant schools and many Unitarians had combined with others in order to do so: for example, six Unitarians were on the Birmingham Infant School Committee of 41 (the others comprised 11 Quakers, 22 Anglicans and 2 Independents), although only two very small non-denominational schools were established.<sup>3</sup> Such cooperation was important, as it showed that Unitarians could extend working-class education by working with others, although unfortunately sometimes their involvement might mean that some

<sup>1</sup> Stewart W.A.C. and McCann W.P., The Educational Innovators, (1967), 242, 246-53; New C., The Life of Henry Brougham to 1830, (1961), 226-7; Silver H., Robert Owen on Education, (1969), 149-64; Malleon E., Autobiography..., (Privately printed 1926), 45-51.

<sup>2</sup> Silver H., The Concept of Popular Education (1965), 136-48; McCann P., New Light on the Infant School Movement, (Lecture at H.of E. Conference, Birmingham, 1981.)

<sup>3</sup> Frost M.B., op.cit., 103, 182.

subscribers withdrew.<sup>1</sup> Unitarians similarly supported the establishment of Lancasterian schools, for example, at Cross Street the boys transferred to the Manchester Lancasterian School of 1810 since its aims were the same. Similarly, Lancasterian schools were also firstly promoted by Brougham, Quakers and the Utilitarians, Bentham, particularly, liking monitorial methods as a scientific, economical and rational way of extending education. The non-denominational Royal Lancasterian Association and its 1814 successor, the British and Foreign Schools Society (B.F.S.S.), were attractive to all Dissenters, especially once the establishment in 1811 of a rival, the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, threatened the spread of Anglican indoctrination amongst the working-class. The Benthamites left the B.F.S.S. as it became more religious.<sup>2</sup> Many Lancasterian schools were also established outside the Society itself, although they often used teachers trained at its Normal School in Borough Road.<sup>3</sup>

In the early days, as the Christian Reformer asserted, Unitarians were the "most liberal and zealous supporters - in many instances the founders - of Lancasterian and British schools..."<sup>4</sup> Unitarians in Manchester, Birmingham,

<sup>1</sup> E.g. C.R. (1841), 46.

<sup>2</sup> Binns H.B., A Century of Education being the centenary history of the British and Foreign Schools Society 1808-1908 (1908), passim; Lawson J. and Silver H., op.cit., 241-6; Miller P.J., "Factories, Monitorial Schools and Jeremy Bentham: the Origins of the Management Syndrome in Popular Education", Journal of Educational Administration and History, (July 1973), vol.V, no. 2, 10-20; Simon B., The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870, (Lawrence and Wishart Paperback 1974), 143-150; ed. Burston W.H., James Mill on Education, (1969), 120-93; Burney L., op.cit., 7; Maltby S.E., op.cit., 39, 154.

<sup>3</sup> Marsden W.E., "Diffusion and regional variation in elementary education in England and Wales 1800-70", H. of E., (Sept. 1982), vol.11, no.3, 177-82.

<sup>4</sup> C.R., (1834), 542.

Leicester, Staleybridge, Dukinfield, Exeter and the Strutts in Derby and Belper are examples of this. The many Unitarians who actively participated in or supported British schools included William Turner Junior, James Stansfeld, John Edward Taylor, Samuel Sharpe, Mrs Barbould, William Friend, Robert Aspland, Richard Shaen and W.J. Fox.<sup>1</sup> William Turner, together with a Quaker and an Anglican minister, persuaded the Newcastle Corporation to establish a Lancasterian school for boys instead of having illuminations for George III's Jubilee. Turner became secretary to the Royal Jubilee School, delivered the annual addresses, for many years wrote the annual reports and, with James Losh and two others, negotiated the setting up of a girls' school in 1812. Teachers from these schools were eagerly sought elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

Supporters of the National Society furiously denounced non-denominational teaching as ungodly or (perhaps worse) as favouring Unitarianism. Unitarians denied the first accusation, although being somewhat more disingenuous about the second. Men like Frederick Hill and Henry Morley preferred what they saw as a wider, more stimulating education against a degrading, narrow, intensive Anglican indoctrination.<sup>3</sup> The B.F.S.S. had its religious dissensions, however, which, from 1834-1847, led to many Unitarian complaints against doctrinal teaching and these

<sup>1</sup> Simon B., op.cit., 135-6; Frost M.B., op.cit., 167-81; Greenwood M., op.cit., 21-2, 32-4; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 158; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 188; Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 186, 254-6; C.R., (1854), 138; Record of Unitarian Worthies, (1876), 162; D.N.B., vol.55, 448, vol.51, 425; Rogers B., Georgian Chronicle, (1958), 230; Knight F., University Rebel, (1971), 284; Aspland R.B., op.cit., 229; M.R., (1810), V. 108-12; Ruston A., .. Hertfordshire.., 21; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 65.

<sup>2</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 79, 251-7, 261.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. C.R., (1825), 233; M.R., (1811), VI, 366, 551-4; (1812), 45-9; (1807) I, 381-4; (1808) II, 509-10; Hill F., op.cit., 70-1, 76-7, 83-90, 93, 96-8; Morley H., Early Papers and Some Memories, "A Defence of Ignorance" - 1851, (1891), 137. See also M.R., (1817), XII, 181-3; C.R., (1841), 156.

ended in legal quarrels.<sup>1</sup>

There was a danger that Unitarians, like others, saw these schools as a panacea for all kinds of social evils and crimes: for example, the enthusiastic Thomas Paget M.P., at Leicester, stressed that an educated population would create wise government and better labourers.<sup>2</sup> Yet there was a genuine desire to spread good education and civil liberty; defects in the system were criticised and improvements were eagerly noted.<sup>3</sup> It proved impossible, however, for the Lancasterian system to supply either the amount or always the quality of schooling needed. Although, in the 1820s, Lancasterian schools constituted over half the provided schooling in the large urban areas of Manchester and Liverpool, generally the distribution of British schools was thin and uneven outside the London area, and Dissenters found concentration on overseas missionary projects more alluring.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, as in Leicester from 1839 to 1840, provided educational institutions were underused.<sup>5</sup> Unitarians on their own could not rectify the situation and so increasingly demanded state education.

The severe shortages of educational provision for the masses in the nineteenth century and the attempts to establish a national system against religious conflict over the control of education, widespread middle-class fears of state

<sup>1</sup> Halevy E., The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism, (Faber Paperback 1972), 295; Binns H.B., op.cit., 146-55; Holt R.V., op.cit., 262-3.

<sup>2</sup> Greenwood M., op.cit., 52, 32-3; Binns H.B., op.cit., 287; M.R., (1814), IX, 145-9; Frost M.B., op.cit., 173-7.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. M.R., (1807), I, 381-4; (1829), N.S.3, 244, 378-86.

<sup>4</sup> Marsden W.E., op.cit.

<sup>5</sup> Greenwood M., op.cit., 164.

interference, apathy, even opposition to popular education, albeit decreasingly so have been well described and analysed elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> There is no room here to do more than give a brief, broad outline of Unitarian involvement.

Most Unitarians vigorously opposed any Bill, such as Brougham's of 1820 or Graham's of 1843, which aimed to extend education by increasing Anglican educational control, although William Shepherd and J.R. Beard and Harriet Martineau respectively are notable examples of those who thought any measure was better than nothing. Yet Beard also bitterly attacked the opulent Established Church which did not use its riches to educate the people and when it did gave an education

... almost as bad in kind as it is deficient in extent; ... for the most part, a mere bald mechanism... an inoculation of sectarianism, instead of teaching... to call out, strengthen and refine the faculties, to fill the mind with useful knowledge and lead the heart to the love of God and man:...

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For an overall view see Lawson J. and Silver H., op.cit., 266-75. More detailed accounts can be found in Hurt J., Education in Evolution (1971); Bishop A.S., The Rise of a Central Authority for English Education, (1971); Maltby S.E., op.cit. See also Marsden W.E., op.cit.; M.R., (1817), XII, 182-3; Fraser D., The Evolution of the British Welfare State (Macmillan Paperback 1973), 72-3.

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M.R., (1820), XV, 413-4, (1821), XVI, 25-31, 57, 113-5, 154-7, 186-8, 217, 315-6, 356-7, 501-4; MSS D.W.L., 12.111, Letters to Edgar Taylor opposing Brougham's Education Bill, 2,3, 5, 6; Aspland R.B., op.cit., 424-9; Carpenter J.E., James Martineau ..., 255; Bushrod E., op.cit., 132; H.P. MSS, HiM2, Minute Book, Petition between 27.11.1842 and 31.12.1843; MSS... Great Meeting Vestry Book, 1843; Greenwood M., op.cit., 191-7, 203; MSS M.C.O., Shepherd Papers, VII, 3; Holt R.V., op.cit., 262; Webb R.K., Harriet Martineau A Radical Victorian, (Columbia U.P. 1960), 219-20; Martineau H., The History of England during the Thirty Years Peace 1816-46, (1849), vol.II, 556-8. See also New C., op.cit., 146-225 passim; Fraser D., Urban Politics in Victorian England (Macmillan Paperback 1976), 270.

As a result crime, and sullen or turbulent discontent abounded:- "We have sown the wind, and are reaping the whirlwind."<sup>1</sup>

Engels, incidentally, interpreted the opposition of Dissenters to Graham's Bill as manufacturers opposing compulsory education because they feared an educated working-class.<sup>2</sup> In the case of Unitarians, including many industrialists, this certainly appears to be untrue. Especially as greater knowledge about the real dearth of educational provision came to light through the work of the new statistical societies, like that in Manchester in which they themselves were so prominent, and through educational surveys like that of Frederick Hill, Unitarians increasingly advocated that only state provision of some kind could relieve the situation.<sup>3</sup> They refused to become voluntaryists as many Dissenters, especially Congregationalists, did from 1846 and they strongly supported state help to all, including Roman Catholics.<sup>4</sup> Unitarians in Liverpool, for example, especially William and Elizabeth Rathbone, had secured the Hibernian system whereby Protestants and Roman Catholics were educated in the same schools but given religious

<sup>1</sup> Beard J.R., The Government Plan of Education... ((1839), 3-32. See also Fox W.J. Collected Works, (1865), vol. VIII, "Five Lectures on Education", (from Finsbury Lectures 1835-40), 179-82.

<sup>2</sup> Engels F., The Condition of the Working-Class in England, (Granada Paperback 1969), 140-1.

<sup>3</sup> The Manchester Statistical Society 1833-1983 - pamphlet and extra notes available at Manchester Central Library 1983 on the Society's 150th anniversary; Hill F., op.cit., 1-13, 237-8, 248, 254-9, E.g., U.C., (1833), 118-9; Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 229-30.

<sup>4</sup> Sellers I., Nineteenth Century Nonconformity, (Arnold Paperback 1977), 71-3; Fraser D.,...Welfare State, 77; Urban Politics..., 271; D.N.B., vol. XXII Supplement 100-1; Allen J.E., "Voluntaryism: a 'laissez-faire' movement in mid-19th century elementary education" H. of E., (June 1981), vol. 10, no.2, 111-20; Greenwood M., op.cit., 195-206, 242-6, 250-6, 259-60; Carpenter J.E., James Martineau..., 273; Holt R.V., op.cit., 263-4.

instruction separately. Although these excellent schools became models for the day, the virulent opposition they aroused led to six years of acrimonious elections, ending in the Tories returning once more to power in Liverpool in 1841, and lost Liberals such as Rathbone their seats, despite the fight put up by Richard Yates, the brilliantly sarcastic William Shepherd and other Unitarians.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians felt the urgency of the situation, and realised that the principle of grant aid was, in Harriet Martineau's words, that:

To those who had much, more was to be given; and to those that

had less, was less to be given: and those who had nothing - nothing.<sup>2</sup>

Thus they supported other ways of extending education. They were strongly represented in the 1837 Manchester Society for Promoting National Education, were attracted to the Central Society of the late 1830s and their educationalists such as Beard, Fox and Morley, were much interested in Dutch, Swiss and German systems of state education and tried to popularise at least the concept.<sup>3</sup> In particular, Sarah Austin's "able and scholarly" translation of Cousin's Report on the state of public instruction in Prussia was influential and this beyond Unitarian

<sup>1</sup> Rathbone E.F., William Rathbone (1908), 48-51; MSS Liverpool Reference Library, EDU 1/36/1, Hibernian Schools Minute Books, Passim; Fraser D., Urban Politics... 134-5; MSS M.C.O., Shepherd Papers, IX, 69, 77, 79, 81, 87, 89.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau H., ...Thirty Years Peace, 253.

<sup>3</sup> Ely R., "In search of the Central Society of Education", Educational Administration and History, Monograph No. 12, (1982, Museum of History of Education, University of Leeds), 1-34; Central Society of Education, (first ed. 1839; Woburn Press 1968), Prospecturs iv, Annual Subscribers ix-xi; C.R., (1841), 148, 150-3; Solly H.S., The Life of Henry Morley, LL.D., (1898), 169-70, Fox W.J., op.cit., 173-6.

circles. Mrs Austin gave a detailed analysis of the Prussian system and her preface (said by Margaret Parnaby to be the most complete expression of W.J. Fox's educational vision) powerfully and clearly argued the case for national education in England. She dismissed both laissez-faire ideology in the education of children, particularly those of uneducated parents, and fears of a totally despotic, anti-religious system. A national system with local control under central direction and with well-trained teachers, she thought, could develop gentle, kindly, thrifty characters, respect for themselves and others, intellectual satisfaction and aesthetic, moral and spiritual appreciation.<sup>1</sup>

In 1834 J.J. Tayler's review of Sarah Austin's translation aroused much comment in the Christian Reformer, particularly on the question of how far compulsory education could be acceptable in England. Tayler's own "enlightened suggestions" for moral education (which would include English history, laws and constitution and political economy) and for non-denominational schools with grant-aided provision of rational entertainment and leisure facilities, were acceptable to those who, nevertheless, shuddered at any idea of compulsion, but correspondents were sure sectarians would find them "too liberal and free-minded". The reviewer in the Unitarian Chronicle proudly stated: "but Unitarians have everything to hope and nothing to fear, from universal education..."; it was right to see men in the "whole circle of their existence" and provide for all their needs. Tayler himself vacillated over state education until, on the verge of a breakdown, he took a sabbatical year on the continent.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Austin S., Translation of M.V. Cousin's Report on the State of Public Instruction in Prussia, (1834), passim; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 375, 389-94; Pollard H.M., Pioneers of Popular Education, (1956), 190-3.

<sup>2</sup> C.R., (1834), 13-22, 188-202; U.C., (1834), 33-6; ed. Thom., op.cit., Vol. I, 103, 105-7, 111-2.



Unitarians, from their own successful experience, could also support schools being "secular", a term which in the 1830s came to refer not so much merely to non-religious subjects as to the Irish National system, that is education which included general religious education based on natural theology rather than sectarian teaching.<sup>1</sup> William Johnson Fox explained that religion could be conveyed by the truths of science, history, morality, poetry, literature, art and the very ethos of a school but that the Bible was degraded if used as a classbook and did not provide useful modern information.<sup>2</sup>

Such emphases meant that Unitarians could appreciate the educational aspects of a most influential movement of the 1830s and 1840s: phrenology. This, as propagated by the Scottish phrenologist George Combe, gave a scientific basis for the study of the mind and therefore of education. Arguing that all people were both educable and should be educated, phrenologists desired for them a wide, useful, secular and scientific education, allowing for a full personal development in harmony with the material world governed by general laws.<sup>3</sup> Combe's Constitution of Man particularly, appealing to many progressive aspirations, achieved a startling popularity among many, including Unitarians such as Beard and the Repository, although often without acceptance of phrenology itself.<sup>4</sup> William Biggs

<sup>1</sup> Ely R., "The Origins of the debate over 'secular' instruction", H.of E., (June 1980), vol. 9, no. 2, 143-57.

<sup>2</sup> Fox W.J., op.cit., 148-162.

<sup>3</sup> Combe G., On Popular Education (1893), passim; Steward W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 280-6; de Guistino D., op.cit., passim.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Martineau H., Biographical Sketches..., 265; D.N.B., vol.9, 167; Hill C., Frederic Hill, (1894), 155; Channing W.H., William Ellery Channing, (Boston American Unitarian Association 1880), 440, 442; Beard J.R., Self-Culture..., 111; Gaskell E., My Diary, (Privately printed by Clement and Shorter 1923), 1835; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 336, 571; Garnett R. and E., The Life of W.J.-Fox (1909), 214-5; Burton H., Barbara Bodichon 1827-1891, (1949), 14-5; D.N.B., vol.6, 235-6.

lectured on phrenology at Leicester, seeing it, together with Christian principle as a supreme humanizing force.<sup>1</sup>

Equally important, George Combe, a friend of Horace Mann, the Unitarian secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, propagated details of how the Americans in Massachusetts had achieved non-denominational, locally controlled and paid-for popular education. In 1847, fresh from victory over the Corn Laws, a number of Nonconformist Mancurians established the Lancashire Public Schools Association (L.P.S.A.) which wanted to establish a pilot scheme of education in Lancashire to promote a national system based on the model of the Massachusetts "common school". This association became national - the N.P.S.A. - in 1850 with Richard Cobden as leader. The history of these associations can be read in the excellent articles of P.N. Farrar and D.K. Jones.<sup>2</sup> Although there were no Unitarians among the seven founders of the L.P.S.A., the first President was the Unitarian M.P. for South Lancashire, Alexander Henry; there were at least six Unitarians among the 25 Vice-Presidents and about a third of the General Committee, including J.R. Beard who worked and wrote energetically and forcibly for the N.P.S.A.,<sup>3</sup> were Unitarians.

<sup>1</sup> MSS ... Biggs' Scrapbooks Vol. I, 1841.

<sup>2</sup> Jones D.K., "Lancashire, the American Common School and the Religious Problem in British Education in the 19th Century", B.J.E.S. XV, (1967), 292-306; Farrar P.N., "American influence on the movement for a national system of elementary education in England and Wales, 1830-70", B.J.E.S. XIV, (Nov. 1965), No. 1, 36-47; Binder F.M., The Age of the Common School, 1830-65, (1974), passim; Hinton J.H., The Case of the Manchester Educationists Parts I and II (1972), passim; Maltby S.E., op.cit., passim. In Massachusetts, Channing was a firm supporter of Horace Mann - Channing W.H., op.cit., 499-501.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 68, 154; Beard James, op.cit., 1850, 1851.

Unitarians elsewhere supported the N.P.S.A., for example in Leicester where Whetstone and other Radicals had already attempted to use local rates in Poor Law education. William Biggs, an early proponent of a Massachusetts type plan, was mayor again in 1849. In line with the growing trend to use statistics to justify educational argument, he asked Joseph Dare, the Unitarian Domestic Missioner, to make a thorough survey of Leicester schooling on the basis of which Biggs was able to lecture publicly on education to a large audience of all sects. He argued the right of all to be educated, the duty of the state to provide that education and the vital necessity of education in making a civilised, law-abiding, moral community. He used Dare's figures to show that only just over 33% of Leicester's juveniles received some day-schooling. most of them for less than two years. Evidence from Frederic Hill and others showed the terrible deficiency, especially for girls. Biggs argued cogently that only the Lancashire plan could solve English educational problems and provide education not as a degrading charity but as a universal right.<sup>1</sup>

Biggs's own scrapbooks hold newspaper accounts from many parts of the country praising the "glorious spectacle" of a chief magistrate lecturing on the "intellectual capabilities and educational wants of his fellow-creatures." Biggs returned to these themes repeatedly in the next few years, especially when standing for election as M.P. on the Isle of Wight. He scathingly told the fearful Church to "stand out of the way ... leave us to provide for that education which you have so miserably neglected..." and lay the basis of a free and glorious country.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greenwood M., *op.cit.*, 282, 292; MSS... Biggs' Scrapbooks, Vol. I, 16.3.1847 newspaper letter to Lord Landsdowne; 20.3.1847 Letter on National Education; 1849 speech in Manchester on education; 1849 Report of a Lecture on National Education, Leicester.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Newspaper extracts 1849 on William Biggs's Lecture; W. Biggs on unsectarian education 1849, 1851, 1852.

Not all Unitarians were so enthusiastic: J.J. Tayler and the other editors of the Prospective Review, for example, felt the N.P.S.A. was too negative and revolutionary, whilst John Ashton Nicholls preferred governmental to local direction.<sup>1</sup> In 1850, however, W.J. Fox, passionate for national education, put before Parliament an education Bill on the lines of the N.P.S.A. plan, although it allowed existing voluntary schools to continue with doctrinal religious instruction. New schools, established by locally elected committees where government inquiry had found a deficiency, would be rate-supported for secular education only. Time would be set aside when parents who wished to could pay for children to be taught religion as they pleased. Despite the firm support of Unitarian chapels such as High Pavement, however, bitter multi-sectarian opposition ensured that this education bill was lost, as were all others before 1870. It was the common-school system, however, (together with the compromise reached in the Liverpool Hibernian schools) which formed the basis of both educational debate in the 1860s and eventually of the 1870 Act, although the Unitarian Joseph Chamberlain and others in the National Education League, would have extended the system to secularism and compulsory schooling.<sup>2</sup>

The one secular school established by the N.P.S.A., the Manchester Free School of 1854, scientific in both method and content and very much akin to the seven Birkbeck schools, was energetically promoted by the Unitarian R.M. Shipman, and eleven Unitarians were on the committee of 25, including Mark Philips, J.A. Nicholls and J.R. Beard. Despite its success and popularity with working-class boys, however, the Department of Education disliked its lack of religion. Yet in truth, had the pupils accepted for life the ethics and social economy drilled

<sup>1</sup> Beard James, op.cit., 1850; ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., vol. I, 321-2.

<sup>2</sup> Beard James, op.cit., 1851; Garnett R., op.cit., 297, 300-2; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 389, 392-6, 566-8; Williams D., op.cit., 32; H.P.MSS, HiM2, Minute Book, 1850; Jones D.K., op.cit.; Farrar P.N., op.cit.; Inquirer, (4.11.1882), 715.

into them they would have been bound more closely to the existing order.<sup>1</sup>

This provokes the question whether the members of the N.P.S.A. were prompted by zeal for "social control", as Katz has argued in the case of Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> Certainly these educational reformers educated for social stability, order and reform, as they frankly admitted, although they were not able to convince enough people to achieve state education in this period, apart from workhouse schools and the educational compulsion in the Factory Acts.<sup>3</sup> The Unitarians most zealous for state education, however, whilst relying on education to solve economic and social problems, did hold firm beliefs in the power of education which were an accepted part of Unitarianism. John Beard, for example, genuinely deplored the fact that in England, despite reformers like Owen, "much of what is called education does not deserve the name", and that health education was neglected whilst over-severity countermanded much educational effort. In 1842, Beard, half-despairingly, wished that the working-class would supply schools, through

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Jones D.K., "Working-class education in 19th century Manchester: the Manchester Free School", Vocational Aspect of Education, (Spring 1967), XIX no. 42, 22-33; The school remained secular until 1861 then had to teach some R.E. to obtain government grant and stay open. It lasted for over 30 years. Grant A.C. "A Note on Secular Education in the 19th Century", B.J.E.S., XVI, (1968), 308-17; Gilmore R., "The Gradgrind School: Political Economy in the Classroom", Victorian Studies, (1967), vol.11, 207-24. I am indebted to D.K. Jones for information on the committee members.

2

Katz M.B., The Irony of Early School Reform, (Harvard U.P. 1968), passim.

3

Karier C., Man, Society and Education, (Paperback Glenview, Illinois, Scott, Foresman & Co., 1967), 60-1; see also Ross J., Three Generations of English-women (1888), Vol. I, 126.

cooperative ventures, in a nationally hierarchical organisation which the state could help through the supply of rooms or apparatus. Hopeful for the effects of Kay's work, however, he gave full details of it.<sup>1</sup> The Radical W.J. Fox denied explicitly that national education should be used for the relief of suffering, proselytising, political quiet or class security. Such would be easily apparent to working-class radicals and useless anyway:

Who has not seen when the sole object of a child's education is to prevent it from being troublesome...what a poor, weak, pitiful, hypocritical abortion of humanity is produced thereby! And such is nationally the result as well as individually.<sup>2</sup>

National education, he said, should have "no aristocratical reserves of instruction":

There should be the opportunity for the human mind to rise to its highest aspirations, there should be every stimulus to apply capacity wherever capacity exists.<sup>3</sup>

It was folly to think of education in terms of supply and demand, said Fox; only the state could offer an organised, structured system with well-trained, well-paid well-respected teachers for everyone in society and state-financed and inspired libraries, museums, theatres and oratories etcetera to quench the aroused thirst for knowledge. Thence would come economic, political and social reforms and justice.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Beard J.R., *Schools* (1842), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Fox W.J., *op.cit.*, 124.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-43, 163-72, 309-10.

