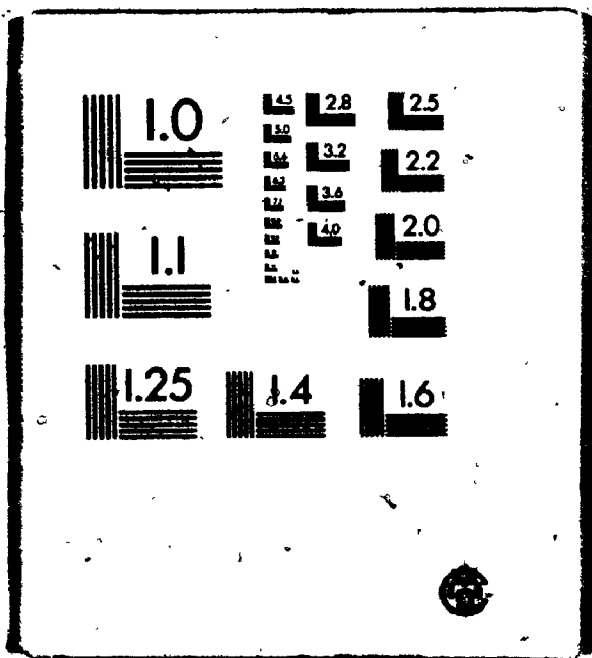


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A TROUBLED ZION:  
THE ANGLICAN EXPERIENCE IN UPPER CANADA, 1791-1854

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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THE ANGLICAN EXPERIENCE IN UPPER CANADA, 1791-1854

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the Church of England in Upper Canada from the founding of the colony in 1791 until the secularization of the clergy reserves in 1854. Its main objective is not to examine the unfolding of events in the struggle for the separation of church and state, but rather to relate the Church of England's political fortunes to the social and intellectual dimensions of the Anglican experience. As far as the Church of England's record as a religious organization is concerned, attention is devoted both to the church's achievements and failures in meeting the needs of a pioneer society, and to the connection between the church's problems in the religious sphere and Strachan's plans in the late 1810s and 1820s to further the Anglican cause through the sale of the clergy reserves and the erection of a church-controlled educational system. With regard to the church's intellectual development, there are chapters dealing with the social, political, and religious views not only of Strachan but of the clergy as a whole. In the last few chapters, emphasis is placed on the ideological response of the church to reverses in the world of politics, the growing attachment of clergy and laity alike to the concept of a self-supporting and self-governing church, and the Anglican clergy's increasingly bitter outlook on the world in general and Upper Canada specifically. The last chapter explores the high church-low church wrangling of the post-union period, and offers some reflections

concerning the implications of this internecine strife for the Church of England's future as a religious body.

With the adoption of a social and intellectual approach to the study of Upper Canadian Anglicanism, a number of things become clear. By examining the Church of England's position in Upper Canadian religious life without any preconceived notions about the nature of a "frontier" society, this thesis shows that the church was far more successful as a missionary organization than other historians have been willing to admit. Further, in terms of the intellectual features of the Church of England's experience, the following analysis demonstrates that the Anglican clergy's intransigence in defending the policy of church establishment was closely tied to their own world view and to their unflagging belief in the role of an established church in the maintenance of social and political stability. It also underlines the fact, which has been missed by historians concerned with charting the day-to-day developments in the crusade for religious equality, that the Church of England in the post-rebellion period faced agonizing questions about its future as a religious institution. During these years political reverses gradually undermined the old belief that the Church of England had a vital role to play in guiding the evolution of Upper Canadian society. Indeed, Anglican arguments in favour of church establishment now went hand in hand with the conflicting view that the Church of England might be well advised to withdraw into itself, cut off all ties with a sinful state, and concentrate on its mission as a branch of the catholic and apostolic church. This vision of the church's future was one of the main motivating factors behind