Unitarians held genuine educational as well as self-interested ideals, therefore, but were unsuccessful in their forceful demands for national education in this period. Henry Morley, in 1851, found that the "Gates of Ignorance" remained "impregnable."<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians realised that one of the greatest deficiencies of the grant-aided system was that it failed to reach the poorest of the working-class at all. In Boston, America, the Unitarian Joseph Tuckerman developed the idea of domestic missions, run by "ministers at large", belonging to no religious society, to seek out those most in need, to help them through sympathy, moral guidance and relief of their physical wants if possible. Tuckerman personally was inspired by his belief that every person was a unique individual, never "totally depraved" or beyond hope, always with some "spark of moral sensibility" which could be "blown into a flame." He recognised that poverty and lack of suitable clothing kept the poor away from ordinary churches, that bad housing caused social evils, that the poor did feel cold and hunger and should not be given advice and then left "as naked and cold" as found. Above all he believed that every minister at large should go amongst the poor with love, respect and sympathy, not condescension and pride.<sup>2</sup>

Channing, his friend, warmly supported Tuckerman's unwearying labours, sure that his was the only way to touch the "springs of mental energy and self-respect" of the poor. Channing had long argued the responsibility of the rich to justify their property by helping the common well-being. He believed, as did

<sup>1</sup> Morley H., op.cit., 143.

<sup>2</sup> Carpenter M., Memoir of Joseph Tuckerman, D.D., (Christian Tract Society 1849), 12-66.

Tuckerman, that all classes had the same capacities, the same proportion of superior intellect and virtue but that the poor had greater miseries and temptations, aggravated by the stresses and inequalities of modern society, by ill-health and lack of interesting pleasures. For Channing:

A society is advanced in proportion as human nature is respected.

It is the misery of the present state, that man, as man, is counted of so little worth.<sup>1</sup>

Real liberty was when all had the widest opportunities : government was there to help the weakest.<sup>2</sup>

The influence of these Americans was diffused to England particularly through the British and Foreign Unitarian Association (B.F.U.A.), whose secretary, W.J. Fox, was in touch with Tuckerman, and through Tuckerman's own tour of England, tirelessly promoting his ideal. Both Tuckerman and Channing chastised the English middle-classes for letting the poor feel, often rightly, that no-one cared for or tried to supply their needs. Channing wrote that the "uneducated and depressed millions" of England "darken your country and make me almost shudder at your luxury and prosperity."<sup>3</sup> Unitarian periodicals like the Monthly Repository and the Christian Reformer gave every publicity to this call to give practical, non-sectarian help for the individual regeneration of the poor and in the 1830s domestic missions were established in many large urban centres, "almost entirely supported, managed and served by Unitarians."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ed. le Breton A., Correspondence of Dr. Channing and Lucy Aikin..., (1874), 131-4; Channing W.H., op.cit., 260-5, 347.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 348.

<sup>3</sup> Holt A., A Minister to the Poor..., 11; C.R. (1834), 580-3; ed. le Breton A., op.cit., 61-2, 73, 89-91, 102-3, 112, 122, 134, 201.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. M.R., (1831) N.S.5, 78-82, 315-21, 405-7, 423-7, 491, 667-9, 797-804; C.R. (1834) 614-5; (1841), 133-5, 608-10, 772, 779; Tarrant W.G., The Story and Significance of the Unitarian Movement, (1910), 64-5; McLachlan H., U.H.M.C..., 8-10;



Missionaries were appointed whose chief methods were to visit the poor in their own homes and to set up educational and social centres.<sup>1</sup> At Liverpool in 1836, for example, the avowed aim was "to carry the spirit of Christianity to [a limited number of] homes of the neglected", to help orderliness in these homes, cultivate taste,

and, above all, to promote an effective education of their children, and to shelter them from corrupting agencies.<sup>2</sup>

At Leicester in 1845 the avowed aim was:

To promote the welfare of the community - to alleviate distress, to teach, to help, to carry a message of hope and comfort and sympathy to the homes of those in need.<sup>3</sup>

The minister was to become a personal friend and administer careful benevolence, that is, to help the poor without pauperising them.<sup>4</sup> The Domestic Mission in Leeds was established as the one way the rich Unitarians could meet the poor.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Beard C., Fifty Years of Domestic Missions, (1885), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Drummond J. and Upton C.B., James Martineau, (1902), 89.

<sup>3</sup> Ellis I.C., Records of 19th Century Leicester, (Privately printed 1935), 99.

<sup>4</sup> Short H.L. op.cit., 261-2.

<sup>5</sup> Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 168; see also ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., Vol.I, 201-2.

Although there was some opposition, for example in London, many Unitarians, especially those already noted for their educational efforts such as William Gaskell, John Beard, J.G. Robberds, J.A. Turner, James Heywood, the Rathbones, J.H. Thoms, James Martineau and Joseph Whetstone supported their local domestic missions.<sup>1</sup> They were much discussed at Manchester College.<sup>2</sup> The editor of the Monthly Repository, W.J. Fox, was a most active founder of the London mission and was congratulated by Tuckerman himself for his efforts and for his real understanding of Christ's message, that is helping the "ragged and famishing." Fox blamed society for the "depravity" of the poor - "What may become their crime, was first their calamity" - and said that society should rectify this through both civic institutions and enlightened charity. Since, if many of the poor joined "respectable" churchgoers, the latter would be as startled as "the first irruption (sic) of some northern tribe would one of the cities of ancient Italy", the better-off must go to the poor who were only "always with us" because Christ was not.<sup>3</sup>

In many ways domestic missions were posited as peculiarly Unitarian. Tuckerman was less bothered by the dangers of erroneous theological conceptions that by defective sensibility to Christian obligations, especially that of enabling all to enjoy spiritual fulfilment. Channing believed this ideal to be

<sup>1</sup> Garnett R., op.cit., 165; Brill B., op.cit., 32-3, 54; Beard James, op.cit., 1833; U.C. (1833), 118; M.R. (1830) N.S.4, 559; Holt R.V., op.cit., 338; Packer B.A., "The Founding of the Liverpool Domestic Mission and its development under the Ministry of John Johns", T.U.H.S., (April 1984), vol. XVIII, no. 2, 109, 110; D.N.B., vol. 56, 146; Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 88-9; MSS...Elizabeth Rathbone Correspondence...op.cit., VI.1.256, VI.1.257; Ellis I.C., op.cit., 86-7, 100-1; Greenwood M., op.cit., 223.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. M.R. (1830) N.S.4, 559; C.R. (1836), 583.

<sup>3</sup> Garnett R., op.cit., 142-3; M.R. (1831) N.S.5, 797-804.

the "best illustration of the true spirit of Unitarian Christianity", since the Unitarian tenet of Christ saving mankind exclusively by a moral influence meant that Unitarians must have a "moral interest in mankind", an essential respect and brotherly concern for all, and faith in everyone's capacity for "indefinite improvement."<sup>1</sup> In Massachusettes, this implementation of Unitarian humane, moral philosophy led the Unitarian into the forefront of philanthropic endeavour, an acknowledgement by those with economic and social power of their responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> Sellers argues that it was the same in England, where Unitarians combined evangelical aid and cultivation of self-help with an "unusually strident insistence" on breaking class barriers. Thence they espoused a variety of good works from special schools to wash-houses and

growled at the opulence and philistinism of fellow businessmen

and industrialists as rich as they yet...indifferent to the slums.

They said with William Rathbone VI: "Howl ye rich."<sup>3</sup> Anne Holt has said that Unitarians, unable to appeal to the poor through the senses and imagination, could only use individual contact.<sup>4</sup>

However, "Unitarian" these ideas were, the Unitarians, unlike many who had missions to the poor, were not proselytising. It was hoped to help people to become more religious but to attend the church of their choice. Martineau explained later that it was because the B.F.U.A. was named Unitarian, a party

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter M., op.cit., 92-3; Channing W.H., op.cit., 478-9,481.

<sup>2</sup> Howe D.W., The Unitarian Conscience, (Harvard U.P. 1970), 246,249,255.

<sup>3</sup> Sellers I., op.cit., 93-4.

<sup>4</sup> Holt A., op.cit., 14.

name considered divisive and incompatible with the aims of domestic missions, that independent missions were established.<sup>1</sup> John Wilson in Salford passionately opposed those who were keener on separating Christians than combining in common Christian principles and

uplifting the great mass of the community from a state of ignorance, degradation, vice and misery, to a sense of their capabilities and dignity as rational, intellectual and spiritual beings.<sup>2</sup>

William Johnson Fox, like another writer to the Monthly Repository, hoped that by such, and by relieving people's wants, "the identity of Unitarianism as a religion of love and mercy, with pure and undefiled Christianity "would be shown, but doctrines were not the business of the domestic missionary, although he could give such information if asked.<sup>3</sup> Ashworth, the minister in Manchester, for example, did this.<sup>4</sup>

Some Unitarians supporting the domestic missions, unlike John Beard and others might not consider Unitarianism a religion for the people, of course, although Channing said that if this were so it was the biggest argument against Unitarianism.<sup>5</sup> Yet even when other religious missions proselytised their own

<sup>1</sup> Heywood B., Addresses delivered at the Manchester M.I.. (1843), 58; M.R. (1831) N.S.5, 317; C.R., (1840) 176; Beard C., op.cit., J. Martineau, "Address to the London Domestic Mission, 21-2.

<sup>2</sup> C.R. (1841), 177.

<sup>3</sup> M.R. (1831) N.S.5, 423.

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Ministry to the Poor commenced in Manchester Jan.1, 1833 (1833), 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> McLachlan H., U.H.M.C......, 11-2; M.R. (1831) N.S.5, 406-7; Channing W.H., op.cit 480.

particular doctrines as, for example, in Liverpool and Leicester, Unitarian missions remained resolutely open to all.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, however, they found the common belief that no-one could change their ways without a God-given conversion a great stumbling block.<sup>2</sup>

The missionaries themselves were not necessarily Unitarian: John Gent Brooks, for example, though educated among the General Baptists and encouraged by a local Unitarian minister in Hinckley, only gradually became more firmly Unitarian after being appointed as domestic missionary for the New Meeting, Birmingham in 1844.<sup>3</sup> The wish, as expressed in London, was simply to employ men "of superior mind and character."<sup>4</sup>

Many of the men appointed appear to have fulfilled this wish. John Gent Brooks himself was a poor stocking-weaver at Hinckley whom sickness sent to the workhouse, but whose self-education raised to schoolmaster there. Lady Byron paid for him to be trained as a teacher at Ealing. When he died, after nine years hard work in Birmingham, the General Advertiser said that his memory would be cherished as an "incentive to all that is excellent."<sup>5</sup> Joseph Dare ran the boys school at Hinckley Unitarian Chapel before he was supported by Mrs T. Paget as Leicester's missionary. Of humble origins he was later likened

<sup>1</sup> Holt A., op.cit., 46; Joseph Dare in Leicester felt very strongly against those from other Churches who dispensed charity and spiritual help only to professed followers - see e.g. Dare J., 2nd Domestic Mission Report (hereafter D.M.R.) Leicester Public Reference Library (1847) 9-10; 3rd D.M.R. (1848) 24, 4th D.M.R. (1849) 16-7, 8th D.M.R. (1853) 17.

<sup>2</sup> Report.....in Manchester, op.cit., 16.

<sup>3</sup> Bushrod E., op.cit., 42, 199.

<sup>4</sup> M.R. (1831) N.S.5, 426.

<sup>5</sup> Inquirer, (18.2.1854), 109; Bushrod E., op.cit., 42.

to St. Francis by Isabel Ellis.<sup>1</sup> John Johns, the first missionary in Liverpool, charismatic, an intellectual, poet and practical mystic, died of typhoid in 1847 after attending a victim only he and the Roman Catholic priest would touch. His successor, the Revd. Francis Bishop, brother-in-law to Henry Solly, educated at London University and the General Baptist College, was said to be even better with the poor, by Elizabeth Rathbone who described him as genial, well-informed, fond of literature and gentlemanly, although not born such. He later became superintendent missionary at the U.H.M.B.<sup>2</sup> The Leeds missionary was John Mill, active in the Co-operative Movement and a leader of the radical working-class Leeds Redemption Society with James Hole and others.<sup>3</sup>

Once the missions were established a whole plethora of societies and institutions was generated around them: non-denominational Sunday schools and even chapels (where clothes did not matter), ragged schools, libraries, provident and sick societies. Ashworth's mission, for example, quickly grew in scope and in 1834 free science lectures were given. Benjamin Heywood provided property at Miles Platting where David Winstanley, a Unitarian handloom weaver, worked in conjunction with Ashworth and, amongst other activities, established a Mechanics' Institute,<sup>4</sup> a few members of which (notably Abel Heywood, the radical bookseller)

<sup>1</sup> Ellis I.C., op.cit., 81-7.

<sup>2</sup> Holt A., op.cit., 21-6, 48-54; MSS.....Elizabeth Rathbone Correspondence...  
op.cit., VI.1.257; Beard James, op.cit., 1856.

<sup>3</sup> Harrison J.F.C., Social Reform in Victorian Leeds. The Work of James Hole 1820-95, Thoresby Society, (1954) No. 100, Monographs III,3.

<sup>4</sup> Report.....in Manchester, op.cit., 3-11; U.C. (1834) 58; Seed J., "Unitarianism, political economy and the antinomies of liberal culture in Manchester, 1830-50" Social History, (Jan .1982) vol.7, no.1, 15.

became Unitarians.<sup>1</sup> The London mission, an offshoot of B.F.U.A. activities, similarly established schools and savings banks in an area of grinding poverty (it still survives in Tower Hamlets).<sup>2</sup> Johns in Liverpool, extended the usual activities to include evening lectures, a free library, a Mechanics' Institute and allotments on land he acquired. As in Manchester, this mission, instead of directing individual charity, became a charity itself, especially in the hungry forties.<sup>3</sup> In Birmingham, Brooks established a Ragged Sunday school of 300, sewing classes for mothers, a day school for girls and night school for boys, adult classes for both sexes and a mutual instruction society of 130. By 1853 he was asking for cheap newsrooms, cheap Saturday night concerts and opportunities for cricket. He had 154 members of the library and 415 depositors in a savings club. The teachers were chiefly from the poor themselves but a college-trained teacher took the girls' school, ladies of the New Meeting took the sewing classes and Unitarian ministers gave lectures.<sup>4</sup> At Leicester, Joseph Dare, apart from his tireless visits (about 4,000 a year), established classes for boys and girls, a Sunday school, a sewing school, a library and a reading-room, a mens adult class teaching the three Rs, geography, art and science and a female one teaching the two Rs, dictation, geography and mental arithmetic. Yet his resources were on a much smaller scale than in the big cities: Liverpool, for example, had a loan fund worth £14,000 from 1843 to 1844, and its annual income kept increasing from £200, whereas the Leicester mission had only a small relief fund of about £200,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>2</sup> The Unitarian, (April 1985), 33; Short H.L., op.cit., 262.

<sup>3</sup> Holt A., op.cit., 31, 38-41; Packer B., op.cit., 111-3.

<sup>4</sup> MSS M.C.O., Presbyterian Chapels, Vol.2, 284, Birmingham, Inquirer (9.3.1895); Bushrod E., op.cit., 196-202; Wilson H., "A Hundred Years of Religious and Social Work in Birmingham. The Church of the Messiah Domestic Mission", T.U.H.S., (1945) vol. VIII, no.3, 113-5.

together with gifts in kind, and its annual income was about £130. The numbers attending the various classes were variable but the girls averaged 120 to 130 by 1848 and some were having to be turned away. The boys averaged about 80, and by 1849 some of them, too, had to be turned away. Standards in both intellectual attainment and behaviour, as elsewhere, started abysmally low, but the various activities obviously had some appeal, especially work in the library whose tracts numbering 3 - 4,000 in 1847 alone, were "swapped jealously."

Dare's survey of 1849 showed that in Leicester less than one-third of adults attended a place of worship and scarcely one working-man in five could read and write. His Sunday school only gradually established regular attendance but its attraction for older women led to the opening of an adult Sunday school particularly for writing. Provident societies, a difficult proposition at any time among the extremely poor, failed in the hard years of the late 1840s. Dare's annual reports illustrated the hopeless, abysmal ignorance and dangerous fatalism of the poor concerning disease. His mission made some inroads against this, for example, in the 1840s, a little group of workmen finding the Mechanics' Institute too narrow for the free discussion of many religious and social questions, joined Dare's discussion class in the mission hall, beginning a practice which lasted for 35 years.<sup>1</sup> This seems similar to Brook's People's Instruction Society in Birmingham where recreation and mutual improvement were combined with warm surroundings, good books, newspapers and cheap wholesome food at the cost of 1d a week from members.<sup>2</sup>

Generally, the "ministers at large" expanded their views as their missions developed. Dare, for example, disliked equally the disincentives of gloomy religion and an inquisitive and officious clergy, and those who provided vulgar

<sup>1</sup> Dare J., D.M.R.s (1849-53 inclusive), passim; Simmons J., "A Victorian Social Worker. Joseph Dare and the Leicester Domestic Mission", Leicester Archeological and Historical Society, (1970-1), XLVI, 66-7, 74; Gould F.J., The History of Leicester Secular Society, (Leicester Secular Society 1900), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly T., A History of Adult Education in Great Britain (1962), 189-90.



and degrading amusements for the poor. He rejoiced in improvements such as the recreation ground provided in 1847 (where William Biggs scandalized some by presiding over the women's sack race).<sup>1</sup> Johns, similarly, wanted more open spaces for ordinary people and R.V. Yates, President of his mission from 1843 to 1846, gave Princes Park to Liverpool in 1843.<sup>2</sup> (Other Unitarians provided similar parks, Joseph Strutt, for example in 1840, giving Derby a landscaped Arboretum of 11 acres, costing £10,000, whilst William Enfield was determined to use the Nottingham General Enclosure Act for regular recreation areas).<sup>3</sup>

The activists, indeed, realised not only the extent of the terrible deprivations of the poor but also that the latter could not improve matters simply by moral reform and their own efforts. John Wilson's message<sup>4</sup> was repeated by Dare who not only agitated for compulsory education for the working-classes but also for washhouses, proper sanitation, replacement of verminous timber and plaster and undrained, overcrowded houses and the control of lodging houses (with some success on the latter). He cogently and constantly enumerated the physical disadvantages of life which gnawed at the self-respect and moral development of the poor. At the same time he did not under-estimate the need for education, but progress was slow.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in Liverpool, Johns realised

<sup>1</sup> Simmons J., op.cit., 71; Dare J., 1st D.M.R. (1846) 25; 7th D.M.R. (1852) 13; Patterson A.T., op.cit., 378;

<sup>2</sup> Holt A., op.cit., 46, 67.

<sup>3</sup> Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 187-8; H.P.M.S.S., Armstrong R.A., op.cit., 23.

<sup>4</sup> C.R. (1841), 177-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ellis I.C., op.cit., 91; Dare J., 1st D.M.R. (1846) 5-8, 21, 23-6, 3rd D.M.R. (1848) 7-8, 21; 4th D.M.R. (1849) 6-7; 7th D.M.R. (1852) 8-9.

the need for municipal housing, proper recreation and shorter working hours. Experience gradually led him from blaming the poor themselves for their problems to emphasising those unfavourable circumstances which afflicted them and tempted them into crime, drunkenness and immorality. Twenty years before Octavia Hill he appealed to landlords to look after their property and concern themselves over tenants' conduct. By 1842 he recognised the duty of the state to interfere on behalf of the people's health and happiness. By 1847 he was certain that free education and much else had to be provided to liberate the poor from the conditions created or fostered by the wealthier, far more indeed than one mission could achieve (though Brian Packer has wished that this mission in Toxteth, without a minister since 1971, could be revived).<sup>1</sup>

Johns was not alone in breaching classical political economy: in Manchester, for example, from 1833 to 1853, the domestic missionaries, Ashworth, Buckland and Layhe increasingly went beyond the initial recognition that more and better schools, "innocent and rational recreation", better police and legislation were needed, to criticise the prevailing assumptions about the moral causes of poverty. The prolonged economic crises of the late 1830s and 1840s, which crushed many sober, hard-working people into pauperism, undermined Buckland's confidence and forced him to emigrate.<sup>2</sup> His reports were used by Joseph Adshead to describe the extreme destitution not of "the intemperate and dissolute" but of the hardworking, temperate and self-educated who were

sinking in the midst of misery which they can neither remove nor flee from...Men, with physical strength, mental cultivation, and moral principle...starving in the largest manufacturing town in the world for want of employment!<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holt A., op.cit., 41-5, 47, 55-6, 64-5; Packer B., op.cit., 112, 114-9.

<sup>2</sup> Short H.L., op.cit., 262-3; Report.....in Manchester, op.cit., 17-8; U.C. (1834), 58; Seed J., op.cit., 17-9.

<sup>3</sup> Adshead J., op.cit., 28-39.

The harrowing realities of life, which contradicted comfortable middle-class abstract theory, were graphically reported by Layhe.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, such men were not restructuring society. They themselves, like Tuckerman, fought against middle-class indiscriminate charity which might make mendicants of the working-class. Dare's experiences led him to single out a "race of permanent mendicants and paupers" from the rest. In later life he was on the first committee of the Leicester Charity Organisation Society (C.O.S.) whose compassion stretched only to the "deserving poor." William Rathbone VI pioneered a similar organisation in Liverpool.<sup>2</sup> As elsewhere, the Manchester mission believed from the first that intemperance was one of the greatest scourges of the working-class.<sup>3</sup> Tuckerman was one who gave up alcohol himself as an example. He did also instance in England the "great and horrible abuses of power, of wealth..." as further problems for the domestic missionaries who had to take Christianity to millions of poor slaves who had nothing to call their own except the air "of which no-one feels it his interest to deprive them." The poor had their rights, said Tuckerman, though he would not confound the "distinctions which God has instituted" and hoped to "effectually repress the bloody spirit of revolution."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Seed J., op.cit., 18-9.

<sup>2</sup> Dare J., 8th D.M.R. (1853) 6-8; Simmons J., op.cit., 77. M.R. (1831) N.S.5, 318-9; Howe D.W., op.cit., 250-1; For C.O.S. see Bosanquet H., Social Work in London 1869-1912, (Harvester Press 1973); Barnett H., Canon Barnett. His Life, Work and Friends (1921).

<sup>3</sup> Report.....in Manchester, op.cit., 16-7; Holt A., op.cit., 28,59; Dare J., 1st D.M.R. (1846) 10-11, 2nd D.M.R. (1847) 19.

<sup>4</sup> Carpenter M., op.cit., 55-6; M.R. (1831), N.S.5, 666-9. See also Channing W.H. op.cit., 476-7.

Tuckerman's compassion, justice, perception, indeed, were compounded by his absorption of the teaching of Dr. Thomas Chalmers, the Malthusian Scottish Presbyterian and he wished, therefore, whilst providing essential material support for the poor, not to undermine their independence or help from family and friends. He preferred the moral message of voluntary help to state aid, the "delegated love" which Martineau later scorned, yet he was shocked by the superficial attitudes of English newspapers and politicians towards the poor.<sup>1</sup> His message that men were essentially equal and degraded by vice not poverty was echoed in Liverpool by J.H. Thom and Henry Booth.<sup>2</sup> Tuckerman's social theory seemed to promise much, yet kept from the poor the necessary basic securities of life. Later Unitarians, like Charles Beard, went further, acknowledging that a more just and nearly perfect social system needed to be designed.<sup>3</sup>

The same mixture of motives which underlay the establishment of domestic missions can be seen in the allied social and educational efforts of the Unitarians which can be referred to only briefly here. One of the most fervent disciples of Tuckerman and Channing was Mary Carpenter.<sup>4</sup> From 1846 she began a Ragged School, free schooling for the very poor, in Lewin's Mead, Bristol. In 1850 she bought the squalid slum court in which the school was situated, improved the dwellings by adding water, baths and washhouses, added lodging houses for homeless boys, planted creepers against the walls and laid out a playground. At first police assistance had been necessary but at the end of two years H.M.I. J. Fletcher declared that

<sup>1</sup> Howe D.W., op.cit., 246, 251; Sellers I., op.cit., 94; Packer B., op.cit., 109; Beard C., op.cit., Martineau., 23-31; M.R., (1831), N.S.5, 319-20.

<sup>2</sup> Packer B., op.cit., 106-8.

<sup>3</sup> Beard C., op.cit., 12-16.

<sup>4</sup> She wrote the biography of Tuckerman much quoted here.

he did not know of any other Ragged School where there was so large an amount of intellect and well-directed effort exerted to raise the school, to train up self-acting beings.<sup>1</sup>

Largely through Mary Carpenter's own tremendous efforts and inspired teaching, the school flourished and provided evidence for her series of papers in 1849 for the Inquirer, later issued in book form. In this she made clear the principles of respect, courtesy and sympathy by which she worked with the very poor and the full liberal education she believed they should receive.<sup>2</sup>

Such principles seem partly reminiscent of the care for extremely poor children in his carpenter's shop in Portsmouth of John Pounds, traditionally held to have been a Unitarian and the founder of Ragged Schools.<sup>3</sup> In fact, although Pounds took the children to the Sunday school of the Unitarian chapel in High Street, Portsmouth, this was because it was the only one which made them welcome and he "found the spirit of Christian love prevailing there". The Revd. Dr. Russell Scott (patron of the young John Beard and father of Mary Carpenter's co-worker in Bristol, Russell Scott Junior), his successor, the Rev. Henry Hawkes, and their congregation greatly helped Pounds, who had little interest in doctrine.<sup>4</sup> Pounds' efforts became known partly through a memoir in the Christian Reformer of March, 1839. They inspired Thomas Guthrie in Edinburgh, but D.H. Webster has

<sup>1</sup> D.N.B., vol. 9, 159; Carpenter J.E., Mary Carpenter....., 36-8, 80, 87-8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 89-94, 105; Carpenter M., Ragged Schools..., by a Worker, (1849); Manton J., Mary Carpenter and the Children of the Streets, (1976), 81-96.

<sup>3</sup> Montague C.J., Sixty Years in Waifdom, (1969); Jayne R.E., John Pounds, (1925).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 43-123; Inquirer, (10.7.1982), Burgess J., "Remembering John Pounds", 3; Unitarian Worthies, op.cit., 8-9; Beard James, op.cit., 1800-25; McLachlan H., Taylors and Scotts... 26, 33- Rev Russell Scott was grandfather of Russell Scott Taylor, J.E. Taylor and C.P. Scott, editors of the Manchester Guardian in turn.

argued strongly that the evangelical organisation which developed schools to care for the most destitute, ignorant "human vermin" in the worst slums, and which established the Ragged Schools Union (R.S.U.) in 1844 with Lord Ashley as President, had its own rationale. The R.S.U. glossed over Pounds' connections with Unitarianism, just as it would never accept the advocacy of Mary Carpenter, "one of the most tireless and compassionate workers for reform", for destitute, neglected and delinquent children. The evangelicals' ragged schools increasingly propagated conservative theology. The schools spread, although some of the middle-class feared that their aid put a premium on the negligence and thriftlessness which they assumed caused extreme poverty. The Newcastle Commission in 1861 neither commended ragged schools nor paid much attention to Mary Carpenter who understood better the economic causes of poverty, the urgent need of help (she would accept state aid, unlike the R.S.U.), and the need for interesting, pleasant and affectionate teachers.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians were not welcome in the R.S.U., but they did set up some ragged schools of their own, often connected with their domestic missions, as at Liverpool and Birmingham.<sup>2</sup> Individuals such as Lady Byron, Elizabeth Rathbone and the Revd. George Harris were interested in this work, the latter teaching illiterate young men and women in his own schoolroom.<sup>3</sup> Caroline Hill wrote in Household Words an account of a small independent ragged school in London which made dollshouse furniture for sale. Until 1857 her daughter Octavia was the compassionate head of this co-operative venture which Talfourd, Harriet Martineau and M.D. Hill all supported.<sup>4</sup> The latter, from 1853, annually entertained Mary Carpenter's

<sup>1</sup> Webster D.H., The Ragged School Movement and the Education of the Poor in the 19th Century, (Leicester Ph.d, 1973), 3-267 passim.

<sup>2</sup> Heasman K., Evangelicals in Action, (1962), 185; Packer B.A., op.cit., 113; MSS M.C.O., Presbyterian Chapels, Vol. II, 284, Birmingham, "Inquirer" (9.3.1895).

<sup>3</sup> MSS...Elizabeth Rathbone Correspondence... VI.1.256, VI.1.257; Unitarian Worthies op.cit., 337-8.

<sup>4</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 551; Bell E.M., Octavia Hill, (1943), 24-9, 34-7, 45.

Ragged School at his new country home near Bristol.<sup>1</sup>

In the Reformatory Movement Unitarians played a much bigger role. Mary Carpenter was also interested in children who were delinquent or apparently likely to be so. Like Tuckerman, she believed that these could be saved by affectionate and moral education. Her work for reformatory schools developed considerably after 1853, so suffice it to say here that, working from detailed information gleaned from Unitarians in Massachusetts, intense research on English and continental methods and from her own experience and deeply-held religious and humanitarian principles, Mary Carpenter evolved a system of good free day schools and industrial and reformatory schools which would cater for the three grades of destitution, vagrancy and criminality. She published her conclusions in 1851 in Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders and other writings. In 1852 she established a model reformatory school in Bristol. Against the norm, she pleaded for no degrading or revengeful punishment or child prison sentences, which merely raised better criminals. She believed that

All children, however apparently vicious and degraded, are capable of  
being made useful members of society

but that this could only be done by love, wisdom and insight into child-life in schools with a middle-class family-like atmosphere.<sup>2</sup> Like Jeremiah Joyce and the Monthly Repository, she perceived the way the law and the enforcement of it militated against an understandably resentful working-class. More in keeping with

<sup>1</sup> Hill R. and F.D., The Recorder of Birmingham: A Memoir of Matthew Davenport Hill (1878), 244, 246.

<sup>2</sup> Carpenter M., ... Joseph Tuckerman..., 53-5; C.R., (1834), 582-3; Carpenter M., Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes and for Juvenile Offenders, (Augustin M. Kelly, New York 1969), passim and especially 38-9; Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 114-9, 130, 136-8, 143-5; Manton J., op.cit., 99-113; May M., "Innocence and Experience", Victorian Studies, (Sept. 1973), vol. XVII, no. 1, 21-2.

the times, she wished parents to pay towards their children's keep at industrial and reformatory schools. These should be rate or government-aided, too, albeit voluntarily controlled.<sup>1</sup>

Miss Carpenter was aided by M.D. Hill whose experience as Recorder in Birmingham had already led him to fight against prison sentences for children and to support Birmingham's industrial school of 1849. Leading a small but determined group, they exploited national disquiet over juvenile offenders to gain the 1854 Youthful Offenders Act. This set a precedent "with revolutionary implications for the position of the child in society." Other supporters included the Hon. Amelia Murray, Lord Shaftesbury and Unitarians such as William and Elizabeth Rathbone, Russell Scott Junior and Lady Byron.<sup>2</sup>

These Unitarians also extolled kindness, industrial training, a family atmosphere to cure delinquents whom Lady Byron called "that most injured as well as most wretched class" yet Hill, albeit blaming their circumstances, termed "a herd of savages in the bosom of civilised society".<sup>3</sup> Such terminology, used also by Mary Carpenter, as R.J.W. Selleck has pointed out, shifted the focus from the decision-makers in society to the poor themselves. Drink, parental neglect, moral destitution (so often equated with the poor) were ultimately blamed for delinquency, not the economic, political and legislative structure. The very term "perishing and dangerous", borrowed from the American Unitarian Theodore Parker,

<sup>1</sup> Joyce J., The Subserviency of Free Enquiry and Religious Knowledge, (1816), 13-5 M.R. (1832) N.S.6, 577-86; Selleck R.J.W., Mary Carpenter: A confident and contradictory reformer", H. of E., (June 1985) vol. 14, no. 2, 111-2.

<sup>2</sup> May M., op.cit., 7-29; Carpenter J.E., op.cit., 121-47; Hill R. and F.D., op.cit. 153-68; 172; MSS ...Elizabeth Rathbone Correspondence... VI.1.234-VI.1.264 passim.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., VI.1.236; Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 163, 170-1.



described the poor as threatening.<sup>1</sup> Thus, despite their humanitarianism, Unitarians helped develop that concept of a residuum in society which others increasingly depicted as irredeemable.

Some of the most ardent Unitarian philanthropists and educationalists held very paternalistic views, for example, Lady Byron. She found confirmation for her educational ideal of regenerating the poor by means of rural employment and association with higher culture, in the work of Fellenberg at Hofwyl whom she visited and publicised. She enrolled students both at Hofwyl and at Kay's Battersea Training College which was partially modelled on it. She also established an agricultural school of her own at Ealing Grove, employing an Owenite and phrenologist, E.T. Craig, to initiate it. At her expense, Craig toured industrial schools in Holland and Switzerland and attended a teachers' course at Hofwyl. At Ealing Grove the boys (aged from about 9 to 13) had 3½ to 4½ hours daily studies, taught by Pestalozzian methods, three hours on their allotments and opportunities to do carpentry, shoe-making and other manual work. Industry, not religious instruction, was the moral agent of the school which became a model of its kind in the 1830s and 1840s, especially for District Schools and workhouse children. For Lady Byron such an education would counterbalance what she saw as the moral catastrophe of the French Revolution, although Craig's influence was hardly so conservative.<sup>2</sup> Robert Owen himself and Unitarians such as Elizabeth Rathbone and Dr. Morrell were also interested in Fellenberg's work, whilst Frederic Hill and a reviewer in the Unitarian Chronicle stressed the significance

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter M., op.cit., v,3; Selleck R.J.W., op.cit., 104-6, 113-4; May M., op.cit., 14-23. I am indebted to Dr. D. Reeder for many insights on ragged and reformatory education given in M.A. lectures at Leicester University 1978-9.

<sup>2</sup> Stewart W.A.C. and McCann W.P. op.cit., 155-69; Pollard H.M., op.cit., 202-9, 241-3, 251-2, 254; Garnett R.G., "E.T. Craig: Communitarian, Educator, Phrenologist", V.A.S.F.E., (1963), vol. XV, no.31, 135-42; Duppa B.F., "The Education of Pauper Children in Union Work-houses", Central Society of Education, (Woburn Press 1968), 299.

of manual labour in general learning, a point not generally noted at the time, although agricultural schools had some popularity in the 1830s.<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

The impulse behind all these efforts was to save the deprived and depraved from their environment by education, efforts now often described as social control or, at least, social engineering. Certainly, as seen, Unitarians upheld beliefs in an enlightened middle-class, the "golden mean" of society, kept by education in the van of economic and technological change, secure against an ignorant aristocracy and impressing their own enlightened culture on the working-class. James Luckcock, for example, did much to promote popular education in Birmingham but his vision of prestigious prize-winning ceremonies, attended by all classes, to award good servants and virtuous parents raising large families on scanty means was almost sickeningly condescending.<sup>2</sup> John James Tayler shamefully recognised that the English poor were "ill-fed, ill-clothed and ignorant...wretched, demoralized and pining..." To save them from falling into a "hideous sink of brutal sensuality", he not only wanted all kinds of education and recreation, but also moral instruction for older children including English history, laws and constitution, and

those elementary principles of moral and political science, which have assumed now in the minds of all well-informed persons the precision and certainty of axioms.<sup>3</sup>

By this he meant political economy.

<sup>1</sup> Silver H., The Concept of Education..., 152-3; Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 61; MSS... Elizabeth Rathbone Correspondence..., VI.1.229; M.R. (1822) XVII, 6-8; Hill F., op.cit., 19; U.C., (1834) 137-41, 263-8; Stewart W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 216-8.

<sup>2</sup> M.R. (1829) N.S.3, 28-30.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Thom J.H., op.cit., 207; U.C. (1834), 36.

This subject developed an increasing importance for the middle-class in the nineteenth century. Drawing originally from Adam Smith's An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations of 1776, it basically extolled laissez-faire in economic matters teaching that the interests and prosperity of society at large could best be served by allowing each man to pursue his own best interest. These economic precepts of capitalism, upholding both market forces against state intervention and an atomistic society, were fused by David Ricardo with Thomas Malthus's gloomy prognostication that the population always tended to outstrip supplies and thus economic backsliding could be avoided only by allowing population decrease through natural disasters or less procreation. Property had to be protected by the state against the poor who should not receive aid which would only serve to increase their numbers and thus their misery. Ricardo stressed the crucial central role of capital in the wealth of a nation and the need to free the commercial classes from parasitic landlords. His theories, publicized by James Mill in his Elements of Political Economy of 1821, were further developed by Nassau Senior's wage-fund theory in which Senior depicted ever-increasing wages swallowing up profits, supposedly made in the last hour of work.<sup>1</sup>

The classical economists did not always agree and were not always understood. Nevertheless, these theories, rationalising so well the actions and aspirations of the new capitalist class, were sanctified into laws. A mechanistic view of society a supreme concern for commercial and production problems, an abiding opposition to Trade Unions, strikes and protection of adult workers, all were popularised amongst Liberals, particularly by the Utilitarians, to become the "intellectual

<sup>1</sup> Halevy E.,...Philosophical Radicalism...., 89-107, 225-48, 264-82, 316-72;  
Fraser D.,...Welfare State... 92-3.

loose change of a popular culture".<sup>1</sup> Ricardo's thesis, at least in its vulgarised version, thrived for decades and has reappeared to some effect in the late twentieth century. The result seemed to be that the poor should be left alone to struggle as best they might with their conditions of life. The one exception to this was in education.

The political economists found many reasons why the poor should be educated and why the middle-classes and, possibly, the state should intervene to do this. Adam Smith wanted to overcome the stupefying effects of the division of labour; Malthus taught that only elementary knowledge, especially of social science, would enable the poor to control their reproductive urges (artificial means of birth-control were anathema to most) and thus prevent their own poverty. Equating developed intelligence with virtue, most political economists argued powerfully that popular education would reduce vice and crime. James Mill advocated teaching political economy itself so that workers would realise both the futility of fighting against natural economic laws and their own identity of interests with the middle-class. Through moral education he hoped they would learn to help themselves by developing such habits as thrift, industriousness, temperance, moral restraint and self-education.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 94-5; Taylor A.J., Laissez-faire and State Intervention in 19th Century Britain, (Macmillan Paperback 1972), 11-26; Hobsbawm E.J., The Age of Revolution (Abacus Paperback 1977), 288-90; Mill J.S., Autobiography, (Oxford Paperback 1969), 139-42; Stromberg R.N., Intellectual History since 1789, (Prentice Hall Incorp. New Jersey 1981), 68-73; Tholfsen T.R., op.cit., 34-8; Webb R.K., op.cit., 102.

<sup>2</sup> Halevy E., op.cit., 241-2, 247-8, 364-5; West E.G., Education and the State. A Study in Political Economy, (1970), 112-9; Education and the Industrial Revolution (1975), 121-33. See also Branca P., Silent Sisterhood, (1975), 130-38.

Since it seemed urgent for the future of political democracy, economic progress and social order for the masses to know their "own best interests", and since it seemed obvious that the uneducated and the poor would or could not educate themselves, some adherents of political economy, notably younger Utilitarians, accepted government intervention of some kind. Such people initiated or supported many educational enterprises from 1807 and often persuaded others of the middle-class to solve pressing problems by allowing state intervention which thereafter generated its own administrative momentum.<sup>1</sup>

Not all the middle-class followed such Benthamite prescriptions. Some, like Herbert Spencer for example, opposed any state intervention,<sup>2</sup> while others scornfully associated both political economy and Utilitarianism with cold-blooded efficiency and middle-class self-righteousness, without necessarily themselves finding any solution for working-class problems. Carlyle opposed laissez-faire and pitied the miseries of the poor but hated democracy. Disraeli won some Conservative sympathy for his ideals of benevolent feudalism as postulated in Coningsby and other novels.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, in this period, the basic tenets of received political economy were exceedingly influential, conservative liberals, Evangelicals, even the Quarterly Review, accepting them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fraser D., op.cit., 94, 101-14; Taylor A.J., op.cit., 31-57.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 24, 26, 46.

<sup>3</sup> Williams R., Culture and Society 1780-1950, (Pelican 1963), 85-95; Disraeli B., Coningsby, (Signet Classic Paperback, New York, 1962), passim and especially 150-1, 165.

<sup>4</sup> Howse E.M., Saints in Politics (George Allen and Unwin Paperback 1971), 128-9; Webb R.K., op.cit., 104-5. See Silver H., Education as History....8-12, for the importance of opinion.

Many middle-class educational reformers were strongly influenced by political economy, for example the Phrenologists and Kay-Shuttleworth who promoted the workhouse district school, where pauper children, entirely under the charge of their teachers, hopefully could be educated to break the vicious circle of poverty and ignorance.<sup>1</sup> Such people disseminated their economic assumptions as facts through schoolbooks, tracts and journals from the 1830s.<sup>2</sup>

The Unitarians' role in this is an important part of their educational contribution. They had close links with all the groups mentioned above: John Beard, for example, admired Kay's Report on the Training of Pauper Children.<sup>3</sup> Many, including the gentle and otherwise liberal Francis Newman, wholeheartedly accepted the "truths" of political economy.<sup>4</sup> In 1818 Thomas Belsham, then a leading Unitarian, opposed the bill to limit children's hours in the cotton factories, prognosticating that this would simply turn them adrift to idleness and pauperism, adding that "...a morbid spirit of philanthropy is abroad."<sup>5</sup> It was remarked upon as a matter of pride in Unitarian Worthies (1876) that Adam Smith held doctrines close to Unitarianism, Malthus was educated by Unitarians at Warrington and

<sup>1</sup> McCrory P., "Poor Law Education and the Urban Pauper Child: the theory and practice of the urban district school 1840-96", H.of E. Conference Papers 1980, Childhood, Youth and Education in the late 19th Century, (1981), 83-100; ed. Tholfsen T.R., Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth on Popular Education (Columbia University 1974), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Goldstrom J.M., The Social Context of Education 1808-70, (Irish University Press 1972), 49, 58-62, 81, 94-101, 124, 128; Tholfsen T.R., Working-class Radicalism... 43-6; Manchester Statistical Society pamphlet op.cit..

<sup>3</sup> Beard J.R., Schools..., 54.

<sup>4</sup> Sieveking I.G., Memoirs and Letters of Francis W. Newman (1909), 73-5.

<sup>5</sup> Williams J., Memoirs of the late Thomas Belsham, (1833), 684.

Ricardo was converted from Judaism to Unitarianism.<sup>1</sup> In the Unitarian ranks were some of the foremost industrialists, merchants and bankers of the day, those very people whose position and interests political economy rationalised. Through their attendance at Scottish universities many had studied political economy and it was taught consistently at Manchester College.<sup>2</sup> Edward Higginson, however, described William Turner Junior, political economy tutor from 1809 to 1827, as having given comprehensive, perceptive lectures against the "slovenly and scrambling laissez-faire" often described as "hard political economy". Students argued long over the precepts of political economy, and its professor from 1840 to 1853, James Martineau, confessed to an abiding difficulty in deciding between Christian compassion and Christian economy. He tried to fuse economic rules with the wider principles of political justice, albeit in a paternalistic way, a fusion admired by students such as Richard Holt Hutton.<sup>3</sup>

There were Unitarians, even Belsham, who strongly dissented from Malthus's views: Thomas Noon Talfourd and other writers to the Monthly Repository attacked this "chilly", "selfish" system on scientific, religious and moral grounds. Harriet Martineau's later contributions to political economy were willingly accepted, however, as were basic tenets of political economy such as the supreme value of self-help, a virtue strongly stimulated by Unitarians in the many savings banks, provident societies and the like, established in connection with various working-class educational institutions.<sup>4</sup> In 1847, for example, J.R. Beard and

<sup>1</sup> Unitarian Worthies op.cit., 236; MSS M.C.O. Wreford J.R., op.cit., 5.

<sup>2</sup> See above chapter IV.

<sup>3</sup> C.R. (1854) 134-5; MSS M.C.O. Wood W.R., op.cit., 12, (24.1.1830), 14 (7.2.1830); MSS M.C.O. James Martineau, Letters to Mary Carpenter, Feb. 1841; James Martineau 6/20, R. Holt Hutton to James Martineau, 3.7.1849; Carpenter J.E., James Martineau...154-6, 287-8; Martineau J., Essays Review and Addresses Vol.IV (1891), 13-4.

<sup>4</sup> Williams J., op.cit., 748; M.R. (1817) XII, 471-3, 532-5, 660-5, 720-3; (1818) XIII, 705-7; (1828) N.S.2, 414; (1829) N.S.3, 634-5; (1832) N.S.6, 24-31.

Abel Heywood, both from working-class backgrounds themselves, helped promote the Working Men's Benefit Building Society in Manchester.<sup>1</sup> Unitarians such as William Roscoe were prime examples of successful self-help and indeed self-education. M.D. Hill, another such person, advised working-men in Hull that self-education was the best way of diffusing political knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Unitarians produced two of the leading popularisers of political economy - Jane Marcet and Harriet Martineau. Mrs Marcet first published her highly successful and readable Conversations of Political Economy for the young in 1816 (the same year that Cambridge started teaching political economy, Oxford following in 1825). Conversations.... were constantly updated through Mrs Marcet's personal acquaintance with many contemporary economists: her book was used both in America and in the Irish lesson books, thus eventually being transmitted to English schools. In her book John Hopkins she tried to take political economy to the working-classes.<sup>3</sup>

The most famous populariser of political economy of the period was Harriet Martineau who, in a blend of Mrs Marcet's and Maria Edgeworth's methods, deliberately aimed to teach the "mass of the people" the "science" which she believed most concerned them. Her best-known work, the Illustrations of Political Economy, published by Charles Fox, (brother of William) appeared in 100 page volumes, monthly for 25 months, from February 1832. At the end of each tale was a summary of the economic principles expounded. They were an instant success, although the

<sup>1</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 179.

<sup>2</sup> Bastell J.K., A Study of Middle-class Education in Liverpool between 1780-1820, (Liverpool Diploma of Adult Education 1980) 77-8; Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 135-6.

<sup>3</sup> Halevy E., op.cit., 317; Marcet J., Conversations on Political Economy, (1817), passim; D.N.B., vol. 36, 122-3; Martineau H., Biographical Sketches... 386-92; The Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review (New York 1840), vol.II, 46-8; Goldstrom J.M., op.cit., 99n.



maximum of 10,000 sales a volume could not be compared with best-selling fiction like Pickwick which sold at 40,000 a month. Miss Martineau also wrote five Illustrations of Taxation and four volumes on the Poor Law for Brougham and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (S.D.U.K.).<sup>1</sup>

Harriet Martineau saw her task as to help those in government rule correctly and the working-classes, for whom she had real respect and sympathy, to best order their lives and prosper. She was most appreciated by Whigs (including the Edinburgh Review), politicians, intellectuals and literary people. She helped political economy become a popular middle-class topic in the 1830s and thus seemed to be very influential. W.J. Fox, for example, welcomed her unusual way of clarifying an important, but hard, seemingly "repulsive" science and hoped she would rectify some of the "sad mistakes" in the thinking of the poor. In fact she challenged much in the thinking of the rich and the established order. She modified some of her views later but the extremity of some of her forceful simplifications worried more subtle economists such as J.S. Mill.<sup>2</sup> Conservatives hated her ideas, the Christian Remembrancer calling her political economy "rank poison" and blasting her as heretical, unfeminine and worldly. Even the Edinburgh Review chided her for her extreme wish to exclude dispensaries for the sick from public charities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Martineau H., Autobiography (1877), vol. I, 135-8, 160-80, 218-25; Illustrations of Political Economy (1832) vol. I, iv-xvi; Garnett R., op.cit., 83-4; Byford D., Harriet Martineau and Didactic Fiction 1830-40, (Leicester M.A. 1971), 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> M.R. (1829); (1832) N.S.6, 24-9, 136-9, 211; Mineka F.E., op.cit., 416; Byford D. op.cit., 7, 22-36, 43, 53-4, 63-4, 77; Webb R.K., op.cit., 112-22; Edinburgh Review, (1833) vol. LVII, no. CXV, 1-38; Martineau H., Autobiography...Vol. II, 245; Inquirer (7.3.1877), 221-2; Taylor A.J., op.cit., 27-8.

<sup>3</sup> Christian Remembrancer (1841), vol. II 178-80; Martineau H., op.cit., vol. I, 199-211; Quarterly Review (April 1877) no. 286, 502; Edinburgh Review op.cit., 31.