the movement to increase the financial and political independence of the Anglican cause. Yet it also must be stressed that there were major obstacles to be overcome before the church could devote itself exclusively to its spiritual duties. For as is pointed out in the concluding chapter of this dissertation, talk of the Church of England's future as a sort of "spiritual society" remained little more than a pipe dream as long as high churchmen and evangelicals subscribed to radically different interpretations of the meaning of the Anglican faith.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
I. ESTABLISHMENT AND SURVIVAL	9
II. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND UPPER CANADIAN RELIGIOUS LIFE, 1820-1840	58
III. JOHN STRACHAN, THE CLERGY RESERVES, AND EDUCATION	91
IV. THE END OF TOLERATION	125
V. CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGY, CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT, AND THE POLITICS OF UPPER CANADA	155
VI. DEFEAT	201
VII. THE SEEDS OF INDEPENDENCE	249
VIII. A HOUSE DIVIDED	310
CONCLUSION	380
BIBLIOGRAPHY	395

## ABBREVIATIONS

ADO	Archives of the Diocese of Ontario
AO	Archives of Ontario
BRMTL	Baldwin Room, Metropolitan Toronto Library
CHAR	Canadian Historical Association <u>Report</u>
CHR	Canadian Historical Review
DCB	Dictionary of Canadian Biography
GSA	General Synod Archives (Toronto)
JCCHS	Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society
OH	Ontario History
OHSPR	Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
SCCIPGDS	Society for Converting and Civilizing the Indians and Propagating the Gospel Among the Destitute Settlers (of Upper Canada)
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (in Foreign Parts)
TDA	Toronto Diocesan Archives (St. James' Cathedral)



To my father, the memory of my mother, and my son, Matthew Rhys

## INTRODUCTION

In the writing of Upper Canadian religious history, there has been a tendency either to concentrate on the lives of individuals and the institutional evolution of particular churches,<sup>1</sup> or to examine, almost to the exclusion of all else, the role of various denominations in political affairs.<sup>2</sup> While the first approach makes the mistake of isolating religious groups from the society in which they functioned, the second ignores the social and ideological factors that determined the response of clergymen to political issues. For example, it is

<sup>1</sup> In the case of the Church of England, good examples of the biographical/institutional approach are: C. W. Vernon, The Old Church in the New Dominion (London, 1929); C. H. Mockridge, The Bishops of the Church of England in Canada and Newfoundland (London, 1896); and J. Langtry, History of the Church in Eastern Canada and Newfoundland (London, 1892). The culmination of institutional surveys was reached with the publication of W. Perkins Bull's From Strachan to Owen: How the Church of England was Planted and Tended in British North America (Toronto, 1937). Philip Carrington's The Anglican Church in Canada: A History (Toronto, 1963) showed that this approach was not something of the distant past but was still thriving in the 1960s.

<sup>2</sup> For the political approach to the writing of Upper Canadian religious history, see Alan Wilson, The Clergy Reserves of Upper Canada: A Canadian Mortmain (Toronto, 1968); J. S. Moir, Church and State in Canada West: Three Studies in the Relation of Denominationalism and Nationalism, 1841-67 (Toronto, 1959); and Goldwin French, Parsons and Politics: The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855 (Toronto, 1962). George Spragge and J. D. Purdy can also be seen as practitioners of this approach, while T. R. Millman, J. L. H. Henderson, and H. H. Walsh combine the political and institutional approaches. For the writings of these historians, see bibliography.

generally recognized that the Church of England, as the church legally established under the Constitutional Act of 1791, was a moving force behind Upper Canada's conservative political tradition. Yet only one scholar, S. D. Clark, has related Anglican conservatism to the Church of England's position in Upper Canadian society, and his conclusions, as will be shown at a number of points in this dissertation, rest more on an uncritical acceptance of the assumptions of Turnerian frontierism than on a careful examination of the reality of the colony's religious life. Further, aside from Professor S. F. Wise,<sup>3</sup> historians have shown little, if any, interest in the intellectual content of Upper Canadian Anglicanism. No attempts have been made to analyze the philosophical principles underlying the policy of church establishment; nor has anyone bothered to explore the sense of mission that lay behind the Anglican clergy's uncompromising attitude in the struggle for the separation of church and state. True, there are studies that laboriously unravel the Church of England's strategy in the controversies over the clergy reserves, the common school system, and King's College. But since these studies ignore the cast of mind that led Anglican clergymen to take the stand they did, they suffer from a common weakness: an inability to see the forest for the trees.