The S.D.U.K., though capable of giving some fairly drastic advice itself, similarly qualified its praise by warning that the truths of political economy would be ignored if all sympathies were to be deadened since charity could not "wholly consist in enlightening the minds of the people."<sup>1</sup>

Sanguine expectations both of the capabilities of the working-class and of the fairness and benevolence of successful industrialists (she chiefly knew Unitarian ones), led Harriet Martineau, however, to overlook the great disparities of power between them. She did perceive the undeserved plight of many good workers and cogently argued that they should earn "comfort and subsistence", but she called the regulation of adult hours, for example, flagrant oppression, taking from working-men their only possession, that is the "free disposal of their own labour." She considered that even the starving and unemployed textile workers would rest quiescent if they realised that machinery would increase labour in due time.<sup>2</sup> She believed that, at least before Whig patronage lost her popularity, the working-class appreciated her writings which were put in Mechanics' Institute libraries like that of Birmingham. She did receive some working-class tributes, for example from John Doherty and the Poor Man's Guardian, especially for her "clear conviction of the Equality of Human Rights" and society's duty to support and educate its every member. However, such praise was withdrawn when she attacked Owenism and advocated Malthusianism. Her strident writing on strikes in the 1830s appalled even her friend and mentor W.J. Fox.<sup>3</sup> Over the Poor Law Amendment Act, for which she was a prime propagandist, she argued that draconian measures were needed to differentiate

<sup>1</sup> Quarterly Journal of Education (1833) Vol.V, (S.D.U.K.1833), 142-53; Webb R.K. op.cit., 215-6; Martineau H., ...Thirty Years Peace...vol.II, 90-1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol.I, ccxcv-ccxcvii.

<sup>3</sup> Martineau H., Autobiography... Vol.I 135,160-1,212-4; Byford D., op.cit., 14-9; Webb R.K., op.cit., 122-4,131-2; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 262.

between the ordinary labourer and paupers to teach the latter to stand on their own two feet. To her the Poor Rate had become "public spoil": prudent, industrious people were paying from diminishing resources for the profligate and ignorant, and hastening public ruin. She welcomed measures supposedly preventing a new generation of paupers, though later recognised their insufficiency in distressed manufacturing districts.<sup>1</sup>

Other Unitarians such as Matthew and Rowland Hill supported the Act, though not unreservedly. With Chadwick (and, indeed, Harriet Martineau) they saw it as a golden opportunity to educate pauper children out of the cycle of pauperism. Their advice was only tardily acted upon, however, despite the efforts of Kay and Tufnell.<sup>2</sup>

It was hardly likely that the working-class would view this Act in the same light: indeed Tholfsen and others have depicted it as an important catalyst in the development of working-class radicalism. In allowing active interference against the poor it aroused the latter's bitterest anger: they saw not themselves, but those who did not labour to earn their bread, as surplus population,<sup>3</sup> (as, indeed, had Talfourd).<sup>4</sup> Working-class Radicals had co-operated with middle-class

<sup>1</sup> Martineau H., ...Thirty Years Peace vol.II 82-90.

<sup>2</sup> Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 130-1; Hill R. and G.B., Life of Sir Rowland Hill (1880) vol.I, 217; Martineau H., Autobiography...vol.I, 218-26; Duke F., "The Poor Law Commissioners and Education", Journal of Educational Administration and History, (Dec.1970), vol.3, no.1, 7-12; West E.G., Education and the Industrial Revolution...138-46.

<sup>3</sup> Tholsen T.R., Working-class Radicalism...40-6; Engels F., op.cit., 306-17.

<sup>4</sup> M.R. (1817) XII, 660-1.

Radicals until 1832, especially in the Political Unions in which Unitarians such as W.J. Fox, William Biggs and Joseph Parkes were so prominent.<sup>1</sup> They increasingly turned against middle-class reformers, however, as their political and economic selfishness became manifest. Working-class Radicals rejected political economy or, as in the case of Ricardo's labour theory, turned it on its head to show the value of labour against capitalism.<sup>2</sup> They could accept the virtues of education, thrift and temperance, although hardly the condescension which accompanied middle-class advice, but in the bitter economic crises of the '30s and '40s they would not accept unemployment or starvation wages as law.

There was middle-class dissension also. Some of the most powerful arguments against extreme political economy were conveyed in the superb fiction of Charles Dickens who loathed the "fussy priggishness and patronage" of Utilitarianism and the new Poor Law as he did joyless Evangelicism. He detested the message that civilisation depended on the poor leading cheerless, sober, celibate, hard lives and delighted in writing of brandy, turkey and circuses for them. Accepting there were deserving and undeserving poor, he placed most of the poor in the first category and looked to benevolent remedies to prevent slums and their stunted, barbaric produce. His religion was emphatically one of works. In this respect he resembled the Unitarians and indeed worshipped for many years at Little Portland Street.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 94-115, 130-5; Greenwood M., op.cit., 10-1, 23-6; Briggs A., "Thomas Attwood and the Economic Background of the Birmingham Political Union," Cambridge Historical Journal, (1948), vol.IX, no.2, 190-216; Salt J., "Creation of the Sheffield M.I.," V.A.S.F.E., (Summer 1966), XVIII, no.40, 145-7.

<sup>2</sup> Hobsbawm E.J., op.cit., 293-6.

<sup>3</sup> House H., The Dickens World (Oxford Paperback 1960), 62, 73-103, 111, 124-5, 192-4; Connell J.M. "Dickens Unitarian Minister Edward Tagart," T.U.H.S. (1944) vol.VIII, no.2, 82-3; Martineau H., ...Thirty Years Peace...vol.II, 704-5.

There were many Unitarians, indeed, who, agreeing generally with the tenets of political economy, were neither dogmatic nor uncaring. Rowland Hill, for example, although a member of the Political Economy Club, questioned whether that which tended most to a nation's wealth also secured its weal.<sup>1</sup> William Smith argued for Parliament fixing compulsory wage-rates for handloom weavers.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Southwood Smith's work on the Factory Commission, the Mines Act of 1842 and urban health was Benthamism not laissez-faire. The Inquirer criticised the wastage and hopelessness of the workhouse<sup>3</sup> and Elizabeth Gaskell wrote a best-selling novel, Mary Barton, about a strike seen from the point of view of the workpeople themselves. Her husband William supplied notes on the dialect, reports from the Manchester Domestic Mission and some of the chapter headings. Mrs Gaskell protested, "I know nothing of political economy" but, despite the chauvinist, patronising views of Lord David Cecil, reiterated by Holt and McLachlan, she was, in fact, the first middle-class novelist completely to understand the life of industrial workers, as Carlyle recognised at the time.<sup>4</sup> From her own and her husband's visiting amongst the poor she could show clearly their pride, the privations beyond their control and the thoughtlessness and lack of social responsibility of their masters. It was in bitter response to the caricature of the famished, ragged, despairing workers, drawn by the well-heeled, womanising Henry Carson, son of a wealthy industrialist, that John Barton

<sup>1</sup> Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., Vol.II 416.

<sup>2</sup> Davies R.W., Dissent in Politics (1971) 251-2.

<sup>3</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 160, 191-2, 197; D.N.B., vol.52, 544. Harriet Martineau similarly wished to provide water and drains in Tynemouth - Webb R.K., op.cit., 218.

<sup>4</sup> Gaskell E., Mary Barton (Penguin 1970) 38 and chapter headings; Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 67; Brill B., op.cit., 54; Holt R.V., op.cit., 189-90; Inquirer (4.12.1965), 2; (18.11.1865), 742; (3.4.1949), 106; Gerin W., Elizabeth Gaskell, (1976) 85-6, 89. See also Watson G., The English Ideology (1973) 3-4.

became a murderer, but his anger had long been fostered by the neglect of the rich and the starvation and death that hit the poor alone in economic crises. He rejected the argument that the rich knew nothing of the trials of the poor:

I say, if they don't know, they ought to know. We are their slaves as long as we can work; we pile up their fortunes with the sweat of our brows; and yet we are to live as separate as if we were in two worlds; ay, as separate as Dives and Lazarus...<sup>1</sup>

Mrs Gaskell's solution was greater understanding and co-operation between the different classes. One of her working-men dismissed political economy: some men were naturally weaker than others and "them that is strong in any of God's gifts is meant to help the weak."<sup>2</sup>

Mrs Gaskell knew that the inequalities of society roused the bitterness of uneducated but thoughtful, caring men. Mary Barton, on the other hand, roused the bitterness of Manchester industrialists, as Mrs Gaskell reported:

Half the masters here are bitterly angry with me - half (and the best half) are buying it to give to their work-peoples libraries.<sup>3</sup>

One of the latter was Edmund Potter. Another Potter, Sir John, opposed even chimney-sweep reform (as had Thomas Belsham), although apparently no grudges were held by such as him at Cross Street against the minister's wife who held very different views.<sup>4</sup> All the Gregs disliked the book (except for Sam, who shortly after was heartbroken by his own failure to establish an industrial Utopia).<sup>5</sup> William Rathbone Greg criticised Elizabeth Gaskell in print. Both

<sup>1</sup> Gaskell E., op.cit., 45 and passim.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., especially 220-1, 455-8.

<sup>3</sup> Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 68,73. Samuel Robinson was somewhat uneasy about supplying Mary Barton to Mechanics' Institutes - Tylecote M., The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851 (1957) 271-2.

<sup>4</sup> Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 66,118; Inquirer (3.4.1949) 106; see also Gaskell E., North and South (Penguin 1970) passim.

<sup>5</sup> Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 73,118-9.

his parents' mill and his own at Bury were examples of the best industrial conditions of the day and Greg believed in employees having fair and just rights but these did not include strikes to force the master's hand. For him political economy was the "science of philanthropy" since it taught the knowledge and self-control necessary to obtain material well-being.<sup>1</sup>

The Gregs were one of many Unitarian industrial families such as those of Ashton, Kennedy, McConnel, Potter, Heywood, Ainsworth, Marshall, Biggs, Strutt, Wedgwood, Ryland, Kenrick and Courtauld. Sylvia Harrop has found that almost two-thirds of the entrepreneurs in north-east Cheshire were Unitarians.<sup>2</sup> Many of these industrialists were educated in those Unitarian establishments which purportedly educated for enlightened industrial and community leadership in a period of dramatic change, and/or, had as ministers men like William Gaskell, J.G. Robberds and J.J. Tayler who, as John Seed says, were "organic intellectuals" actively engaged with the working-class in educational and social institutions and, through their theory and experience, endeavouring to humanise liberal culture.<sup>3</sup> Some of the problems faced could be more usefully labelled "urban" than industrial although Engels castigated the liberal apologists of the day for blaming the "demoralising tendency of the great cities" for "evils already existing in the germ."<sup>4</sup> The problems were not confined to the textile areas

<sup>1</sup> Morley J., "W.R. Greg: A Sketch", Macmillans Magazine (1883) XLVIII, 109, 113-15, 117, 124-5; Thackray A., "Natural Knowledge in Cultural Context: The Manchester Model," American Historical Review, (Feb. 1974) vol. 79, no. 1, 699; House H., op.cit., 73; See also Greg W.R., Literary and Social Judgements, (1868), "Kingsley and Carlyle" (1860) 153-6, 160.

<sup>2</sup> Harrop S.A., op.cit., 126.

<sup>3</sup> Seed J., op.cit., 20-3.

<sup>4</sup> Engels F., op.cit., 149-79. See Lansbury C., "Engels in Manchester", Yale Review, (Oct. 1974), No. 1, 106-10.

either but these, especially Manchester, "the shock city of the age", became the foci of attention at the time, as factory legislation and Kay and Gaskell's Reports, for example, illustrate.<sup>1</sup>

As Fraser has said, "not all factories were dens of capitalist avarice and exploitation" and certainly Unitarian industrialists were anxious to prove this, as many publications, by Samuel, William and Robert Greg for example, show.<sup>2</sup> William Greg, in 1831, detailed evils, especially of severe, unremitting labour, but Robert Greg dismissed this as immature and vehemently expressed the general indignation felt by cotton manufacturers that their industry was singled out for public censure.<sup>3</sup> Manchester Unitarian industrialists such as G.A. Lee blamed

1

Ed. Tholfsen T.R., Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth...6-20,41-79; Roach J., Social Reform in England 1780-1880 (1978) 137-8; Briggs A., Victorian Cities (Pelican 1968) 96, 102, - the whole chapter pp.88-138 is an interesting examination of the significance of Manchester in the first half of the 19th century.

2

Fraser D., ...Welfare State...13; Greg W.R., "An Enquiry into the State of the Manufacturing Population and the Causes and Cures of the Evils therein existing" British Labour Struggles Contemporary Pamphlets 1727-1850 (Arno Press New York 1972); Greg R.H., "The Factory Question.....", The Battle for the Ten Hour Day Continues. Four Pamphlets 1837-43, (Arno Press New York 1972); Greg S., op.cit., See also "Report of a Committee of the Manchester Statistical Society on the condition of the working-classes in an extensive manufacturing district." (instigated and reported by Benjamin Heywood to the Statistical Section of the B.A.A.S.1837). Conditions of Work and Living. Five Pamphlets 1838-44, (Arno Press New York 1972).

3

Greg W., op.cit., 1-26, 28-9; Greg R.H., op.cit., 70 and passim. W.R. Greg supported shorter working hours though not the Unitarian John Cam Hobhouse's 1831 Bill. Fielden quoted W.R. Greg's pamphlet in 1836 - Holt R.V., op.cit., 186.



the smaller, proliferating entrepreneurs for over-production and for mistreatment of their workforces; McConnell and Kennedy were willing for government legislation to regulate these.<sup>1</sup> R.K. Webb has said that manufacturers like Robert Owen, who could afford the luxury of socially responsible and enlightened enterprises, were

necessarily that minority whose economic position was  
secure and whose religious or philosophical positions  
enforced such obligations.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarian industrialists were in both these categories and, certainly, many such as Thomas Ashton, the Strutts and the Greggs, were regarded by contemporaries like James Kay and the Factory Commissioners, Faucher, Peter Gaskell, John Morley and Owen himself, to be models of their kind. They provided comparatively good working conditions, decent housing and welfare services, as did other Unitarian employers such as the Courtaulds in Essex, the Wedgwoods at Etruria and the Biggses, the leading hosiery manufacturers in Leicester. Public testimony was given to the Biggs' generosity as employers by the Chartist Thomas Cooper and by eight employees who defended William Biggs against Tory attacks.<sup>3</sup> Such

<sup>1</sup> Lee C.H., A Cotton Enterprise 1795-1840 (1972), 128.

<sup>2</sup> Webb R.K., Modern England, (George Allen and Unwin Paperback 1830), 160.

<sup>3</sup> Holt R.V., op.cit., 25-6, 51-9; Inquirer (6.9.1845), 573; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 164-6, 169-70, 219-23; Hill F., op.cit., 134-44; Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P. op.cit., 97-104, 169-70, 187-8, 224-53; Morley J., op.cit., 113; Rose M.B., op.cit., 21-8; Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 805-6; Parkes B.R., Essays on Womens' Work (1865), 187-190; Turner C.M., The Development of M.I.s in Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire, (Leicester M.Ed., 1966), 14-5; Evans R.H., "The Biggs Family of Leicester" Leicester Archeological and Historical Society Transactions (1972-3), No.48, 31-2; Greenwood M., op.cit., 240; MSS...Biggs Scrapbooks...Vol.I (5.6.1852). See also Lee C.H., op.cit., 123-7.

testimony was also given by another worker, Robert Blincoe, to several Unitarian industrialists in north-east Cheshire, despite their strictness and low wages.<sup>1</sup>

The working-men of Manchester erected an obelisk to John Ashton Nicholls, the cotton manufacturer, in Great Ancoats Street, for his

untiring zeal and earnestness for the elevation of their class,

intellectually, politically, socially and morally

although he reproved strike action.<sup>2</sup>

Such care for workers by their masters was exceptional if factory inspector Leonard Horner was correct.<sup>3</sup> William Greg pointed out that it was those factory owners who did ameliorate the physical and moral condition of their workers who were "without exception among the most flourishing in the trade" and produced the best workers, particularly where the mills were isolated or in country districts.<sup>4</sup> Engels, however, specifically instanced the examples of Ashton and Greg as tyrannous overlords who could show the factory system to advantage simply because their factories were in healthy country districts where "patriarchal servitude" could longest be maintained. He did not say that such men made no improvements but that they used these, such as the cottage system, to enchain the workers (although there was no compulsion to live in these four-roomed houses with their own cistern, privy, yard and garden).<sup>5</sup> Many of the particular evils such as the constant fines, punishment and truck with which Engels castigated industrialists were not prevalent in Unitarian factories.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harrop S.A., op.cit., 217-8, 226-7.

<sup>2</sup> Wade R., op.cit., 64; C.R. (1859), 639.

<sup>3</sup> Webb R.K., Harriet Martineau...110n.

<sup>4</sup> Greg W.R., op.cit., 27, 31.

<sup>5</sup> Engels F., op.cit., 214-5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., passim and 206; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 219, 22; Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 234-8; Hill C., op.cit., 75-6; Evans R.H., op.cit., 34-7, 50; ...Biggs Scrapbooks...Vol.II 1853 Framework Knitters Bill: Patterson A.T., op.cit. 382-6.

It was on the questions of factory legislation and trade unions that Unitarian industrialists most often used the "laws" of political economy to defend their own interests, although here, too, there was some variation. John and William Biggs supported factory legislation to protect children and recognised their workpeople's right to strike, although many Unitarian industrialists did not (although Ashton, for example, had only one strike in 37 years). The Strutts opposed legislation going further than a 12 hour day for adults and R.H. Greg spoke for many when he totally opposed new factory legislation, although he was more than happy to accept "a well-digested education Bill", for the state should educate "all its children." Greg was particularly incensed that after 1833 respectable factory owners who had spent much on promoting education in their areas, could be dragged through the courts if any of their child workforce were found not attending school. Yet the 1833 Act was passed partly through the work of Commissioners Thomas Southwood Smith and Edwin Chadwick, son-in-law of John Kennedy who, like Henry McConnell, did support limited government intervention on hours and child labour.<sup>1</sup> "Honest" John Fielden, with his brothers, ran one of the largest cotton factories in the United Kingdom. He worked in the mill himself from the age of ten. Converted to Unitarianism by Richard Wright, an ardent disciple of Cobbett, he was "irreconcilably hostile" to the new Poor Law and fought long, in and out of Parliament, to shorten working hours generally as he had done in his own highly profitable mills.<sup>2</sup> He preferred any risk of casting

manufacturers to the winds rather than see the workpeople enslaved, maimed, vitiated and broken in constitution and in heart....<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Evans R.H., op.cit., 34; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 208-11,222; Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 226-9; Greg R.H., op.cit., 5-6,125-6,136-7; Hill F., op.cit., 129-30; Lee C.H., op.cit., 128-30.

<sup>2</sup> D.N.B., vol.18, 1279; Holt R.V., op.cit., 184-5, 25-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 185.

Most of these industrialists blamed the Corn Laws for the general poverty but Engels saw the Anti-Corn Law League, like everything they organised including their philosophical institutions, as merely acting in the bourgeois interest. He argued that the bourgeois deliberately kept the working-class ignorant and thus weak, although he was amazed that it was

So short-sighted, so stupidly narrow-minded...in its egotism, that it does not even take the trouble to impress upon the workers the morality of the day, which the bourgeoisie has patched together in its own interest for its protection!<sup>1</sup>

Not to educate the working-class in morality, including political economy, was hardly true of the Unitarians or other radical educational reformers. Other millowners, forced to establish factory schools, tardily realised that education was "a useful, socially manipulative instrument."<sup>2</sup> Unitarian industrialists consistently blamed lack of education as a prime cause of working-class evils and depicted the form of education needed. W.R. Greg, for example, anxious for the influential classes to stem the "torrent of suffering and corruption, which is fast sweeping away the comfort and morals of so large a portion of our poorer countrymen" stressed the need for domestic economy, moral and religious instruction, political relations and duties, geography and history and the moral, political and religious lessons naturally arising out of them, and above all that delicacy and propriety of feeling and civility of manner which a friendly and respectful intercourse with the superior classes can alone bestow.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Engels F., op.cit., 140-5, 301-5, 323-5.

<sup>2</sup> Silver H., Education as History... 39.

<sup>3</sup> Greg W.R., op.cit., 37-9.

His brothers, including Robert, equally supported such an education for the working-classes. Samuel Greg, following his mother's example at Styal, devoted years to building up a model community at Bollington with many educational opportunities. Also, since Samuel believed that

we must not shut our gates against any merely because

they feel no ambition to become philosophers

he had flower-shows, a glee class, choral society, band, good library with a reading-room and chess-boards too. Although some of his ideas, for example giving a Silver Cross award to well-behaved girls, seem very patronising, he did believe that "all the elements of earthly happiness" could be, and should be, enjoyed by all and he wished to offer the means to make this possible. His motto for his people was "AIDE-TOI, LE CIEL T'AIDERA."<sup>1</sup> John Strutt had a musical society of the workers with a band and choir, the time spent in studying music being reckoned as part of their working hours.<sup>2</sup>

As has been shown above, many Unitarian industrialists personally provided schools for their employees as well as supported national education. They were undoubtedly trying to alter working-class habits but with a faith in the capacities of their workers not usual at the time. Such education would suit their purposes to some extent but the range and extra facilities provided seem evidence that their Unitarian heritage of valuing education for its own sake and for all people was an equally valid stimulus.

A prime example of the mixture of motives in Unitarian educational ventures for the working-class was the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes for working-class adults. The idea for these came from many sources, including the Birmingham

<sup>1</sup> Greg R.H., op.cit., especially 22, 124, 126; Fletcher E., Hannah Greg, (draft, see bibliography); Greg S., op.cit., passim.

<sup>2</sup> Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 260.

Brotherly Society, Scottish examples and that of the middle-class provincial literary and philosophical societies.<sup>1</sup> In the 1820s, largely under the patronage of liberal Whigs, Utilitarians and Unitarians, many Mechanics' Institutes were established, especially in the North and Midlands. Practical Observations... written in 1825 by Henry Brougham, chief advocate of the movement, widely disseminated the basic ideals of a Mechanics' Institute. These were to provide working-men, particularly mechanics, with scientific lectures, apparatus and libraries so that, hopefully, they would understand the scientific principles behind their industrial work and perhaps be enabled to make further discoveries and inventions which would stem foreign rivalry, particularly French. At the same time the diffusion of rational information and examples of successful working-class self-help should civilise and improve the recipient.<sup>2</sup>

Unitarians were particularly enthusiastic about them. The Rev. Edward Higginson enthused that by improving the "mental and moral condition" of working men

their usefulness, comfort and happiness will be thus greatly increased; and... as a direct consequence, the whole frame of Society will exhibit a fairer aspect,... of order, peace and enjoyment than the world has hitherto presented.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matthews W., op.cit., 6-18, 26-7; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 18; Hudson I.W., The History of Adult Education (1851), 29-37; Tylecote M., op.cit., 1-17; McLachlan H., Cross Street... 36, traces the idea of M.I.s to Rev. Thomas Barnes.

<sup>2</sup> Brougham H., Practical Observations upon the Education of the People addressed to the Working-classes and their Employers, (1825), *passim*; Tylecote M., op.cit. 33-8; Harrison J.F.C., Living and Learning... 75-9, 203-11.

<sup>3</sup> Higginson E., Address on the Opening of the Derby M.I., Aug.22nd, 1825, (Derby 1825), 6.

Higginson instigated the Derby Mechanics' Institute, chiefly founded by Joseph and Edward Strutt, the former's donation including 500 carefully selected books from his own library.<sup>1</sup> William Frend helped Birkbeck originate the London Mechanics' Institute.<sup>2</sup> The founding committee of the Manchester Mechanics' Institute included nine Unitarians and thirteen others. George William Wood, disappointed in his aims to get middle and working-class together at the Royal Manchester Institution, was a prime instigator and the banker, Benjamin Heywood, the President from 1824 to 1841, became its principal guide and support.<sup>3</sup> John Marshall Junior helped the two Bainses found the Leeds Mechanics' Institute and Unitarians co-operated with Anglicans at Liverpool and Bristol and dominated the Sheffield Mechanics' Institute. In Birmingham over a third of the Provisional Committee were Unitarians, in Leicester, a quarter. Josiah Wedgwood II and the Kenrick and Chance families were the chief founders of the Hanley, Newcastle under Lyme and West Bromwich Institutions. Charles Wellbeloved instigated the York Mechanics' Institute as George Buckland, vice-President of the Miles Platting Mechanics' Institute, did the Oldham Lyceum. Thomas Walker Horsfield, former student of Hackney Academy, established a Mechanics' Institute at Lewes said to be one of the

<sup>1</sup> Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 186.