This thesis, for its part, has something to say about the institutional evolution and political fortunes of the Church of England in

<sup>3</sup> See in particular these two articles by S. F. Wise: "God's Peculiar Peoples," in W. L. Morton, ed., The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age (Toronto, 1968), 326-61; "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History," United Church Bulletin, no. 18 (1965), 3-18.

Upper Canada. However, its central concern is to place these issues in the context of the church's social and intellectual experience in the Upper Canadian community. Thus, in terms of the Church of England's record as a religious organization, emphasis is placed not only on the church's response to new world conditions at the level of missionary activity, but also on the connection between the church's position in Upper Canadian society and the plans conceived by Strachan in the late 1810s and 1820s to establish an Anglican-controlled educational system and to increase the profitability of the clergy reserves. Similarly, with regard to the church's role in the world of politics, attention is devoted to a wide range of subjects, including the philosophical principles at the heart of the Anglican world view and the policy of church establishment, the ideological response of Anglican clergymen to political reverses, the importance of the church's sense of mission in carrying it through the turbulent decades of the 1820s and 1830s, and the effects on the Anglican mind of the voluntarist victories of the post-union period. Lastly, the Church of England's transformation in the 1840s and 1850s into a self-supporting and self-governing institution is tied to the Anglican clergy's changing view of their church's place in Upper Canadian society, and the high church-evangelical feuding of these years is examined as part and parcel of the church's growing confusion about its role as a religious organization.

There is no need to apologize, even in the age of ecumenism, for the narrow, denominational focus of this study. Although the major religious groups of Upper Canada had a number of things in common, the Church of England's experience had several distinctive characteristics,

so many in fact that a social and intellectual analysis of the Anglican record is bound to reveal much that is fundamental to the history of the colony as a whole. To start with, the Church of England's established status in Upper Canada made it the principal exponent both of the idea of church establishment and of the conservative doctrines which that policy implied. At the same time, while the basic tenets of Anglican conservative thought were shared by other churches, only the Church of England had the power to transform its vision of the good society into concrete government policies, as was witnessed by Strachan's success in the 1820s in obtaining a royal charter for King's College, creating a denominational school system, and persuading the imperial government to accept his plan for the sale of clergy reserve lands. What was equally important, as has already been suggested, the Church of England's ideological perspective went hand in hand with a distinctive sense of mission. From the 1790s Anglican clergymen were inspired by the conviction that the Church of England in Upper Canada was entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining social stability and defending the imperial connection. This messianic outlook remained strong until disestablishment became a reality in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Even then, however, clergymen and laymen alike responded to defeats in the temporal sphere by taking refuge behind a new view of the Church of England's mission. They now put forward the notion-- a notion that had no counterpart amongst other denominations--that the Church of England should withdraw into itself, turn its back on the social and political activities that had previously occupied so much of its time, and act as a beacon of purity in the midst of a corrupt

society.

On the whole, the thesis does not examine the views of the laity in any detail, partly because Anglican laymen played a largely passive role in church affairs until well into the 1830s, but also because of the practical consideration that studying both the clergy and laity for a period of over sixty years would result in a work of unmanageable proportions. Yet Anglican laymen are not ignored entirely. A few comments are offered concerning S. D. Clark's interpretation of the class composition of the Church of England's membership, and the church's possession of a landed endowment is related to one of the major obstacles to the Anglican cause--the reluctance of the laity to support the church financially. In addition, in the chapters dealing with the Anglican experience after the rebellion, attention is devoted to the growing importance of laymen in the institutional and intellectual life of the church. For one thing, it is shown that laymen played a central part in the Church Society and in the movement for synodical government, both of which were expressions of the church's desire to increase its financial and political independence. An attempt is also made to analyze the position of the laity in the high church-low church warfare that plagued the Church of England throughout the 1840s and 1850s.