<sup>2</sup> Knight F., University Rebel (1971), 299.

<sup>3</sup> Heywood T., Memoir of Sir Benjamin Heywood, (privately printed), 40; Kargon R.H., Science in Victorian Manchester (1977), 19-20; Heywood B., op.cit., 1-2.

best in the kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians contributed much to the Mechanics' Institutes in both financial terms and personal involvement.<sup>2</sup> In many Mechanics' Institutes Unitarians held important offices, for example Coventry, Leicester and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> John Withers Dowson was secretary of the Norwich Mechanics' Institute from its establishment in 1823 and responsible for its famous debating class. (Early and late in the day he also ran free classes for young men and women, mostly working-class, in his solicitor's office).<sup>4</sup> George Calvert Holland, an artisan who became a doctor

<sup>1</sup> Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 59-60, 71; Stephens M.D. and Roderick G.W., "Nineteenth Century Ventures in Liverpool Scientific Education", Annals of Science (Feb. 1972), vol. 28, no. 1, 69; ed. Inkster I. and Morrell J., Metropolis and Province. Science in British Culture 1780-1850 (1983), 191-2; Carpenter R.L., op.cit., 270; Salt J., op.cit., 144-7; Royle E., "M.I.s and the Working-Classes", Historical Journal (1971) vol. XIV, no. 2, 318; Turner C.M. "Political, religious and occupational support in early M.I.s", V.A.S.F.E., (March 1968), vol. XX no. 45, 67-8; MSS Leicester P.R.O., Leicester M.I. Minute Books vol. I, (1833-8), 2.11.1833, 19.11.1833; Turner C.M., Development...M.I.S. 19-25, 27-9, 67-79; Tait A., A History of the Oldham Lyceum, (Oldham 1897), 10-13; Aspland R.B., op.cit., 329.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Heywood B., op.cit., 20 and passim; Thackray A., op.cit., 701.

<sup>3</sup> D.N.B., Vol. 6, 236; MSS... Leicester M.I.... - end of 1834, beginning 1835 list officers; Newspaper cuttings relating to the Birmingham Philosophical Institution and the Birmingham and Midland Institute, (1856, Birmingham Reference Library 66); H.P.MSS, Armstrong R.A., ... William Enfield, 22; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 159-60; Inquirer, (2.1.1858), 12; Ramsden G.M., A Record of the Kay Family of Bury, Lancashire, (1979 Gift to M.C.O.) 58; Bowery M.M., op.cit., 285-94; C.R. (1854) 138-9; Unitarian Worthies op.cit., 162-3; Turner C.M., Development...M.I.S. 20, 29-30, 81, 95-7, 102-3; Holt R.V., op.cit., 190, 268.

<sup>4</sup> Inquirer, (19.7.1879), 478.



through his own efforts and the help of the Unitarian minister, Dr. Phillips, was prominent in the Sheffield Mechanics' Institute, as he was in its Literary and Philosophical Society and Mechanics Library.<sup>1</sup> At Stourbridge the only Radical involved was the Unitarian William Ackroyd (grandfather of William Beveridge) to whose penny library the Mechanics' Institute's prosperity was due.<sup>2</sup>

It was partly because of the high Unitarian participation in a movement generally backed by Dissenters and Radicals anyway, that Tories and Churchmen initially largely opposed or, at best, were indifferent to Mechanics' Institutes. There were always liberal Anglicans involved, not least the Bishop of Durham, but many Churchmen were opposed to this non-Anglican extension of working-class education.<sup>3</sup> At Leicester the Revd. George Holt led a furious opposition to the "diffusion of infidel, republican and levelling principles."<sup>4</sup> Charles Wellbeloved found he had

alarmed some of the wise aristocrats at York by an Essay I delivered...on Lord Bacon's maxim 'Knowledge is Power.' They think I must have been teaching them rebellion!<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D.N.B., vol. 27, 139.

<sup>2</sup> Turner C.M., op.cit., 104.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 32; Kelly T., op.cit., 123; Cardwell D.S.l., The Organisation of Science in England (1957), 30-1; Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 60; Garner A.D. and Jenkins E.W., "The English M.I.s: the case of Leeds 1824-44", H. of E., (June 1984), vol. 13; no. 2, 140-2, 145; Stephens M.D. and Roderick G.W., op.cit. 69; Bowery M.M., op.cit., 285. The Bishop of Durham, then as now, a radical, was President of the Royal Jubilee School. The Bishop from 1836 was Edward Maltby who had been brought up a Unitarian - Robberds J.G., Discourses, (1855), 5; D.N.B., vol. 35, 440-1.

<sup>4</sup> Lott F.B., The Story of the Leicester Mechanics' Institute 1833-71, (1935), 3-5.

<sup>5</sup> MSS M.C.O., C.W.II, C.W. to G.W.W., 13.11.1828.

Anglicans opposed the Coventry Mechanics' Institute and set up their own, this illustrating an increasing development from the mid 1830s, as was the greater involvement of Anglican clergy in Mechanics' Institutes generally.<sup>1</sup> Anglicans realised that Mechanics' Institutes could be important agencies for influencing the working-class or, as the Unitarian Christian Reformer ironically remarked, even those originally against the education of the people would now have to support Mechanics' Institutes to disguise their "unrelenting" opposition to "popular improvement" from the "intelligent race of mechanics."<sup>2</sup> At Liverpool the Protestant Mechanics' Institute was established in 1839 in opposition to the flourishing existing one to "save" the younger generation in particular from the "evils" necessarily accruing from an institution run by Unitarians.<sup>3</sup> Thus in adult education too, there was an extension of the urban middle-class conflict.<sup>4</sup>

Silver has said, however, that rather than inculcating deism and revolution, the Radical middle-class wished to harness the allegiance of the "superior working-class" and give them the useful knowledge necessary to make them better workers.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, Charles Wellbeloved (possibly on the defensive

<sup>1</sup> Turner C.M., op.cit., 90-5, 104, 109-17; Political, religious...support... 65-70; "Sociological Approaches to the H. of E.", B.J.E.S., XVII (1969), 153-4; 157; Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 158-83.

<sup>2</sup> C.R., (1834), 14.

<sup>3</sup> Inkster I., The Public Lecture as an Instrument of Science Education for Adults, Paedagogica Historica, (1980) vol. XX, no. 1, 104-5.

<sup>4</sup> Fraser D., ...Urban Politics... passim.

<sup>5</sup> Silver H., ...Concept of Education..., 210-8.

in aristocratic York) vigorously asserted that the York Mechanics' Institute, rather than inculcating insubordination, was saving members from "erroneous and pernicious doctrines..." President George Cayley's toast to "the March of Intellect, with its true leaders in front" sums up one very important aspect of the establishment of Mechanics' Institutes.<sup>1</sup>

After all, although in one respect many of the middle-class radicals were "marginal men", in commercial and industrial areas they often achieved considerable status. Furthermore, the structure of fees ensured both that middle-class men managed and that only the "elite of the working people" could afford to join.<sup>2</sup> Wolverhampton Mechanics' Institute, for example, albeit very progressive, was entirely run and founded by the middle-class.<sup>3</sup> At Leicester, the less extreme artisans approached the middle-class radicals, led by the Biggses, to found the Mechanics' Institute and the ensuing co-operation seemed to guarantee equality, but, in fact, working-class inexperience and lack of finance gave effective middle-class control.<sup>4</sup> In the difficult times of the late 1830s and 1840s class co-operation became a favourite theme of the middle-class managers, for example the cotton manufacturer Samuel Robinson, but this did not necessarily mean less middle-class management.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kenrick J., A Biography of the late Charles Wellbeloved, (1860), 167, 168.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Garner A.D. and Jenkins E.W., op.cit., 142-4; Heywood R., An Address delivered...in Stockport for the establishment of an M.I. on Sept. 8th 1825, (1825) 8.

<sup>3</sup> Turner C.M., Development..M.I.s... 29-30.

<sup>4</sup> Greenwood M., op.cit., 35-42; Patterson A.T., op.cit., 235-8

<sup>5</sup> E.g., MSS.. Leicester M.I...13.1.1835; Robinson S., Two Addresses (1838), 45-51. It was a general Unitarian theme of the time - see e.g. Bowring J., "W.J.Fox", Theological Review (July 1866) XIV, 431.

Middle-class patrons made it clear that they hoped to achieve a change in working-class habits and attitudes. Although William Turner said that only the "sober", "industrious" and "frugal" could benefit from Mechanics' Institutes, it seems clear that Charles Wellbeloved, William Frend, Benjamin Heywood, Frederic Hill and others counted on the Mechanics' Institutes to make men virtuous so that they could benefit from them.<sup>1</sup> Increasingly an accent on moral culture rather than mere intellectual pursuits led to a more general education being provided and the development of cheaper, more leisure-orientated Lyceums, welcomed eagerly by Samuel Greg, for example.<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously the carrot of some social mobility was dangled by men like Samuel Robinson and William Turner.<sup>3</sup>

Inkster argues that all these developments were for middle-class benefit and instances the Unitarian printer Richard Taylor's reference to "innocent...recreation"<sup>4</sup> which would deter men from crime.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, although, to save sectarian and party strife, controversial divinity and party politics were excluded from Mechanics' Institutes,<sup>6</sup> political economy, which justified the capitalist ethic, was not. John Estlin explained at the Bristol Mechanics' Institute that there both classes could become friends and best learn "correct" ideas of their mutual interests and that workmen would gain a "correct knowledge of the principles

<sup>1</sup> C.R., (1825) 234; (1841) 718-8; Kenrick J., op.cit., 166; Knight F., op.cit., 299  
Heywood B., op.cit., 17, 32, 50-1, 84, 97; ed. Hill C., op.cit., 271-2.

<sup>2</sup> Greg S., Speech at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Manchester Lyceums in the Town Hall, (7.12.1840), 3-11.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson S., op.cit., 24, 30-1; Bowery M.M., op.cit., 286.

<sup>4</sup> Author's underlining.

<sup>5</sup> Inkster I., "The Social Context of an Educational Movement: A revisionist Approach to the English M.I.s 1820-50", Oxford Review of Education, (1976), vol. 2, no. 3, 285.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. MSS...Leicester M.I.... 30.12.1833, 31.12.1833.

which regulate the rate of wages" but, in such an improving environment, could not possibly be stimulated to

a lawless conspiracy...to deter their fellow-workmen by threats and intimidation from selling their labour for whatever they please, and thus endeavouring to deprive them of that liberty which is the birthright of every Englishmen.<sup>1</sup>

Benjamin Heywood argued that the foundation must keep pace with the superstructure but relative class positions would not change: it was important to eradicate "the most erroneous views" and visionary schemes which would "spread wretchedness and ruin far and wide", sentiments which were warmly supported by the editor of the Christian Reformer.<sup>2</sup> Heywood's brother-in-law, Samuel Robinson, told the subscribers at his Village Library, in an area where labour relations became particularly bitter, that it was imperative that

every class should understand its position in society - its dependence on others - its connexion with the whole..... The science of political economy which explains all these circumstances, claims the utmost attention of the more intelligent of your class..and... would save you from many fatal mistakes, many unnecessary evils... Any check given to the free employment of capital and the free circulation of labour might have here the most injurious consequences.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C.R., (1826), 51-2. See also Higginson E., op.cit., 18-21; Observations... on establishment of M.I.s (1825), 9-10; Turner C.M., Sociological Approaches..., 161-2.

<sup>2</sup> Heywood B., op.cit., 29-34, 38-9, 62-5, 121; C.R., (1840) 662.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson S., op.cit., 25-6, 28; Farewell Address to Dukinfield Village Library, (1843), 21.

William Turner read Brougham's lectures on political economy at Newcastle Mechanics' Institute; John Marshall Junior promoted orthodox political economy and made vitriolic attacks on Trade Unions at Leeds Mechanics' Institute where the library contained many Harriet Martineau, Mrs Marcet and S.D.U.K. books (although it did also have the socialist Bray, James Hole and Mary Hennell).<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Heywood suggested Harriet Martineau for "entertaining" reading, and her Illustrations...were readily allowed at Leicester where there was controversy over religious books.<sup>2</sup>

The first subject which Mechanics' Institutes offered, however, was science, although the scientific historians Inkster, Morell, Thackray and Kargon believe that this, too, was motivated by middle-class considerations. Their writings show that in many towns the same people propagated science both as part of the new middle-class culture and, at an elementary level, for mechanics and artisans. Kargon and Thackray specifically cite Benjamin Heywood's reiterated explanation of the personal, economic, patriotic and, indeed, religious reasons for this. (Richard Heywood, his brother, sure that chance "favoured the prepared mind", spoke similarly at Stockport). It is further argued that once these men were secure socially and politically so their support turned to other interests.<sup>3</sup>

Mechanics' Institutes did give opportunities both for scientists to gain lecturing posts and for employers to gain superior workmen. The prospectus at Manchester Mechanics' Institute for example, (which R.H. Greg and Kennedy helped draft) showed that the principles of applied science were to be taught rather

<sup>1</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 293; Garner A.D. and Jenkins G.W., op.cit., 148-9, 151.

<sup>2</sup> Heywood B., op.cit., 54-5, 68; MSS...Leicester M.I. ..., 5.2.1834-3.3.1834 passim.

<sup>3</sup> Inkster I., ...M.I.s... 283-99, Public Lecture...92-101, 106; Inkster I. and Morrell J., op.cit., 11-2; Thackray A., op.cit., 688, 701-2; Hargon R.H., op.cit., 20-1, 30, 149-50; Heywood B., op.cit., 2-17, 34, 51-3, 95, 121; Heywood R., op.cit., 3-11.

than any particular trade, as many manufacturers feared.<sup>1</sup> It is true that by mid-century some middle-class Liberals had turned away from scientific institutions, but, as has been shown, amongst Unitarians this generally meant that they left Unitarianism as well. On the other hand when, for example, the Manchester Mechanics' Institute lost its primary scientific aim, William Fairbairn (having risen himself through scientific inventiveness) and other Unitarians attempted to establish the abortive Manchester Institution for the Illustration and Encouragement of Practical Science.<sup>2</sup> Similarly in Birmingham, when the Mechanics' Institute failed in 1843, its Unitarian (and Quaker) backers supported the new Polytechnic instead. When that failed in 1853, they, and in particular Arthur Ryland, helped establish the very successful Birmingham and Midland Institute.<sup>3</sup>

Middle-class enthusiasm for Mechanics' Institutes often evaporated quite quickly, especially in the bitter class warfare of the 1830s. Many manufacturers never saw the need for Mechanics' Institutes since either they preferred men to learn on the job or they were uneducated themselves like the potters who opposed Wedgwood's Mechanics' Institute at Hanley. Unitarians were upset by such attitudes but their support of any institution was often a drawback in itself. They genuinely believed that a real knowledge of science was useful for all classes, preferring this, as Robert Brewin said, to the antiquated knowledge of traditional education: it was such that, with virtue, formed the "only legitimate aristocracy", according to William Biggs, whilst M.D. Hill supported technical

<sup>1</sup> Haines G., German Influence upon English Education and Science 1800-66, (Connecticut College Monograph 6, 1957), 19; Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 62; Kargon R.H., op.cit., 21.

<sup>2</sup> Kargon R.H., op.cit., 36-40, 46.

<sup>3</sup> Turner C.M., Development...M.I.s... 80, 81, 83, 87, 98-103, 121; Tylecote M., op.cit., 114; Gill C., op.cit., 394.

education, provided that the working-class was not limited to industrial training or made into "mere tractable tools for the creation of wealth."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the speeches which Unitarians made to the working-class about the uses, glories and moral effects of science and fear of foreign competition echoed those they made to the middle-class. As Samuel Robinson said, if such knowledge was justified for one class it should not be denied another.<sup>2</sup> The development of adult education for workmen seemed a natural extension of Unitarian ideals and practice. The Potteries Mechanics' Institute, for example, was worthy of the Wedgwoods, with an excellent section on geology, mineralogy and rare and valuable early works of Erasmus, Machiavelli and others.<sup>3</sup>

The sad truth became apparent at many Mechanics' Institutes, however, that scientific lectures were beyond the capacity of many workmen.<sup>4</sup> As Benjamin Heywood despaired: "we have not sufficiently prepared the ground before we have sown the seed."<sup>5</sup> Increasingly a general rather than a scientific education became the aim: at Birmingham, for example, even an Introduction to the Latin Language was written for a class by Joshua Toulmin Smith. There was also a growing emphasis on recreation which Harrison suggests was part of the dissemination of middle-class values.<sup>6</sup> This emphasis also developed because middle-class

<sup>1</sup> Heywood B., op.cit., 59; MSS...Leicester M.I....13.1.1835, 19.1.1835; Printed Report A.G.M. 22-4; Turner C.N., op.cit., 23, 27, 54; ed. le Breton A., op.cit., 295; MSS... Biggs' Scrapbooks Vol.I, W. Biggs' Speech at Mechanics Institute 1849; Hill R. and F.D., op.cit., 254-5.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson S., Two Addresses... 56-62.

<sup>3</sup> Turner C.M., op.cit., 47.

<sup>4</sup> Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 71; Garner A.D. and Jenkins E.W., op.cit., 149-50.

<sup>5</sup> Heywood B., op.cit., 35-6.

<sup>6</sup> D.N.B., vol. 53, 94; Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 74-9.



providers realised that ill-educated, hard-worked men needed leisure perhaps even more than intellectual stimulus in the evenings. Once Heywood understood this, for example, he consistently and fairly successfully promoted baths, excursions, social evenings, concerts and exhibitions, although his own provision of a gymnasium proved to be a failure.<sup>1</sup> William Biggs thought that "the almost total absence of amusement and agreeable relaxation" was the one great error of Mechanics' Institutes outside Yorkshire. He and John Biggs tried to cheer ordinary lives by supporting recreation grounds and Sunday amusements.<sup>2</sup> Samuel Robinson begged the wealthier to help the poorer have public-walks, games areas, botanical gardens, museums, art galleries and concerts as well as chess and draughts, maps and pictures in Mechanics' Institutes, both to enable the people to indulge in the desired "innocent and intellectual" pleasures and because

...amusement is an essential principle in our nature and must be provided for. The bow which is never unbent loses its spring, and the mind which is never relaxed loses its vigour.<sup>3</sup>

Robinson even recommended good fiction (such as Scott) and poetry, as did other Unitarians and the Mechanics' Institute members themselves.<sup>4</sup>

In such arguments Unitarians were again repeating what they said to the middle-class. Whatever motives they held, they did also believe that Mechanics' Institutes should be primarily agents of cultural education to liberate the mind and understanding, in the way Kelly attributes to very few apart from Birkbeck.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heywood B., op.cit., 40-1, 54, 66-7, 81-2, 92-3, 100-3, 107-10.

<sup>2</sup> MSS...Biggs' Scrapbooks op.cit., Evans R.H., op.cit., 40-1.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson S., op.cit., 50-1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 19-23; Hill F., op.cit., 109; MSS...Leicester M.I., 22.4.1834; Channing W.E., The Present Age (1841), 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly T., op.cit., 123.

Workers themselves objected to their exclusion from management in many of the Mechanics' Institutes, although this did vary. The Yeovil Mechanics' Institute, for example, was run by working men (including Henry Solly's Sunday school superintendent, John Bainbridge) as was the West Bromwich Mechanics' Institute, although established by middle-class Unitarians.<sup>1</sup> Some Mechanics' Institutes were founded at working-class instigation, for example Lewis Lewis and William Shepherd responded to such at Woolton.<sup>2</sup> At Manchester tight middle-class control led Rowland Detroisier to form a breakaway Institute in 1829, approved by John Beard and the Monthly Repository. Benjamin Heywood thence began to democratize the original Mechanics' Institute.<sup>3</sup> In Birmingham, where admittedly class relations were better, largely through Joseph Parkes there was a democratic constitution from the beginning. When, in 1827, the artisans suspected management of elections by the Committee, they successfully opposed Rowland Hill as President. In 1832, when the Owenite secretary, in public debate, successfully opposed both the S.D.U.K. thesis on machinery and the exclusion of political books and debates from Mechanics' Institutes, he quoted from the Monthly Repository no less that the S.D.U.K. and Mechanics' Institutes "were in a great measure inoperative because of the exclusion of those topics about which people care most."<sup>4</sup>

There was, generally, bitter resentment against the ban on political discussion, for example at Nottingham where Charles Paget was chairman, although controversial politics and religion were also banned in middle-class institutions patronised by Unitarians.<sup>5</sup> In Leicester William Biggs managed to stop the

<sup>1</sup> Solly H., op.cit., vol. I, 334, 345-8; Turner C.M., op.cit., 70-9.

<sup>2</sup> Stephens M.D. and Roderick G.W., op.cit., 77-8.

<sup>3</sup> Hudson J.W., op.cit., 127; Tylecote M., op.cit., 130-1, 133-8; Heywood B., op.cit., 11, 55, 69; M.R. (1830) N.S.4, 709. See also Garner A.D. and Jenkins E.W. op.cit., 139-52.

<sup>4</sup> Turner C.M., op.cit., 24-5, 33-6.

<sup>5</sup> Wardle D., op.cit., 175-85.

Mechanics' Institute from banning controversial religious or political books at first and, partly through the generous donations of many Unitarians, many books and periodicals written or admired by Unitarians were put in the library. However, the Committee's control over books imperceptibly tightened.<sup>1</sup>

Conflict over these problems in many Mechanics' Institutes exacerbated hostile class feelings. The self-assured utterances of men like the Heywoods and Samuel Robinson that education would be bound to make working people accept the "fixed and immutable laws" which were, in fact, their own class interests, were ill-founded.<sup>2</sup> It was not that working-class educational reformers necessarily opposed all middle-class principles. The various sciences were important in their own ideal educational institutions and many working-class autodidacts and leaders such as James Hole, epitomised the doctrine of self-help. Rowland Detroisier was preoccupied with moral and political regeneration in a way J.R. Beard admired.<sup>3</sup> He recognised working-class degradation, but did not blame workers for it. Like Unitarians, he said that people needed education for pleasure, the development of judgement, personal dignity, health, virtuous leisure, work skills and securing justice, and that the lack of such education was a serious cause of working-class exploitation and deprivation. However, although Detroisier had Beard's agreement that Mechanics' Institutes should not exclude social and political philosophy, the latter upheld the familiar theme

<sup>1</sup> MSS..Leicester M.I., 30.12.1833 to and including, Printed Report 1835 passim; Greenwood M., op.cit., 41-2; - only about one-seventh of the Committee were Unitarians in 1835.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Heywood R., op.cit., 9-11; Heywood B., op.cit., 121; Robinson S., ...1843.. 21; Two Addresses... 39-47.

<sup>3</sup> Stewart W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 74-89; Harrison J.F.C., James Hole... 26-7; Tholfsen T.R., Working-class Radicalism.., 65; M.R., (1830) N.S.4, 709-11.

that such topics encompassed the "great truths of political economy and jurisprudence" which freely and impartially studied would bring "light" to the working-classes.<sup>1</sup> Workers, however, did not want middle-class political economy, as they showed by their absence from William Turner's lectures on such at Newcastle.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, professional lectures on phrenology and oratory, subjects which Unitarians could equally appreciate, were very popular at Newcastle in 1837.<sup>3</sup> Phrenology had great appeal for the self-taught and those interested in human physiology and the benefits of mental health.<sup>4</sup> One such was James Hole, secretary of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes from 1848. Hole, a working-class intellectual, influenced by those from Unitarian backgrounds such as Barmby, Harriet Martineau, Theodore Parker, Emerson as well as Carlyle, Owen and Ricardian Socialists, wished Mechanics' Institutes to give a full liberal and vocational education to artisans. When Hole lectured on the organisation of labour and related topics he gave a reasoned but devastating critique of laissez-faire, preferring co-operative socialism, state education and informed public opinion to raise the masses.<sup>5</sup> The working-classes wanted physical as much as cultural improvement. Lacking their own resources, they used the Mechanics' Institutes without accepting middle-class economic solutions.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Detroisier R., An Address in the Advantages of the intended Mechanics Hall of Science delivered at the Manchester New M.I., (31.12.1831) - his earlier addresses ran on similar lines; Tholfson T.R., op.cit., 64-5; M.R. (1830) N.S.4, 709-11.

<sup>2</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 293.

<sup>3</sup> Dyer L.J., Newcastle M.I., Adult Education, (Dec.1949), vol.XXII, no.2, 125.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Garnett R.G., op.cit., 137; Harrison J.F.C., Living and Learning 114; de Guistino D., op.cit., 61; D.N.B., vol.53, 94-5.