A word of explanation is in order regarding the place of Strachan in this thesis. As the leading Anglican clergyman in Upper Canada and a key figure in the colony's oligarchical government, Strachan is, by any standards, a giant in the Canadian past. This fact alone makes it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid concentrating on Strachan in a

6

study of the Anglican experience in Upper Canada. What compounds the problem is that Strachan left behind a body of material, published and unpublished, that is without parallel in pre-Confederation Ontario. Still, the Church of England was not a monolith forged under the guiding hand of Strachan, but a large, disparate group of individual clergymen responding in their uniquely personal ways to developments in Upper Canadian society. In the pages that follow, therefore, an effort has been made to rescue many clergymen from the obscurity to which they have been customarily relegated. The first two chapters deal with the Church of England's experience as a religious organization in the pre-1820 period. The next three chapters study Strachan's role in Upper Canada's religious and political life in the pre-rebellion years, but in chapters six, seven, and eight a number of issues--the separation of church and state, the achievement of responsible government, the church's struggle to become self-supporting and self-governing, and the conflict between high churchmen and evangelicals--have been analyzed from the standpoint not of Strachan alone but of the entire clergy. To provide this broad focus, a variety of hitherto neglected sources have been utilized. Included in these sources are sermons and pamphlets, letters and editorials published in the Anglican press, and reports to missionary organizations.

Two final points should be made. First, the boundary dates of this study are not as arbitrary as they might appear on first glance: 1791 marks the formation of the province of Upper Canada and thus seemed a logical place to begin, while 1854 was the fateful year that witnessed, with the secularization of the clergy reserves, the destruction

of the Church of England's vision for Upper Canadian society.

Secondly, it must be pointed out that examining the Anglican experience during these years presents one structural difficulty--the fact that Upper Canada was part of the diocese of Quebec until 1839. Still, to have studied the Church of England in the two Canadas would have been an impossibly ambitious task. It also would have precluded any attempt at cohesive analysis. Upper Canada and Lower Canada were two distinct political cultures, and the Church of England planted in these communities faced radically different problems. Unlike the Upper Canadian church, the Church of England in Lower Canada operated in a society that was overwhelmingly Catholic. As a result, whereas the church in Upper Canada was profoundly influenced by the tractarian movement, its Lower Canadian counterpart, far more conscious of the threat of "popery," was solidly low church in its theological orientation. At the same time, since the Lower Canadian church was on the periphery of the colony's religious life, its clergymen were not driven by the same sense of mission that inspired their brothers beyond the Ottawa. For them, the Church of England in Lower Canada resembled more a tolerated sect than a church legally established under the Constitutional Act. Put simply, their major concern was not charting the course of their society's evolution, but survival.

A number of debts have been incurred during the research and writing of this dissertation. I particularly want to express my gratitude to the Canada Council and Carleton University for supporting me financially during my years as a doctoral student; Jane Graham for carefully and patiently proofing every line of my prose; Rea Wilmshurst



for faultlessly typing a rather unwieldy manuscript; and, for their unfailing helpfulness and courtesy, the staffs at the Archives of Ontario, Trinity College Library, the Baldwin Room of the Metropolitan Toronto Library, and the General Synod Archives, Toronto. Also, I am deeply obliged to Professor S. F. Wise, whose seminal studies of religious and political life in British North America first led me to the conclusion that the Anglican experience in Upper Canada was a suitable topic for a doctoral dissertation. Having worked under Professor Wise for almost a decade, I would like to thank him not only for providing invaluable guidance during the preparation of this thesis, but also for teaching a brash graduate student that there was still much to be learned about the craft of historical writing.

## ESTABLISHMENT AND SURVIVAL

This chapter deals with the most important aspects of the Church of England's record in Upper Canada from the 1790s until the years immediately after the War of 1812. Specifically, it examines, first, the factors that led to the passage of the Constitutional Act of 1791, with its underlying view of the church's role as the bastion of social stability and the imperial tie; second, the contrast between the church's established status in law and its actual position at the local level of religious life; third, the belief of Anglican clergymen, a belief noted both for its optimism and its remarkable naïveté, that the Church of England had a chance to become the "national" church of Upper Canada; and finally, the connection between this utopian frame of mind and the Anglican clergy's tolerant attitude towards other denominations. In addition, since it is impossible to view the Church of England in a vacuum, an attempt has been made to analyze the Anglican experience during these years in the context of religious conditions in Upper Canada as a whole. Through the adoption of such an approach it is hoped that an understanding of the religious development of Upper Canadian society will throw into sharper focus the problems faced by the Church of England.

## I

The Church of England planted in Upper Canada after the passage of the Constitutional Act was the product of a long period of historical evolution in which a multitude of social, political, and religious factors had interacted to form an institution with distinctive perspectives on things both sacred and secular. The most salient aspects of this historical inheritance, along with the influence of the church's past on the course of its experience in Upper Canada, will be studied in detail in succeeding chapters. For one thing, it will be pointed out that from the Henrician reformation onwards the Church of England lacked a clear sense of its own doctrinal character; and that the ambiguities inherent in the Anglican via media, with its rather hazy compromise between the claims of Roman Catholic institutionalism and Protestant individualism, sowed the seeds of an internal conflict between high churchmen and evangelicals, a conflict that was to be particularly bitter in the Upper Canada of the 1840s and 1850s. It will also be pointed out that in the years after 1820 the Upper Canadian clergy's hostility towards the "enthusiasm" of its sectarian rivals revealed the enduring legacy of the "rational piety" of the Hanoverian church, and that the Anglican clergy's elevated view of their own social status, which had slowly developed over the course of the centuries, was one of the principal reasons why the Upper Canadian church clung so tenaciously to the clergy reserves. Finally, it will be noted that the commitment of the Anglican clergy of Upper Canada to the policy of church establishment was intertwined with the belief that

the Church of England was a central element of Britain's national polity and one of the most effective safeguards of "sound" religion and social stability, a belief which after the Elizabethan settlement of the late sixteenth century had gradually become an article of faith with all apologists of the church-state connection.

The last point concerning the Church of England's reputation as a bastion of the social order is especially relevant to a discussion of the factors leading to the Constitutional Act of 1791. On this score, it is necessary at the outset to make some preliminary remarks on the status of the Church of England in the colonies of Quebec and Nova Scotia in the years before the American Revolution. In the first place, it must be emphasized that the history of both these colonies in the pre-revolutionary period provided ample precedent for the policy of church establishment later implemented under the Constitutional Act. In Nova Scotia the Church of England's established status was recognized not only in royal instructions to successive governors, but also in an act passed by the local legislature in 1758.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the old province of Quebec, the establishment of the Church of England was a vital part of the imperial government's strategy of preparing the way, gradually but inexorably, for the assimilation of the French Canadians. Thus, while the Treaty of Paris in 1763 granted the Crown's new Roman Catholic subjects the liberty of religious worship "as far as the laws

<sup>1</sup> Judith Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, 1783-1816 (London, 1972), pp. 114-15.

of Great Britain permit,"<sup>2</sup> instructions issued to the first two governors of the colony, James Murray and Guy Carleton, gave them the power to reserve land throughout the colony for the support of Protestant clergymen and schools<sup>3</sup>--a power which, as Murray was told in 1763, would ensure "that the Church of England may be established both in Principle and Practice, and that the said Inhabitants may by Degrees be induced to embrace the Protestant Religion, and their Children be brought up in the Principles of it."<sup>4</sup> Even the Quebec Act of 1774, supposedly the Magna Carta of French Canadian liberties, was emphatic in its declaration that while the Roman Catholic Church was to be granted its accustomed dues and rights, it would nevertheless be lawful for the Crown to make provision for "the Encouragement of the Protestant Religion, and for the Maintenance and support of a Protestant Clergy within the said Province, as he or they shall, from Time to Time, think necessary and expedient."<sup>5</sup> That the phrase "Protestant Clergy" was meant to apply only to the Church of England became abundantly apparent in the following year, when Carleton was informed that "it is a toleration of the free exercise of the religion of the Church of Rome only, to which they are entitled, but not to the powers and privileges of it, as an established Church, for that is a preference

<sup>2</sup> Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, eds., Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1828, 3 vols. (Ottawa, 1907), I, 86.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-40, and 217. In the 1780s, similar instructions were issued to Governor Haldimand. See ibid., p. 475.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-40.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 403.