<sup>5</sup> Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 119-129; James Hole... 26-35.

<sup>6</sup> Silver H., Concept of Education...222-3; Turner C.M., op.cit., 122-5.

Yet Unitarians were genuinely concerned about the real condition of the working-class. Benjamin Heywood, for example, although so patronising in his huge efforts for the Manchester Mechanics' Institute, often worried about working-class hardships, including those of starving machine-breakers.<sup>1</sup> Both he and the more radical Biggses have been described, then and since, as self-interested. Yet Unitarians could genuinely support self-help through education and cultural and moral reform since this was the means by which many of them had achieved success. Furthermore, to believe both in the equal capacity of the working-class and in education as an end in itself for all was to subscribe to radical concepts for the day. To many Unitarians, for example Hollings, William Shepherd, William Turner, John Wilson, Charles Bray and Philip Carpenter, the over-riding reasons for Mechanics' Institutes were that the "true dignity of man consisted in his intellectual capacity", that all that was "precious in literature, or ennobling in knowledge, or graceful in art" should be freely and widely accessible and that knowledge would raise men from serfdom.<sup>2</sup> Manchester College valued Manchester, Salford and Liverpool Mechanics' Institutes sufficiently to send them each copies of its Introductory Lectures of 1840.<sup>3</sup> George Searle Phillips, secretary of Huddersfield Mechanics' Institute from 1846 to 1854, was a transcendentalist inspired by the writings of Channing and Parker, stressing the divinity of the individual soul and the need for social reform. He ensured that his Mechanics' Institute was genuinely working-class and, through personal visiting, helped regular attendance.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heywood B., op.cit., 29-31, 54-8, 97.

<sup>2</sup> Evans R.H., op.cit., 43-8; MSS Biggs' Scrapbooks, Vol.I, J. Hollings speech at the Boston M.I., 1852 MSS M.C.O., Shepherd Papers, IX, 92; Bowery M.M., op.cit., 286; C.R., (1841), 718; D.N.B., vol. 6, 236; Holt R.V., op.cit., 190.

<sup>3</sup> MSS M.C.O., Letter-Book M.C....1824-80, 137.

<sup>4</sup> Harrison J.F.C., Living and Learning...137-50. I am indebted to David Heptonstall, a student at the Huddersfield Polytechnic for details on the Huddersfield M.I..

Channing, indeed, was a humane inspiration for many Unitarians working in Mechanics' Institutes. His lectures on Self-Education and On the Elevation of the Labouring Portion of the Community of 1838 and 1840 were circulated widely among working-people in England. Channing accepted that people like Chartists rejected "servile" education, but he urged temperance, education and peaceful agitation upon them so that they should earn respect. Delbanco argues that the only great flaw in Channing's ideals was that his prescription for "individual regeneration" was within a static, hierarchical vision of social reality. Nevertheless, some mechanics were grateful for Channing's recognition "that man was not simply a means, but an end, and exists for his own sake..", that working-people had their own springs of thought, that the "happiness of a community depends vastly more upon the distribution than the amount of its wealth," and that excessive toil and the harsher doctrines of political economy - "generally from a suspicious source" - were wrong.<sup>1</sup>

Even Unitarians more enamoured of political economy than Channing were sincere about sharing the pleasures of knowledge. Samuel Robinson rhapsodised about learning being like climbing out of a valley with fresher and clearer views at every step and only grasping "the relation of the whole with its parts" when at the top. He opposed those who would stop the spread of knowledge and reminded his audience that "KNOWLEDGE is POWER", accepting that in a well-constituted society labour should procure the necessities of life.<sup>2</sup> He did not offer any economic change to facilitate this, however. The educational and economic thought of many Unitarians was built on extreme individualism but the stress on the influence of the environment and increasing recognition of the real effects of this on working-class lives produced a tension between the need for educational and moral reform alone and for economic and social reform too.

1

Channing W.H., op.cit., 483-6; Delbanco A., William Ellery Channing, (Harvard U.P. 1981), 69-72, 143; Channing W.E., Self-Culture (1839), *passim*; Lectures on the Elevation of the Labouring Portion of the Community, (1840), *passim*.

2

Robinson S., Two Addresses...14, 29, 32-5.

Such a paradox contributed to the failure of Mechanics' Institutes as far as the initial aims were concerned. As Samuel Robinson sadly commented in 1843, Mechanics' Institutes did not draw the support of mechanics or largely diffuse scientific principles, probably, he thought, because of the lack both of elementary knowledge and of appeal in science.<sup>1</sup> Both these points had some validity. Although E. Royle has contended that J.W. Hudson and M. Tylecote are wrong to term the clerks and warehousemen who increasingly formed the membership of Mechanics' Institutes, as lower middle-class, it is obvious that Hudson's contemporaries, such as Benjamin Heywood, thought similarly.<sup>2</sup> Where the working-class were attracted they were often in small numbers, for example 300 out of a total population of 142,000 attended in Birmingham, a comparatively prosperous area for artisans.<sup>3</sup> Even at the flourishing Oldham Mechanics' Institute where 1,266 attended on average in the bitterest years of 1839 to 1842, the professional and trading classes (about 2.5% and 23% respectively) attended the literary departments, whilst the artisans and operatives (about 27% as well as 14.7% miscellaneous) caught up on their elementary education.<sup>4</sup> Also, as has been shown, the Mechanics' Institutes changed their educational aims, although after 1853 science had a new lease of life in them through the examinations of the Society of Arts and the Department of Science and Art.<sup>5</sup> From 1835 a new impetus to technical education had come in some areas with the

<sup>1</sup> Robinson S., ...1843.. 10-13.

<sup>2</sup> Royle E., op.cit., 305-21; Hudson T., op.cit., vii and passim; Tylecote M., op.cit., 258-9 and passim; Heywood B., op.cit., 55,92.

<sup>3</sup> Turner C.M., op.cit., 48,55-65; Royle E., op.cit., 318-9, says 487 in 1840, 405 of whom were working-class but his definition of such is different.

<sup>4</sup> Tait A., op.cit., 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> Cardwell D.S.L., op.cit., 62-5, 69-70.

establishment of Schools of Design which were energetically promoted by many Unitarians including manufacturers. However, lack of support from many other manufacturers and rivalry between those organising these schools meant that they had a troubled history before 1853.<sup>1</sup>

There were also difficulties of running costs and attendance fees. At Huddersfield, George Searle Phillips helped introduce special regulations to tide members over bad times.<sup>2</sup> Generally, however, it took time for the middle-class patrons to realise the real financial hardships of even the artisans. Further difficulties of unsuitable buildings, poor teachers and political tensions all served to disenchant working-class members, although at Birmingham, at least, Unitarians supplied good teachers in Daniel Wright and his helpers William and Toulmin Smith and Matthews Green, and supported moral force Chartism. Some of the best Unitarian lecturers, indeed, gave their services, not only Daniel Wright, an exceptionally brilliant teacher, but also James Martineau, William Jevons, W.B. Carpenter, Southwood Smith, George Buckland, William Turner, J.F. Hollings and William Turner Junior.<sup>3</sup> William Gaskell's course of lectures on poets and poetry of humble life to the Manchester Miles Platting and Salford

<sup>1</sup> Bell Q., The Schools of Design (1963) 104, 111-9 and passim; Ellis S., "Ewart, Haydon and the Select Committee on Art and Manufactures 1835-6", H. of E. Bulletin, (Spring 1975), no.15, 15-22; H.P. MSS Armstrong R.A., ...William Enfield, 22; Kenrick J., op.cit., 212; Greenwood M., op.cit., 278; Lott F.B., op.cit., 18-9. See also Garner A.D., "The Society of Arts and the M.I.s: The co-ordination of endeavours towards science and technical education, 1851-4" H. of E. (Dec.1985), vol.14, no.4, 255-62.

<sup>2</sup> David Heptonstall op.cit.

<sup>3</sup> MSS..Leicester M.I...., 1834, May to Dec. passim; Turner C.M., op.cit., 44-6, 81, 83; Stephens M.D. and Roderick G.W., op.cit., 71-4, 84; Tait A., op.cit., 14; Bowery M.M., op.cit., 291-2; ed. Simon B., Education in Leicestershire, 1540-1940, (1968), Crook Z. and Simon B., "Private Schools in Leicester and the County 1780-1840", 126; C.R. (1854), 138-9.



Mechanics' Institute were repeated, by request, to the teachers and senior scholars of the Lower Mosley Street Sunday school.<sup>1</sup> John Kenrick, however, did not find his own efforts at York encouraging either to himself or his audience.<sup>2</sup>

Despite difficulties, Mechanics' Institutes did give many educational advantages to those who joined them; 102,050 members in 610 Mechanics' Institutes and like institutions in 1851, according to Hudson.<sup>3</sup> At best, classes in a wide variety of subjects were offered; at worst, at least elementary education in the three R.s. Mutual improvement societies grew and flourished within some Mechanics' Institutes and overcame many teaching and class difficulties. Charles Bray was a member of such a society which formed in Coventry in 1851 from the Mechanics' Institute when the Church of England took over.<sup>4</sup> Henry Solly established one in a hay-loft in Yeovil where lectures, concerts, readings and recitations were given.<sup>5</sup> Some institutions established very successful schools. The Lower or Commercial School at Liverpool, like the High School very much supported by Unitarians, offered a non-denominational education in English, writing, arithmetic, elementary mathematics, science and geography (the curriculum was expanded later by Martineau, Jevons and two others) to sons of members of the Mechanics' Institute for £1.10s.0d. a year, with special terms for attendance at or transference to the High School.<sup>6</sup> Similar developments took place in Manchester where, by 1837, the day schools were overflowing.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 20,33.

<sup>2</sup> MSS M.C.O. J.K.IV, J.K. to G.W.W., 11.5.1834.

<sup>3</sup> Hudson J.W., op.cit., vi.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Heywood B., op.cit., 77-8,100,117; Turner C.M., op.cit., 90-5; Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 51-2.

<sup>5</sup> Solly H., op.cit., vol.I, 397-8,400.

<sup>6</sup> Tiffen H.J., op.cit., 26,31,62-5; MSS M.C.O., Shepherd Papers, V,124-5.

<sup>7</sup> Heywood B., op.cit., 43-7,79-80,91.

The Mechanics' Institutes also offered a chance to hear the famous, for example Fanny Kemble, Charles Dickens, Ralph Emerson, George Stephenson and the brilliant lecturer George Dawson, termed by Henry Solly as "a great moral and intellectual factor in the growth and elevation of English middle-class life," and of the "Upper Tenth among the artisan population." From 1847 Dawson's eclectic, non-denominational "Church of the Saviour" in Birmingham, deeply involved in childcare and education, attracted many Unitarian members and Dawson closely co-operated with Unitarians locally and nationally, although never taking the actual name.<sup>1</sup>

Libraries, for example the priority at Newcastle Mechanics' Institute where William Turner was one of the first donors, were another attraction of Mechanics' Institutes in the days before the Public Library Acts.<sup>2</sup> Samuel Robinson's praise of his Dukinfield Village Library, however, for having good and new books rather than old, cheap or useless ones, indicated how some libraries fared.<sup>3</sup> Newsrooms, when and where they were allowed, concerts and exhibitions, were further attractions: High Pavement Chapel lent the Nottingham Mechanics' Institute its organ for four to five months to use in its Exhibition of 1840.<sup>4</sup> The 1839 Manchester Mechanics' Institute Exhibition drew many of the "lower classes" to see its "beautiful" models of steam engines, pictures and curiosities, according to Mary Thom. Such exhibitions were expensive, however, as, for example, Leicester found. The 1840 Birmingham one bankrupted its Mechanics' Institute even though there were three bankers on the committee!<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Briscoe H.K., "Nottinghamshire M.I.s in the 19th Century", V.A.S.F.E., (Autumn 1954), vol.VI, no.13,152; Solly H., op.cit., vol.II,17; Turner C.M., op.cit., 83; D.N.B., vol.XIV, 221-2.

<sup>2</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 287-8.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson S., op.cit., ..1843.., 8.

<sup>4</sup> H.P.MSS,Him2, Minute Book, 24.5.1840, 15.1.1841.

<sup>5</sup> MSS...William Rathbone, IX.2.17; Lott F.B., op.cit., 10; Turner C.M., op.cit.87.

The Mechanics' Institutes did expand members' opportunities: for example, several men from the mutual instruction classes engendered by James Martineau's lectures apparently became scientists and inventors.<sup>1</sup> The Owenite George Holyoake and others held important posts in the Birmingham Mechanics' Institute.<sup>2</sup> Abel Heywood, a member of Miles Platting Mechanics' Institute lectured at Detroisier's new Mechanics' Institute and became a renowned printer, much recommended by John Beard. Known as a radical and a firebrand, he was imprisoned during his fight for a free press. A "freelance Unitarian", he later became Lord Mayor of Manchester, but he had hardly been compromised by middle-class values.<sup>3</sup> The Mechanics' Institutes were places where different classes could meet but the working-class elite at whom they were aimed were the least amenable group for middle-class economic and political ideals.

Limited space means that other ventures in which Unitarians were similarly motivated, for example their fight against the stamp tax on newspapers and for cheap literature, can only be mentioned briefly here. Harriet Martineau, for example, in "The Scholars of Arneside", sharply upbraided those who kept correct knowledge of the news from the poor as though it were private property, as did Frederic Hill.<sup>4</sup> Hill extolled the cheap, informative publications of Henry

<sup>1</sup> Drummond J. and Upton C.B., op.cit., 71; Heywood B., op.cit., 50-1, visualised Manchester M.I. as a recruiting ground for superior workers. Thomas Ashton had lent an enterprising mechanic at his mill, Benjamin Goodfellow, the money to set up in business himself. Goodfellow founded the Hyde M.I., 1850, and became a very notable British engineer; - Harrop S.A., op.cit., 221.

<sup>2</sup> Royle E., op.cit., 319-20; - Holyoake was unable to teach at West Bromwich and Handsworth M.I.s He did become assistant to Daniel Wright at Birmingham but was not appointed his successor.

<sup>3</sup> Garnett R.G., op.cit., 137; Inquirer, (6.1.1894), 9-10; Beard J.R., Self-Culture 89, 91.

<sup>4</sup> Martineau H., Illustrations of Taxation...No.V; Hill F., op.cit., 109-12.

Brougham's S.D.U.K., a society in which his brothers Rowland, Edwin and especially Matthew, were deeply involved. Matthew Hill played a key role in the organisation of the society, and, co-operated with Charles Knight whom he introduced into it, in many of its publications, especially the Penny Magazine of 1828 which was soon selling 200,000 copies a time.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Southwood Smith, Harriet Martineau and other Unitarians all wrote for the S.D.U.K..<sup>2</sup> However, many of its publications were either too simple, too long, over-elaborate or worse, unacceptable because of their content, especially when, in response to both a massive development of working-class literature and the Agricultural Riots of 1830, political economy was introduced. Insensitive economic advice, the suspicion that the Society was in the pocket of the increasingly hated Whigs, and the fact that alone among unstamped magazines the Society was unprosecuted, led to a hatred of its publications which were sold in bundles at reduced prices to gentlemen.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, as David Vincent has said, "there is no doubting the genuine commitment of its leaders to the value of knowledge for its own sake," although this was one of the few areas of experience which seemed capable of class co-operation within capitalism.<sup>4</sup> The Monthly Repository regularly reviewed,

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Hill C., op.cit., 72-3; Dobson J.L., "The Hill Family and Educational Change in the Early 19th Century", Durham Research Review, (Sept.1961) vol.12, 80-2.

<sup>2</sup> D.N.B., vol.52,544; Martineau H., Autobiography...vol.I,218,312. E.g. ed. Saddler T., Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, (1872), vol.II,128; Patterson E.C., "Mary Somerville", British Journal for the History of Science, (1969), vol.IV, No.16, 319.

<sup>3</sup> Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 28-9,34-5; Silver H., Concept of Education...,219-20; Byford D., op.cit., 15-6; Webb R.K., op.cit.,223; Martineau H., Biographical Sketches...159-60.

<sup>4</sup> Vincent D., Bread, Knowledge and Freedom, (Methuen Paperback,1982), 138,145.

and at first, welcomed, S.D.U.K. publications, but Fox and other Repositaires gradually turned against the Society's politics and political economy.<sup>1</sup>

The Society's publications, although undoubtedly providing, in cheap form, much useful and entertaining knowledge and placed in Mechanics' Institute libraries such as Birmingham, Leicester and Leeds, did not reach the working-classes in the way its founders hoped. They did inspire enormously popular imitators such as Chamber's Edinburgh Journal, Eliza Cooke's Journal and Dicken's Household Words, but it is impossible to ascertain how much any of these influence the working-class.<sup>2</sup>

Individual Unitarians also tried to produce cheap literature for the working-class. From 1848 John Beard, for example, wrote many books for autodidacts, including lessons for Cassell's Popular Educator, used in Mechanics's Institute classes and gave lectures at the Manchester Mechanics' Institute, which were afterwards produced as Self-Culture, a detailed, hardly elementary, guide to why, what, how and when to learn.<sup>3</sup> In the 1840s Joseph Barker did much to print and distribute cheap books to the working-class, especially those of Channing and other Unitarian writers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. M.R. (1829), N.S.3, 788-9; (1830) N.S.4, 558; (1832), N.S.6, 56-60, 359; (1833) N.S.7, 361-77.

<sup>2</sup> MSS...Leicester M.I., 11.11.1634; 1835 Printed A.G.M. Report, 6-10; Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 148; Perkin H., The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880, (Routledge Paperback 1972), 305-7.

<sup>3</sup> Beard James, op.cit., 1852, 1859, list of books published by J.R. Beard at end; Beard J.R., Self-Culture... passim.

<sup>4</sup> McLachlan H., Nonconformist Library... 163-7; U.H.M.C....12.

By the late 1840s the need for better cooperation with the working-classes was deeply felt by the more sensitive of the middle-classes. Many Unitarians, such as Henry Solly, William Shaen, Elizabeth and Frank Malleeson, Elizabeth and William Gaskell, were very much moved by the Christian Socialists' ideal of fellowship among all classes, eventually translated into the development of Working Men' Colleges, with opportunities of rich self-development through a broad, liberal, humane curriculum, taught by highly qualified teachers. A number worked with F.D. Maurice, the leader of the Christian Socialists and son of a Unitarian minister, and elsewhere in such Colleges, but this was after 1853.<sup>1</sup> So was Henry Solly's establishment of Working Men's Institutes which, although aiming at working-class independence and dignity, were permeated by the ideal of altering the cultural lifestyle of the working-classes and prone to the setbacks which Mechanics' Institute had experienced.<sup>2</sup>

These later initiatives occurred in the years when there was a more mellow relationship between the classes, not the bitter years of 1815 to 1850 when the working-class did not need Engels to tell them the contradiction between the fair words of middle-class reformers and the realities of working-class existence. They had their own response to the situation: Samuel Greg was broken by a strike against new machinery, Thomas Ashton was killed, Samuel Robinson had to face very bitter industrial disputes.<sup>3</sup> Working-class Radicals preferred a cooperative, secure society (though, paradoxically, with independent productive workers) to the atomist, unequal one of industrial capitalism. They allied with different sections of the middle-class at different times as it suited them: in Manchester,

<sup>1</sup> D.N.B., vol. 37, 100-2; Solly H., op.cit., vol. II, 53-6; Inquirer, (12.3.1887), 172; Malleeson E., op.cit., 56-7; Brill B., op.cit., 76; Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 90.

<sup>2</sup> Solly H., Working Mens' Social Clubs and Educational Institutes, (1967), passim; Solly H., These Eighty Years... vol. II, 48, 50 and passim.

<sup>3</sup> Rose M., op.cit., 17; Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 120; Harrop S.A., op.cit., 209; Tylecote M., op.cit., 252-3.

for example, unmoved by promises of equal votes on incorporation, fearing the vigorous command of Liberal control, they backed the traditional obligarchy against "turtle-fed aldermen and cotton-lord mayors".<sup>1</sup> They had their own ideology, forged partly from their interpretation of those same cultural and political influences which affected middle-class radicals<sup>2</sup> and partly from their own searing experience.<sup>3</sup>

From these sources working-class Radicals constructed a deeply-held ideal of practical, liberal, humane education. Working-class schools, almost inevitably impermanent, at which they sometimes paid 4d to 1/- a week, were deemed preferable to middle-class cheaper or free ones, but often their chief educational resources were the family, key books, the workplace, heterodox religion and the Radical press.<sup>4</sup> Individual economic self-help they derided, but self-education was a proud part of their tradition, as David Vincent and John Burnett have so well portrayed. Their "really useful knowledge" emphasised, apart from the Bible, great English literature and poetry (and Scotland's Robert Burns), politics, natural history and, in their schools, science. They wanted education for life, to raise them to their full potential rather than for work where there was little real mobility. They wanted freedom from ignorance, superstition and non-rational

<sup>1</sup> Perkin H., op.cit., 230-7; Fraser D., Urban Politics..., 120-1.

<sup>2</sup> Tholfsen T.R., Working-class Radicalism... 14-76.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Shaw C., op.cit., 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ross J., op.cit., 296; ed. Dale R., Schooling and Capitalism, (Open U.P. 1976), 44-54, Johnson R., "Notes on Schooling of the English Working-Class, 1780-1850"; Johnson R., "Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England", Past and Present, (NO. 1970), No. 49, 96-119; Webb R.K., The British Working-Class Reader, 1790-1848, (1955), *passim*.

behaviour (including intemperance), and knowledge of the world about them and of health. Autodidacts sometimes relieved their solitary hard struggles by joining in mutual improvement societies, educational institutions or libraries - all activities which could be a liberating education in themselves.<sup>1</sup> Men like Francis Place, the Utilitarian tailor, Detroisier, the Swedenborgian/Deist fustian-cutter later patronised in London by Mill, Carlyle and Lady Byron, or James Hole, the Deist leader of cooperative socialism, were all examples of working-class men whose own lives, and thence those of others, were transformed by their educational beliefs.<sup>2</sup>

The various working-class collectivist movements of this period - Owenism, the Cooperative Movement and Chartism - all (even "physical" Chartists to some extent) made a well-rounded, scientific, secular, or at least non-sectarian, education for all a central part of their ideal, never forgetting the link between education and the economic, social and political structure. Lack of resources, of good teachers and of time defeated many excellent educational ventures, as did opposition from wealthier classes, apathy from the poorer of their own and concentration on other objectives. Continual setbacks led many Radicals to advocate state education by the middle of the century.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vincent D., op.cit., passim; ed. Burnett J., op.cit., especially 135-40, 186-92. See also Harrop S.A., "Adult Education and Literacy: The importance of post-school education for literacy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries", H. of E., (Sept. 1984), vol. 13, no. 3, 191-201.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Thrale M., Autobiography of Francis Place, (1972) passim; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 122-8, Harrison J.F.C., ... James Hole .. passim.

<sup>3</sup> Silver H., ... Concept of Popular Education... passim; English Education and the Radicals (1975), 47-89, 106-14; Robert Owen on Education ... passim; Stewart W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 53-97; Simon B., The Two Nations..., 193-276. See Cooper T. The Life of..., (1879), passim.



Unitarians could find much affinity between the general educational ideal just outlined above and their own. Many were interested friends of Robert Owen, including the Strutt family, John Fielden and especially Rowland Hill who nearly joined the New Harmony venture.<sup>1</sup> The Hill brothers supported various cooperative schemes. Daniel Wright and W. Hawkes -Smith were Owenite-Socialists. Even Harriet Martineau admired the man and appreciated his achievements especially once her early anti-socialism abated.<sup>2</sup> Others like W.J. Fox, J.R. Beard and even Lady Byron, sympathised with Owen's cooperative and educational ideas but not his economic ones. Dr. Morell delighted in cooperative educational methods.<sup>3</sup> Goodwyn Barmby, who, through Fox's influence, became a Unitarian minister in 1849, had set up an Owenite community in the 1840s and been a Chartist. He, Fox and George Searle Phillips, with James Hole, E.T. Craig and others brought out The Truth Seeker, 1846-50, to diffuse their communitarian, cooperative and transcendentalist ideas.<sup>4</sup> Charles Bray helped establish and was President of the cooperative Coventry Labourers and Artisans' Society.<sup>5</sup> Various writers to Unitarian periodicals liked the environmentalist educational ideas of Cooperators, preferring their ventures to the foolish S.D.U.K. advice for working-people "to become capitalists and go out of the labour market". They appreciated that cooperators were seeking equality by raising themselves through permitted collective self-help, not by sinking others.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 167, 182-4, 193; Holt R.V., op.cit., 26; Hill R. and G.B., op.cit., 173-176, 205-7, 212-4; Hill C., op.cit., 104-6; Turner C.M., op.cit., 104-6.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau H., Biographical Sketches...308-15; Autobiography...vol. I, 230-2.

<sup>3</sup> Garnett R., op.cit., 48-9, 54-5 and 254-5; McLachlan H., Records...2; M.R. (1819) XIV, 641-4; (1822) XVII, 6-8; (1823) XVIII, 450-7; see also Garnett R.G., op.cit., 140.

<sup>4</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 561-2; Harrison J.F.C., Living and Learning...118-9.

<sup>5</sup> D.N.B., vol. 16, 236.

<sup>6</sup> U.C., (1834), 200-2; M.R., (1832) N.S.6, 521-8.

The atheism sometimes expressed by Owenites and Cooperators, although sometimes equated with Socialism by conservatives, deterred Unitarians. Methodist Unitarians in Lancashire shared the political and economic ideals of both Owenites and Chartists whom they often attracted to their chapels but, helped by John Beard a staunch supporter, they defended their religion and usually asserted political neutrality in their chapels. At Oldham, from 1816 to 1817, those who did not do so were driven to America. At least ten, possibly thirteen, of the original Rochdale pioneers were from Clover <sup>Street</sup> Chapel - the "Cooperative Chapel" whilst another, Charles Howarth, was also connected to Unitarianism. Nine of twenty-four members of the Chartist 1847 Council of the Peoples International League were Unitarians. Such Methodist Unitarians were devoted to education and, despite their poverty, provided as full an education as they could in their Sunday schools (at Padiham they optimistically built stairs in the chapel for the day they could afford a gallery).<sup>1</sup> Also Joseph Barker's penny weekly, The People, was pro Chartist, selling 20,000 copies a week, although it was not popular with all Unitarians.<sup>2</sup>

Middle-class Unitarians reacted variously to Chartist demands, from R.H. and W.R. Greg who were completely opposed to the operative vote through those like J.J. Tayler who wanted real financial and electoral reform for the working-class but were sure that insurrection was caused by the selfishness and ambition of the leaders, to the Marshalls in Leeds and the Biggses in Leicester who wanted to unite all classes behind a "radical programme somewhat short of the Charter".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.g. see ibid., 521; U.C., (1834), 203; McLachlan H., Essays... 213-28. Beard wrote Religion of Jesus defended from the Attacks of Owenism, (1839).

<sup>2</sup> McLachlan H., Nonconformist Library... 183.

<sup>3</sup> Fraser D., Urban Politics... 247, 260-3; Bushrod E., op.cit., 234-5; MSS.. William Rathbone VI, IX.2.14; ed. Thom. J.H., op.cit., vol. I, 199, 263; Carpenter J.E., James Martineau... 289; MSS M.C.O. 6/20, James Martineau, R.H. Hutton to J. Martineau, (3.7.1849); Channing W.H., op.cit., 486-7; MSS... Biggs' Scrapbooks, vol. I, 1840, 1841, 1842; Patterson A.T., op.cit., 302-33, 356-8.

More popular with the working-class than Biggs was Joseph Whetstone, the Unitarian worsted manufacturer and the first pupil of Charles Berry, who was treasurer and supporter of the Leicester Working Men's Association. His early cooperation with the Leicester Chartists, who later under Thomas Cooper became famed for their educational ventures, was symptomatic of his lifelong attachment to the furtherance of education.<sup>1</sup> In Birmingham, West Bromwich, Walsall and Wolverhampton, Unitarians supported moral force Chartism but not violence.<sup>2</sup> Henry Solly, born into a rich mercantile Unitarian family, became a Chartist, converted by his Sunday school superintendent and others at the Yeovil Mechanics' Institute, but unconsciously prepared, he said, by the writings of Channing and Fox. Solly represented his local Chartists from Yeovil, and later Tavistock, at various conferences in Manchester and Birmingham and in December, 1842, voted with Lovett against the Suffragists. His consistent public support of the Chartists eventually lost him his ministerial post at Yeovil. Bainbridge and Stevens, who ran the Sunday school, were sacked from their respective employments. The latter emigrated and Bainbridge eventually worked in London and helped Lovett in his educational work at High Holborn. He also continued to get a free library opened in Marylebone, but for Solly's congregation it was a great loss.<sup>3</sup>

The emphasis of moral force Chartism on the necessity of the "best possible system of education" for happiness and good government to save working people from being "moulded to the several purposes of priestcraft, sectarianism and charity-mongers" should obviously have won some Unitarian support. So would both Lovett's cry for a state-aided but locally controlled system of education, for libraries and all forms of healthy and rational amusement, and later, his establishment of a school which, like the Birkbeck schools, taught social science.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greenwood M., op.cit., 127-38, 148-52, 228-31, 282-3.

<sup>2</sup> Turner C.M., op.cit., 98-100, 104-6.

<sup>3</sup> Solly H., op.cit., vol. I, 334, 343-51, 369-72, 375-83, 390-410.

<sup>4</sup> Lovett W., Life and Struggles of.. (1967), 112-21, 205-6, 301-4.

"W" in the Christian Reformer, although admitting he was no advocate for Chartism as usually professed, reviewed Lovett's Chartism very favourably. He accepted that with the apathy of the rich "to the physical wants and to the intellectual and moral improvement of the poor", the poor had to take matters into their own hands and he rejoiced in Chartist educational aims which were "in perfect accordance with the most enlightened views", in their educational methods and in their realization that true liberty rose from "public enlightenment and public virtue".<sup>1</sup> W.J. Fox upheld the Charter as a "moral document" and gave popular lectures to skilled artisans and tradesmen on current politics, poetry, drama, history and biography at Lovett's National Hall, Holborn, from 1844 to 1846.<sup>2</sup>

There were points on which compassionate Unitarians who were orthodox on political economy and working-class Radicals could meet. Harriet Martineau, for example, realised that Chartism was a compound of many protests against social suffering. Whilst upholding her economic views, she opposed excessive labour and the iniquities of the needless inequalities in society, quoting Godwin's saying that it could not be meant that:

1,000 seeds are sown in the wide field of humanity, for no other purpose than that half a dozen may grow up into something magnificent and splendid, and that the rest...are merely suffered to live that they may furnish manure and nourishment to their betters.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C.R., (1841), 153-6.

<sup>2</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 553-9; Lovett W., op.cit., 238-9, 278.

<sup>3</sup> Webb R.K., Harriet Martineau..., 173, 213; M.R., (1831) N.S.5, 435; Martineau H., ...Thirty Years Peace, vol. II, 265, 412-14. See also Higginson E., Address...., 13.

She looked forward to the day when

every individual shall be employed according to his capacity  
and rewarded according to his works.<sup>1</sup>

Those Unitarians who had welcomed the French Revolution, for example Jeremiah Joyce and William Frend, continued to fulminate against enormous inequalities, as Frend's Plan of Universal Education (advocated by Harriet Martineau), illustrated.<sup>2</sup> W.J. Fox did not accept that poverty was "the 'necessary' condition of any class" and deplored condescending, sentimental or conservative attitudes. He supported Trade Unions yet advocated the new Poor Law and the withdrawal of all restraints on labour and opposed the Ten Hours Movement. Thus he ran foul of the workers in Oldham when he stood for Parliament against the son-in-law of the hugely popular John Fielden. The real thrust of all his reforming zeal, in fact, was towards the elite of the working-class earning about £100 to £130 a year. Socialists and Chartists supported him in Oldham from 1847 and he was much appreciated by the adult educational clubs which thrived therein in the 1850s, but he had no rapport with the northern industrial proletariat. His Repositaires were, like him, mainly committed to social improvement through a broad educational programme, appealing to both "enlightened" middle-class and artisan autodidacts. Their biographer Margaret Parnaby describes the Unitarian chapel as a "club for intellectuals and litteratae", an inspiration for social investigation, the betterment of mankind and advanced liberal Radicalism but not addressing itself to the evils of industrial society.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.R., (1831) N.S.5, 440.

<sup>2</sup> Joyce J., op.cit.; Frend W., Plan of Universal Education, (1832); M.R., (1832) N.S.6., 689-94, Mineka F.E., op.cit., 417.

<sup>3</sup> M.R., (1832) N.S.6, 4; (1833) N.S.7, 726-32; Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 92-8, 262-7, 562-90; Garnett R., op.cit., 291.

Yet, although they gave no critique of capitalism, Fox and others did worry about such evils and genuinely believed a generous, liberal education could elevate the working-classes from ignorance and narrowness of view.<sup>1</sup> Though varying in their radicalism and liberalism, on this educational point Unitarians were all agreed. They also did provide much education that was appreciated. Solly, for example, who like many other Unitarians, was deeply influenced by Channing, recalled meeting a Chartist in Birmingham in 1842, whose "high principle and largeness of thought" struck him and found he, too, was inspired by Dr. Channing. The man was later imprisoned for sedition.<sup>2</sup> The Chartist Thomas Cooper's lesson-books at Leicester included Channing's Self-Culture and Elevation...<sup>3</sup>

Unitarians, of course, were not the only reformers involved in the education of the working-classes. Apart from phrenologists and the Christian Socialists who have already been referred to, there were liberal Anglicans like Stephen Hawtreys who established a "working-class Eton" and Nonconformists like Edward Baines, the Voluntarist, who, in fact, made the Leeds Mechanics' Institute more democratic and widened its curriculum when J. Marshall and the Anglican B. Gott wanted to stress science.<sup>4</sup> The effects of the writings of Coleridge and Carlyle

<sup>1</sup> Inquirer, (11.6.1864), 391; M.R., (1832), N.S.6, 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Solly H., op.cit., vol. I, 114, 180, 187, 206, 211, 315, 344-5, 410.

<sup>3</sup> Greenwood M., op.cit., 152.

<sup>4</sup> Cowie E., "Stephen Hawtreys and a working-class Eton", H. of E., (June 1982) vol. 11, no. 2, 71-86; D.N.B., vol. 22 Supplement 100-1 - (the D.N.B. refers to Baines having attended M.N.C. in Manchester c. 1810-15 but probably means William Johns private school 1805-15 where Dalton lived; see McLachlan H., Essays..65-6); Garner A.D. and Jenkins E.W., op.cit., 145-6; Harrison J.F.C., op.cit., 62.

awakened a new sense of responsibility and care for the working-classes generally among the educated classes, although their political effect was usually conservative, as certainly was that of Disraeli's. The Anglican Church, revived by its disparate wings of Evangelicals and High Church from the 1830s, took an increasingly active role in the education of the poor, although again their education was to preserve a conservative, hierarchical, deferential society.<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians, despite the economic position and ideology of many of them, in their commitment to a wide, liberal, rational, modern, unsectarian education and in their deep humanitarianism, did have a meeting-ground with working-class Radicals on education and culture, as, for example seen in the educational work of the Gaskells. William Gaskell did much to help the poor through the Domestic Mission, the Mechanics' Institute and after 1853, the U.H.M.B. and the Manchester Working Men's College.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Gaskell let the poor speak for themselves in Mary Barton, many of her short stories and, later, in 1863, in Sylvia's Lovers, where her sympathy is all for gentle Philip Hepburn who spent years of hard, lonely effort to gain the knowledge he prized so highly.<sup>3</sup> Mrs Gaskell herself admitted she wished to "give utterance to the agony ... of dumb people". She was obviously successful since apparently cotton operatives clubbed together to buy Mary Barton.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Willey B., Nineteenth Century Studies, (Peregrine 1969), 9-58, 111-40; Williams R., op.cit., 65-97; Knights B., The Idea of the Clerisy in the 19th Century, (1978), 59-99.

<sup>2</sup> Brill B., op.cit., 45-7, 55, 76, 82.

<sup>3</sup> Gaskell E., Mary Barton... passim; Four Short Stories, (Pandora Paperback 1983); Sylvia's Lovers, (O.U.P. Paperback 1982) 95, 119-20, 161 and passim.

<sup>4</sup> Briggs A., op.cit., 101.

Mrs Gaskell wrote much about working-class women. As a prison worker and social reformer she knew about prostitution and, through Charles Dickens and Angela Coutts, helped girls who had been seduced and left to the streets. In her book Ruth, in 1853, she counterpoised the rigid, one-sided views that dominated the problem in Victorian England. Like other Unitarians, such as William Biggs who helped "penitent" females in Leicester, she had an awareness, unusual for the time, that girls were safer through developed intelligence and common-sense than a hopefully innate virtue. She also realised that women derived strength and dignity from independent work, as Mary Barton, Libbie Marsh and others of her working-class heroines illustrated.<sup>1</sup> This was not a general view, even among Unitarians. Their views on women, radical for the day, were tempered by their domestic ideology, particularly so in the case of the working-class.

Females were included in the expansion of education for the working-class but only partially. It seems that the female literacy rate lagged about 16% to 21% behind the male one of 66%-67% from 1800 to 1850 and did not begin to equalize until after the 1870 Education Act.<sup>2</sup> Before the 1850s there were more elementary places for boys than for girls in provided schools, for example Frederic Hill assessed that in London in 1836 there were 33% more places for boys in National schools and 50% more in British schools.<sup>3</sup> Nor was the curriculum the same: sewing

<sup>1</sup> Chapple J.A.V. and Pollard A., op.cit., 98-100, 205, 220-8, 235-7; Gaskell E., Ruth, (Dent, Everyman's Short Stories Library 1967), passim; Lansbury C., Elizabeth Gaskell. The Novel of Social Crisis, (1975), 31; MSS...Biggs' Scrap-books, vols I & II - many letters of William Biggs in the Leicester Mercury 1846 and 1859. On this question W.R. Greg, Literary and Social Judgements...133-6, did not think Mrs Gaskell went far enough.

<sup>2</sup> Lawson J. and Silver H., op.cit., 237, 259, 278.

<sup>3</sup> Hill F., op.cit., 254.



was always included for girls at the expense of "intellectual" subjects, such as mathematics and writing. Similarly, at the Printing School in Whitechapel for both sexes, for example, boys only were trained as printers. It was difficult to get equal opportunities for girls in the Schools of Design, although there were some good results in York and Leeds. Before 1854 fewer girls became pupil teachers and when they did, they again had less intellectual training, lower grant and, once qualified, lower salaries. They also had lower status, for example they were often kept from teaching boys, even infants, women only taking this department over when costs had to be sharply reduced.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in adult education Mechanics Institutes were established specifically for men and, except for social occasions, stayed that way until a need for numbers, subscriptions and wifely support, together with a growing conviction that education would produce better wives and mothers, allowed women into some of them. Even then, as at Leicester, a woman had to be a relative of a male member. It was not until the 1840s that female classes were established: the Huddersfield Female Education Institute of 1846 was the first of its kind. Working women, however, never attended Mechanics' Institutes in the same numbers as men, social custom and the demands of home being great handicaps. Furthermore, their separate provision often meant very basic courses, although admittedly their inferior education meant that these were necessary. Girls schools were established by Mechanics' Institutes but usually were later and smaller than the Boys'. Working People's Colleges were primarily for men, but Night Schools, in Bristol from 1812 to 1832 and in the factory areas in the 1840s, became more popular with

<sup>1</sup>

Horn P., Education in Rural England, (1978) passim; Stewart W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 201; Bell Q., op.cit., 103, 134-5; Neff W.F., Victorian Working Women, (1929), 109-11.

women, especially once factory legislation had lessened their hours of labour.<sup>1</sup>

In some respects Unitarians followed the prevailing norm. As with Sunday schools, so in the provision of charity and day schooling they often educated more boys than girls, although this did vary. At Nottingham, for example, there were more boys than girls until 1850 when the boys doubled to 80 and the girls more than trebled to 90 and roughly two-thirds more was spent on the boys. The master was paid 35% more than the mistress until 1839, when he was paid 32% more. In the 1850s his salary was 50% more, yet the mistress at that time appears to have been the more go-ahead teacher and was praised for obtaining government inspection and pupil-teachers.<sup>2</sup> Apart from women teachers consistently being paid less, men were usually in ultimate control. The curriculum included domestic subjects at the expense of the intellectual, although such of the latter which remained were often, as in Unitarian boys' schools, more expansive than elsewhere. At Strutt's schools at Belper from 1823 to 1830, for example, more girls were educated than boys but the girls spent part of the time sewing and on Saturdays, whereas boys had extra schooling (admittedly to keep them out of mischief) it was assumed that girls would be helping at home. At the factory schools the girls spent half their time sewing and knitting. Even Samuel Greg, at his school, gave extra academic classes to the boys only, although in leisure activities he

<sup>1</sup> Tylecote M., op.cit., 263-7 and passim; Stephens M.D. and Roderick G.W., op.cit. 70; Hudson J.W., op.cit., 3-5, 136-7; MSS...Leicester M.I., 3.3.1834; David Heptonstall op.cit.; Purvis J., "Womens Life is essentially domestic, public life being confined to men", H. of E., (Dec.1981), vol.10, no. 4, 227-43; "Working Women and adult education in 19th Century Britain", H. of E., (Sept. 1980), 193-212; Neff W.F., op.cit., 78-9.

<sup>2</sup> Bowery M.M., op.cit., 69; H.P., MSS, HiS9 Charity School Register; HiS54 AnniversaryServices. See also Holt A., Walking Together...167; Bushrod E., op.cit., 164-5.

encouraged both sexes to be together.<sup>1</sup> Barbara Leigh-Smith and Frederic Hill advocated co-education but this was not generally acceptable.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Unitarians, like Dissenters generally, opposed Brougham's Bill of 1820, partly because it left girls out.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in 1833 the Monthly Repository circle opposed the lack of equal provision for girls in Roebuck's proposals.<sup>4</sup> Night schools were often provided at domestic missions and these, as at Leicester, for example, had more girls than boys. In 1848 the female adult class was learning the two R.s, dictation, geography and mental arithmetic. Dare also provided a sewing-school and an Adult Sunday school since so many female domestic servants attended.<sup>5</sup>

From the evidence examined it is difficult to assess how far Unitarians were responsible for the admission or otherwise of women to adult institutions. Certainly the middle-class societies they supported were usually exclusively for men, as were Solly's Working Men's Institutes, even though Solly himself had a high opinion of women's abilities.<sup>6</sup> Edward Higginson and Benjamin Heywood, for example, apparently thought that wives would benefit most by the attendance at Mechanics' Institutes of reformed husbands who thence would run a clean, orderly,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 160-1; Griffith G., History of the Free Schools, Charities, Hospitals and Asylums of Birmingham, (1861) 138, 142-6; Burney L., op.cit., 32-3; Binns H.B., op.cit., 75; MSS...Shepherd Papers X, 33; Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., op.cit., 256-7; Greg S...Letters to Leonard Horner...6-11.

<sup>2</sup> Steward W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 310; Hill F., op.cit., vol.I, 217.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. M.R., (1821) XVI, 115.

<sup>4</sup> Parnaby M.R., op.cit., 377.

<sup>5</sup> Dare J., 1st D.M.R., (1846), 17-18, 2nd D.M.R., (1847), 8-9, 13, 16-7; 3rd D.M.R., (1848), 16; 4th D.M.R., (1849), 11-12.

<sup>6</sup> Solly H., op.cit., vol. I, 58-9, 366-8, 386, vol. II, 30.

disciplined home and share their new knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Unitarians were much responsible for the establishment of both boys' and girls' schools at the Liverpool Mechanics' Institute but the latter was provided seven years after the former and had fewer numbers.<sup>2</sup> When women were allowed into the Mechanics' Institute and later the Working People's Colleges, it was usually because men's needs seemed to require this. The excellent London Working Women's College, instituted by the Unitarian Elizabeth Malleson and other Unitarians, and based partly on the Midland Institute in Birmingham in which Unitarians were much involved, was not established until 1864.<sup>3</sup>

John Beard supported this college which gave women a liberal education for its own sake and for their proper self-development, not because of any position they might hold relative to men, yet even he often seemed to see education for working women chiefly in the light of their being domestic animals.<sup>4</sup> This was not altogether to working-class women's disadvantage since domestic training gave them a way into their largest source of employment, and the ability to sew, make and mend not only was a financial boon to a household but gave her status. Seeing girls as domestic creatures who could only thrive in loving homes much influenced Mary Carpenter's attitudes to delinquent girls and, later, Frances Power Cobbe's recommendations for girls in workhouses.<sup>5</sup> The general Unitarian view for all

<sup>1</sup> Higginson E., Observations....9; Heywood B., op.cit., 17.

<sup>2</sup> Tiffen H.J., op.cit., 26-31, 66, 103-7.

<sup>3</sup> Tylecote M., op.cit., 263-7; Malleson E., op.cit., 57-71; Purvis J., "Womens Life...domestic..." Gill C., op.cit., vol. I, 394-5.

<sup>4</sup> Beard J.R., Self-Culture...259-60.

<sup>5</sup> Carpenter J.E., Mary Carpenter...89-90, 164-6; Manton J., op.cit., 120-44; Cobbe F.P., Life of... (1904), 327-8; Dare J., 1st D.M.R., (1846), 6, 17-18.

classes was to emphasise the importance of mothers and the equal rights and capacities of women, although not necessarily in the same spheres as men. William Frend, for example, wished in this Plan... for equal attention to be paid to females' education, although it should be "directed also to objects more peculiar to them".<sup>1</sup> John Beard said that whatever education was good enough for a boy was good for a girl and both should have the same educational opportunities. Although he did not wish women to "leave their own sphere" in a vain attempt to displace men, in matters of taste and grace they could do better and should take over. Working-class women, he said, needed a general education for their own development and cookery, health education and both sciences, for their domestic role. Such an education was vital in order for women to educate families and ultimately the race, although society was often indifferent to it. Beard was in favour of women's rights and the better employment of unmarried women.<sup>2</sup>

There were many working-class women who could appreciate Beard's view and preferred the status and influence he conferred on educated mothers at home to the unskilled, low-paid, second laborious job they might have in a highly disciplined, dirty factory. Phrenology, which gave women a subordinate, yet still very high, status as wives and mothers and similarly demanded a full, liberal education for this, was equally appealing.<sup>3</sup> The general stress on domestic virtue for all, made by reformers, could enhance working women's lives if followed, yet at the same time kept women in the home which for most was an "unremitting round of domestic chores", emotionally draining, worsened by continuous child-bearing and

<sup>1</sup> Frend W., op.cit., 50. See also e.g. Dare J. 5th D.M.R. (1850), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Beard J.R., op.cit., 256-60.

<sup>3</sup> Combe G., op.cit., 57-67; de Guistino D., op.cit., 58-60, 72-3.

with little escape. The educational ideals of Unitarians and other educationists such as Pestalozzi concerning the moral and domestic influence of women could be simply an added strain.<sup>1</sup> Catherine Barmby, for example, a Unitarian Owenite feminist, described the domestic sphere, including customs and private and public manners, as women's God-given "absolute province" for which she must be given greater educational opportunities. At the same time her blaming uninteresting drudges of wives for their men leaving home at night did little for men's moral responsibility in the home and less to lighten their wives' toil.<sup>2</sup>

This domestic emphasis aided the rhetoric against married women working in factories used by men as far apart in political thinking as Engels and Lord Shaftesbury. John Beard, who probably felt no sympathy for Shaftesbury's fear that factory women were "gradually acquiring all those privileges which are held to be the proper portion of the male sex", and were thus turning from their rightful wifely obedience, nevertheless wanted legislation to prevent at least mothers from working in factories:

It is altogether impossible that the labouring classes, at least of the manufacturing districts, can ever be happy until a new and improved race of mothers appears.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Murray J.H., Strong-Minded Women, (Penguin 1984), 77, 82-4, (and 90-2, 167-8); Pestalozzi J.H., Letters on Early Education addressed to J.P. Greaves Esq., (1827), xx, 3-6, 32-3, 54, 57-67, 109-17.

<sup>2</sup> Barmby C., "Women and Domesticity", Peoples Journal, (1847), vol. III, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Engels F., op.cit., 177, 189-97; Halevy E., A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century (1952), vol. VI, Book II, 488; Perkin H., op.cit., 149-58; Beard J.R., Schools... 46-8.

Beard wanted special institutions for young female manual labourers where they could be taught to be domestic servants and mothers. He constantly reiterated his theme that factory girls, when married, rendered their homes "filthy and miserable" by their "ignorance and sluttish habits" so, unsurprisingly, their poor husbands sought refuge in pot-houses. Working-class women properly educated that is in moral and domestic economy, would turn their homes into a delight.<sup>1</sup> Even Mrs Gaskell repeated such views on factory girls in Mary Barton.<sup>2</sup> William Jevons was writing against married women in factories at the time of his death in 1882.<sup>3</sup>

These tirades against married women working in factories paid too little attention to the poor housing and to the poverty that deprived them both of decent pots and pans and of the general wherewithal to provide the idyllic homes dreamt of by their advisers.<sup>4</sup> Reformers who wished to raise men's wages so that their wives did not have to work, however, were in tune with traditional working men's demands. The latter feared women undercutting their wages, for women were always paid at lower rates, which, as far as W.R. Greg was concerned, justified their employment:

It is clearly a waste of strength, a superfluous extravagance, an economic blunder, to employ a powerful and costly machine to do work which can be as well done by a feebler and cheaper one.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 48; M.R., (1832) N.S.6, 164-5, 238.

<sup>2</sup> Gaskell E., Mary Barton...43-4, 165-6.

<sup>3</sup> D.N.B., vol. 10, 814.

<sup>4</sup> Hurt J.S., Elementary Schooling and the Working-Classes 1860-1918, (1979), 186.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. MSS Biggs' Scrapbooks Letter (not by Biggs) to Leicester Chronicle, 1849, Vol.I; Greg W.R., Literary and Social Judgements...371; Strachey R., The Cause, (1928). 52-7.

This is hardly a feminist argument! Greg, like Thomas Ashton, however, was against mothers of young children working in factories, especially since such seemed to have babies only 25 months apart not 18 as in the country! The Gregs generally were adamant that women in factories were no more immoral than elsewhere, in fact, were probably less so, as the workers could afford to marry earlier.<sup>1</sup> Others, however, used more traditional arguments against women being breadwinners. They paid far less attention to jobs involving sweated labour where women worked in equally bad, if not worse, conditions than, but were less independent of men. Harriet Martineau, in contrast, wished women to be able to gain independence in respectable, decently-paid jobs, although her views on the bastardy provisions of the 1834 Poor Law took this independence rather far. In "The Scholars of Arneside", she showed the difficulties for women both of ignorance and of early marriage and motherhood.<sup>2</sup>

It is not easy to find direct evidence of what working-class women thought about these various views since, in this period, they had not gained sufficient self-confidence to write about themselves as many of their menfolk did, nor have historians concerned themselves much about them until recently.<sup>3</sup> Male working-class reformers, for example Rowland Detroisier, tended to express views similar to Beard's.<sup>4</sup> Francic Place gave his daughters a very full education in languages, mathematics, science, history and geography, whilst Lovett interested his wife

<sup>1</sup> Harrop S.A., op.cit., 220; Greg W.R., Enquiry... 16, 34; Greg S., op.cit., 17-9; Greg R.H., op.cit., 34, 50-7, 62.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau H., Society in America, (1837), vol. III, 147-51; History of the... Peace... vol. II, 86; Illustrations of Taxation... V, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Although women did play a part in working-class movements, e.g. see Silver H., English Education and the Radicals... 55; Strachey R., op.cit., 31.

<sup>4</sup> Detroisier R., op.cit., 7; M.R., (1830) N.S.4, 710-1.



in all his intellectual and political activities, certain that wives' ignorance and resentment at their husbands' involvement in things they did not understand and from which they were excluded was a major cause of domestic dissension and of keeping men from their "patriotic exertions". Lovett himself had been heavily reliant on his wife's earnings at one time, yet he, like many Chartists, wanted firmly to confine women to the domestic sphere, opposing female waged labour as undermining their husband's manliness. Chartists did not include female suffrage in the Charter, as a newspaper letter addressed to the Chartists, probably from William Biggs, strongly protested in 1840. Even so, Lovett did aim at the harmonious development of the physical, moral and intellectual powers of every child, whether boy or girl, and wanted high schools for both, teaching a wide range of sciences, including applied ones, social science, physiology and health, and the first principles of the most useful trades and occupations according to sex.<sup>1</sup>

The fullest opportunities, both generally and in education, offered to women were within Owenism and the Cooperative Movement. The egalitarian Owenites committed themselves to a collectivized family life and complete female equality, especially in education, as William Thompson and Anna Wheeler's Appeal... illustrated. In the Cooperative schools, the Halls of Science and Owenite communities women received and took greater chances of equality. Yet the attention given to collective self-improvement instead of male-orientated "low and debasing amusements", and to a sober, gentle, family-orientated way of life, whilst in one way enhancing women's status and participation, in another increased the emphasis on

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Thale M., op.cit., 226-7; Lovett W., op.cit., 31-4, 81, 116-20; Taylor B., Eve and the New Jerusalem, (Virago Paperback 1983), 78, 270-3; MSS...Biggs' Scrapbooks...vol. I, 9.5.1840; Strachey R., op.cit., 31.

their domestic role and their relative virtues. The weaknesses of the Owenites and Cooperators in a capitalist, patriarchal world were not helped by their freer position on marriage. Furthermore, tensions did arise over the position of women, although generally women workers were supported, as in the Tailors' strike of 1834. The general support for equality in early British Socialism was replaced by a greater differentiation in Chartism, leading in turn to the male-dominated model Trade Unions and Labour Party. It was left to the Cooperative Party to revive the question of real equality for women amongst the working classes in the late nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

The Unitarian view of womens' position in society therefore; a composite of radical and traditional views, fitted that of many of the working-class leaders by the 1850s. By this time the failure of Chartism, the weakness, now apparent, of working-class organisation against capitalism and greater general prosperity all turned the working-class along paths of reform more within the framework of capitalist society. Their leaders' acceptance of certain middle-class cultural values - respectability, thrift, temperance, self-reliance, self-education - helped the dominance of the middle-class ideal. The temperance and phrenological movements, with which many Unitarians sympathised, helped mould such ideals, as did Methodism and other Nonconformist societies in which Unitarians played no part, although they did participate in the Utilitarian diffusion of useful knowledge which at least gave some extension of education to the working-classes. Despite the fact that working-class democratic and egalitarian ideals and assertion of collective self-help differed from the overriding middle-class view, therefore, there was

<sup>1</sup>

Taylor B., op.cit., passim; Pankhurst R.K.P., William Thompson, 1775-1833, (1954) passim; Thompson W. and Wheeler A., Appeal of Half the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the other Half, Men, to retain them in political and thence in civil and domestic slavery; Stewart W.A.C. and McCann W.P., op.cit., 75-89.

greater acquaintance of all classes in one cultural tradition in mid-century than ever before.<sup>1</sup>

Tholfsen, in his explanation of the amelioration of middle-class attitudes which led to consensus, highlights as an important cause the small, but influential group of social reformers which included Channing, W.J. Fox, Emerson and George Searle Phillips, all Unitarians or Transcendentalists closely connected with Unitarians.<sup>2</sup> In that Unitarians consistently tried to diffuse such culture and education, they were obviously important in this. Seed has drawn a difference in Manchester between the Unitarian agents of cultural reproduction engaged with the working-class in educational and social institutions and the active capitalists, although, as has been shown here, those latter who were Unitarian were involved in these institutions as well. Nevertheless, the former were mediating influences transforming liberal culture so that its mores could be more widely diffused.<sup>3</sup>

Unitarians were involved in a very wide range of activities taking education to the working-class. They wanted a much wider curriculum and educational opportunities for both sexes although neither was won before the twentieth century. They knew and wanted to share the excitement of education and how it could open up personal opportunities. Their rational views, their supreme faith in the capabilities of human-beings if given the right environment and education, could find rapport with working-class ideals despite economic and class tensions. In all, in this sphere, their contribution, if flawed, was undeniably important.

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Tholfsen T.R., Working-Class Radicalism...passim; de Guistno D., op.cit., passim; Perkin H., op.cit., 380-407; Fraser D., ... Welfare State, 95-101.

2

Tholfsen T.R., op.cit., 140-3.

3

Seed J., op.cit., 20-5.

## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to examine what contribution, if any, Unitarians made to education in England from the late eighteenth century to about 1853. The evidence given shows that Unitarians did have a very positive educational ideal derived from their attitudes and position in society as Rational Dissenters, as a dynamic part of the new commercial and industrial middle-class and as part of both middle and working-class intellegentsia, as well as from their experience of Dissenting academies, Scottish and German universities and their involvement in the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution. Through the works of David Hartley they gained both a theory of the human mind which exalted the powers of careful, lifelong education and an awareness of which methods and subjects of study would best develop the type of God-loving, moral, humane, liberal, socially-concerned and useful being which they most admired and would allow human beings to reach perfection. Through Richard Price, William Ellery Channing and James Martineau, leading exponents of another strand in Unitarianism, they were also able to build up a reverence for the essential powers of humankind which again endorsed the necessity of a wide and deep education. This educational ideal informed the activities of Unitarians and led them to widespread involvement in many educational ventures.

This ideal should logically have been extended to all sections of society, Unitarians believed, but to achieve such an education for everybody was no mean task during the period examined since there was such a dearth of decent educational provision, the most prestigious male educational institutions being dominated by the Established Church and becoming increasingly exclusive, and the classical tradition remaining very strong. Especially once England was embroiled in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars it was not easy to uphold the ideal of a tolerant, liberal meritocracy against the powerful, aristocratic, hierarchical Establishment in both Church and state. Unitarians found allies for many of their educational ideas in the nineteenth century in the Utilitarians and Phrenologists but they were opposed by Romanticism, entrenched traditional attitudes, Evangelicalism and, later, Anglo-Catholicism. Since the Unitarians were also increasingly

estranged from other Dissenters they were somewhat isolated, yet at the same time their extreme individualism meant that they did not act as one group, although their wide spectrum of views were all on the left-wing of the political and religious divide. They were intensely disliked, their alien theological convictions and liberal spirit detracting from any respect commercial wealth and power might have won for them, as Henry Solly, for example, ruefully recorded in the case of his own family.<sup>1</sup> Orthodox Christians' abhorrence of seemingly anti-Christian views - Priestley, for example, denied the virgin birth 200 years before the present Bishop of Durham - coupled often with general dislike of their radical politics, made it difficult for Unitarians to win sympathy for their educational objectives.

Unitarians' own educational ventures were sometimes, as at Hackney for example, too grandiose to endure without substantial and consistent financial backing and generally their private middle-class schools were too costly for all but a few. Unitarianism never achieved large numbers (at most they numbered about 50,000 by the 1850s)<sup>2</sup> so it was impossible for them always to achieve much on their own despite the great wealth of some within their ranks. Cooperation with other promoters however, might mean, as in the case of proprietary schools, that their ideal was diluted or at least that their contribution was hidden. Conversely their involvement might discourage the participation of others, as in the initial establishment of Mechanics' Institutes, or lead to the dissolution of the institution as happened with many of the liberal academies.

Nevertheless, Unitarians sought to achieve their educational ideal through a wide range of educational enterprises both in formal and informal education and the very extent of their involvement has made it difficult to contain within the limits of this thesis. Independently they established a multiplicity of schools, academies and colleges to suit different sections of the working and middle-

1. Solly H., These Eighty Years, (1893), Vol. I, 134-6.

2. Gilbert A.D., Religion and Society in Industrial England, (Longman Paperback 1976)

classes; they played a large part in founding Lancasterian schools, Mechanics Institutes, Literary and Philosophical Societies and many other scientific and cultural societies; they established domestic missions with a wide variety of educational activities; they cooperated with others to institute infant, British and proprietary schools; they became deeply immersed in the development of University College, London and they played a significant role in the fight for state education. Throughout all these ventures they attempted in varying degrees to promote the scientific, liberal education expounded by their leading education-  
 alists, not least Priestley himself. They pioneered new subjects and methods, new attitudes on punishment, health and physiology and new ways of educating the delin-  
 quent and outcasts in society. Their educational enthusiasm was seen in small societies as well as large and in poor chapels as well as rich, for example the impoverished Oldham congregation managed to give a wide Sunday school education "superior" to that of any in the district in precisely the same way as did the far bigger and wealthier Birmingham ones.<sup>1</sup> Such enthusiasm was also seen in countless Unitarian individuals of both sexes, young and old, rich and poor, who engaged themselves in multifarious educational concerns, eagerly pursuing the enlighten-  
 ment of both themselves and others. John Aikin, John Relly Beard, Mary Carpenter, William Gaskell and James Heywood are only some of the outstanding examples of this. Unitarians wrote endlessly about education, they produced textbooks, manuals didactic novels, encyclopaedias, treatises, editions of modern literature, both English and foreign. Many of these Unitarians were in the important second rank of educationalists and intellectuals rather than the first, but the very numbers of them drawn from such a small group and the proliferation of their activities comprise an important contribution.

With respect to their actual aims Unitarians had only limited success. Rational Dissent did no more than hold its own in the nineteenth century. The pion-  
 eering work of Unitarians in Biblical criticism was outstanding but hardly won them great sympathy, and although in mid-century the Anglican Broad Church movement indicated a large measure of affinity with Unitarians,<sup>2</sup> then, as now, rational

1. Marcroft A., Historical Account of the Unitarian Chapel, Oldham, (1913), 89.

2. Wigmore-Beddoes D.G., Yesterday's Radicals, (1971), *passim*.

theologians unnerved and angered the orthodox majority by publishing their scholarly insights. Nevertheless, the part Unitarians played in establishing and insisting on educational institutions which were open to all irrespective of religious belief and their determination to follow the truth, certainly in religious matters, wheresoever it led, had long-term effects and was especially vital for the growth of a modern educational system. Unitarians provided examples of non-denominational education in their own schools, the Hibernian schools and the Massachusetts model and led the way in obtaining the civil rights of Dissenters, including access to hitherto exclusive educational establishments.

In pioneering new methods and subjects in education the Unitarian contribution which continued throughout the nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> was mingled with that of other progressive educationalists, the Utilitarians, Combe and the phrenologists. The Unitarian ideal of a liberal education was a very positive antithesis to the traditional classical curriculum although, for the most part, it did not deny classics a place. It is difficult to gauge how far Unitarians influenced the very gradual adoption of English literature, modern languages, modern history and geography in the grammar and public schools and the ancient universities after 1850 but they certainly had persistently promoted these subjects throughout educational establishments with which they were connected and, not least, in their many educational publications. Very importantly they fostered the study of science and produced and attracted eminent scientists including applied scientists and engineers like John Taylor, William Strutt and William Fairbairn who were creating industrial England.<sup>2</sup> Equally significant, however, was the Unitarian effort to make scientific studies and thinking, including applied science, an integral part of a liberal education. Unfortunately, outside of the institutions with which Unitarians and other progressive educationalists were connected, science did not become an

1. E.g. see Solly H.S., The Life of Henry Morley, LL.D., (1898), 229 to end;

McLachlan H., Records of a Family 1800-1953, (1935), 39 to end.

2. Ross J., Three Generations of Englishwomen, (1888), 28; Fitton R.S. and Wadsworth A.P., The Strutts and the Arkwrights 1758-1830; (1958), 170-2; Record of Unitarian Worthies, (1876), 244.

integral part of the curriculum nor was it considered a necessary part of a "gentleman's" education. Applied science gained some ground later in the century notably at Owen's College through the work of Henry Roscoe,<sup>1</sup> but even now in the late twentieth century it lacks the status one might assume for it in an industrial nation and all too few can approach the many-sided culture of a John Aikin.

Where Unitarian efforts in science education have been recognised they have often been criticised as being used for social and political ends. Some people, as Thackeray, for example, has pointed out,<sup>2</sup> did abandon science when it no longer suited their own purposes: they abandoned Unitarianism in the same way. This hardly detracts, however, from the integrity or importance of the Unitarian commitment to science which was a natural result of their religious, psychological and economic tendencies. This commitment was given from the late eighteenth century when chemistry, for example, was in its infancy although it was developing through the work of Priestley and of the Quaker, John Dalton, who was inspired by him and who was a tutor at Manchester Academy from 1793 to 1800.<sup>3</sup>

Unitarians failed to establish their view of a liberal education partly because of their success in helping the opening up of traditional institutions which were, however, moulded by a different culture and ethos. Wealthier Unitarians had access to Oxbridge, for example, University Hall, which had been founded with such enthusiasm in 1848, declined.<sup>4</sup> Unitarians failed either to convert the Establishment or non-Unitarian industrialists to their educational ideal. Their own industrialists and merchants might often make their sons finish their higher education after only two years at college or university but the length and quality of the education the latter received was far greater than the norm for businessmen.<sup>5</sup>

1. Ed. Sanderson M., The Universities in the Nineteenth Century, (1975), 79, 109.

2. Thackeray A., "Natural Knowledge in Cultural Context: The Manchester Model", American Historical Review (Feb. 1974), 678-80, 706-7.

3. Davies V.C., A History of Manchester College, (1932), 63-5, 70.

4. Tarrant W.G. and Worthington J., "University Hall, London", T.U.H.S., (1927), Vol. IV, No. I, 10.

5. E.g. Solly H., op.cit., 60-169.



Although Unitarians helped give a better education to some, at least, of the middle-class, it can hardly be said that generally they achieved an "enlightened" middle-class. They themselves, however, did produce many outstanding leaders in many walks of life whose work continued throughout the nineteenth century, as the examples of Henry Crosskey and Joseph Chamberlain in Birmingham and Charles Beard in Liverpool illustrate.<sup>1</sup> It was in the provinces, indeed, before the 1850s when London reasserted her preeminence, that Unitarians most made their mark. Here where they often achieved economic and, after 1836 especially, political power, their chapels repeatedly became the focus of local educational initiatives. The Great Meeting, Leicester, Cross Street Chapel, Manchester and Hanover Square, Newcastle are among the most outstanding examples. Robert Spence-Watson said that Hanover Square under William Turner's fifty-eight years of pastoral care "became for the town and district a focus of light and learning."<sup>2</sup>

A.J.P. Taylor, writing of Manchester, called it -

the only city that can look London in the face, not merely as a regional capital, but as a rival version of how men should live in a community.<sup>3</sup>

Unitarians played a leading role in the shaping of both Manchester's ethos and predominance but Taylor's picture of the "merchant princes" whose ghosts "walk in the twilight" in Victoria Park, is not altogether sympathetic. He found their radicalism ruthless and lacking in care for the slums or any commitment to economic equality or democracy.<sup>4</sup>

They had succeeded by their own energy and they supposed that the duty of society was discharged if it gave others the chance to do the same.<sup>5</sup> )

1. Briggs A., Victorian Cities, (Pelican 1968), 198, 202, 206; McLachlan H., op.cit., 39-51

2. Watson R.S., The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne (1793-1896), (1897), 33.

3. Taylor A.J.P., Essays in English History, (Book Club Associates 1977), 307.

4. Ibid., 308-9.

5. Ibid., 309.

Similar criticisms have been voiced by others, as has been discussed. Certainly in pressing the "truths" of political economy Unitarians were supporting middle-class interests and a number of their educational initiatives amongst the working-class suffered accordingly. Yet before 1832<sup>1</sup> and especially in less highly industrialized urban centres and again in the 1850s, it was possible to fuse a common culture amongst radicals to some extent and the self-reliant, industrious, moral, rational Unitarians led the way in this.

Furthermore, despite bitter industrial conflict in which Unitarians might be involved as employers, it has been shown that it is far from the truth to say that they did not worry over the poor or did not positively work to provide education for them. There were, of course, working-class Unitarians as well and some of these, like Thomas Poynting and Abel Heywood, used Unitarian educational institutions to the benefit of both themselves and others. Silver has said that middle-class Radicals were happy with educational reform because they could keep social order and follow rational and philanthropic aims.<sup>2</sup> There is some truth in this for Unitarians but since they firmly believed that "knowledge is power" they would hardly have tried so consistently to put knowledge, and a wide knowledge, too, in the way of the working-classes had they not genuinely believed in working-class education.

Similarly, one suppressed section of English society owed much to Unitarian educational attitudes and initiatives. Females, especially in the middle-class, were able to receive a far better education in Unitarian homes and schools and later at Bedford College than was possible almost anywhere-else. Some of them used this education to notable effect in the outside world and it was from Unitarian ranks that many involved in the Woman's Movement of the 1850s came. It is true that the domestic ideal by which Unitarians sought to gentle all classes, despite conferring status and stimulating better female education, could be restrictive especially for working-class women. Conversely, well-educated Unitarian women very much contributed to making their homes intellectual centres to which many of

1. See e.g., Peel J.D.Y., Herbert Spencer, the evolution of a sociologist, (1971), 35, 50-5.

2. Silver H., English Education and the Radicals, (1975), 46.

the most cultivated women and men of the day gladly resorted. Susannah Taylor's house in Norwich, regularly visited by leading liberal Whigs amongst others, was a good example. From such a home came a stream of distinguished children: John Taylor, an engineering prodigy; Richard, a renowned printer of European fame; Edward, Gresham Professor of Music; Philip, a first-class inventor; Arthur, printer to the city of London; and Sarah, an excellent translator whose successive homes in England and on the continent likewise became magnets for men and women of scientific and intellectual renown.<sup>1</sup>

The Taylor family like other remarkable Unitarian families were much inter-related with other Unitarians.<sup>2</sup> Familial links such as these partially fit in with N.G. Annan's thesis of the network of intellectual families which, in the nineteenth century, spread gradually over the length and breadth of English intellectual life, criticising the assumptions of the ruling-class above them and forming the opinions of the upper middle-class to which they belonged. The Aikins and Taylors were hardly upper middle-class, although other Unitarians specifically picked out by Annan fast became so, for example: the Wedgwoods, who were related to the Darwins, Sir James Mackintosh, the Whig philosopher and J.C. Sismondi, the Genevese economist; and William Smith's family who were interrelated with the Nightingales and Cloughs.<sup>3</sup>

It was through their familial links and the intellectual circles in which they moved that Unitarians were able to diffuse their educational ideals. Many outstanding intellectuals of the day such as George Eliot and J.S. Mill were very closely connected with Unitarians and the best Unitarian preachers such as W.J. Fox

1. Ross J., op.cit., 4-29 and passim; le Breton A.L., Memories of Seventy Years, (1883), 73; Parnaby M.R., William Johnson Fox and the Monthly Repository Circle of 1832 to 1836, (Australian National University Ph.D., 1979), 31-2.

2. See MSS Ouren D.L., Genealogia Unitariana Britannica, (M.C.O. 1975)

3. Annan N.G., "The Intellectual Aristocracy", ed. Plumb J.H., Studies in Social History, (1955), 246-8, 260-74 and passim.

and James Martineau drew many influential people to hear them.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, brilliant Unitarian scholars such as John Kenrick, William Gaskell and Lant Carpenter were denied the preferment, fame and national success they probably would have won within the Anglican Church or the ancient universities. However, the type of scholarship and studies they pursued were chosen because of their concerns as Rational Dissenters which were the touchstone of their educational activity. In choosing to follow free enquiry and modern studies they made an enormous contribution to English education and intellectual life in this period when such liberal attitudes were disliked and, at times, positively dangerous to hold.

Unitarians were not without faults but within the confines of a class-ridden, hierarchical, patriarchal society they offered a broad, tolerant, humane ideal in education to fulfil life rather than to restrain it. The chief Unitarian educationalists such as Aikin, Beard, Fox and Mary Carpenter lived by this ideal; leading Unitarian ministers such as Robberds, Gaskell and Taylor preached this message to congregations containing highly influential members in local society. The most socially conservative Unitarians held out such an education to as many as possible, for example James Martineau taught equally the mechanics of Liverpool and young ladies and students at Manchester College. The ideal promulgated at Warrington was not narrowed. It lived on both through people and institutions, for example through both William Turner, a student at Warrington whose many educational concerns included being Visitor at Manchester College from 1808 until his death in 1859, and through Manchester College itself, seen by many as the successor to Warrington and surviving to celebrate its bicentenary in 1986. At its celebratory festivities Unitarians from both Eastern and Western blocs united in the familiar toast "To civil and religious liberty all over the world".<sup>2</sup> The

1. Haight G.S., George Eliot, (O.U.P. Paperback 1978), 37-49, 102, 105, 109, 381, 422, 508, 550; Kamm J., John Stuart Mill in Love, (1977), 19, 27-33 and ff.; Inquirer, (25.6.1864), 419; Carpenter J.E., James Martineau, (1905), 409.

2. Compare e.g. M.R., (1829), N.S.3, 703.

bicentenary lecture was given in honour of Rabindranath Tagore who, drawn first to the College by Unitarian Links with the Brahmo Samaj, lectured at Manchester College in 1930 to packed Oxford audiences.

The Unitarians did contribute an ideal, liberal in all senses of the word, to English education. They had a genuine, deep-seated commitment to rational religion, the pursuit of truth and freedom of thought for all and above all to education as a means of human perfection. They sought consistently in many spheres to promote this. They achieved only partial success but with such small numbers it is remarkable that they contributed so much.

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453

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