which belongs only to the Protestant Church of England."<sup>6</sup>

Of course, enshrining the principle of church establishment in law was one thing, and actually establishing the Church of England in fact as well as in name was another. The importance of this distinction was well illustrated in Quebec and Nova Scotia, for in each of these colonies the Church of England's de facto position bore little resemblance to its de jure status as the established church. To take the case of Nova Scotia, when the revolution broke out in 1776, the Church of England's few, rather insignificant privileges as the established church, namely its right to marry by licence and the power of its congregations to function, in a legal sense, as corporate bodies, hardly compensated for its weakness as a religious force: at that point there were only six Church of England missions in the colony, and Anglicans were greatly outnumbered by the members of other denominations.<sup>7</sup> Worse still was the situation in the old province of Quebec, where a combination of factors, notably a severe shortage of clergymen, the lack of substantial immigration from the British Isles and the attitude of successive governors, confined the Church of England to the periphery of the colony's religious life. When civil rule was inaugurated in 1764 there were only two Anglican clergymen in the colony, John Ogilvie and John Brooke, and they were military chaplains who restricted their

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 425.

<sup>7</sup> Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, pp. 41-42 and 116.

ministrations to the garrisons of Montreal and Quebec City.<sup>8</sup> This situation, which in the eyes of one witness encouraged "the French inhabitants to look upon their conquerors in an odious light, and to become more impatient of the English yoke,"<sup>9</sup> might have been remedied if the governors of the colony had followed their instructions to support the Church of England. But Murray, Carleton, and Haldimand, taking the view, quite rightly, that the imperial government's plans for the assimilation of the French Canadians were both misguided and impractical, ignored all injunctions to strengthen the position of the Anglican establishment. The result was that at the conclusion of the American Revolution, Quebec did not possess a single Anglican church building, services being performed in various military barracks or Recollet chapels borrowed for the purpose.<sup>10</sup> Further, at the same point in time there were only four clergymen in the colony, and three of these, David Chabrand Delisle, David Francis DeMontmollin, and Jean-Baptiste-Noël Veysi re, were French clerics who were unable to speak English intelligibly.<sup>11</sup> To be sure, something might have been salvaged

<sup>8</sup> H. C. Stuart, The Church of England in Canada, 1759-1793, from the Conquest to the Establishment of the See of Quebec (Montreal, 1893), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>10</sup> T. R. Millman, Jacob Mountain, First Lord Bishop of Quebec: A Study in Church and State, 1793-1825 (Toronto, 1947), pp. 36-37.

<sup>11</sup> These three clergymen, all of whom were Europeans, had been sent to Quebec by the British government. Curious though it may seem, imperial authorities were convinced that French-speaking clerics were much needed in Quebec to serve that colony's large population of French Protestants. See Stuart, The Church of England in Canada, pp. 24-35.

if the few clergymen resident in the colony had been men of sincerity and dedication. But in actual fact these were precisely the characteristics which Delisle, DeMontmollin, and Veyssière lacked. Carleton accused DeMontmollin of "levity and folly, both before and after his renouncing the errors of the Church of Rome";<sup>12</sup> an anonymous individual reported that Delisle, stationed in Montreal, performed service only on Sunday mornings, Christmas day, and Good Friday;<sup>13</sup> and Veyssière was described as "almost useless as a clergyman" by Charles Inglis, first Anglican bishop in British North America, and as an essentially "bad character" by Jacob Mountain, first bishop of the diocese of Québec.<sup>14</sup>

The state of the Church of England in Quebec and Nova Scotia was a matter of vital concern to William Knox, Under-Secretary for the Colonies between 1770 and 1782. By the early 1780s Knox had come to the conclusion that British North America, now becoming the home of thousands of loyalist exiles, would have to be provided with a strong Anglican establishment if a second colonial revolution was to be avoided. This point of view was forcefully expressed in a number of reports drawn up by Knox in the course of the 1780s. In the first of these reports, which was described as "a general plan for the introduction and establishment of the Church of England and thro' it combating and repressing the prevailing disposition of the colonies to republicanism, and exciting in them an esteem for Monarchy," Knox argued that British North

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 83.



America would follow the example of its revolutionary neighbours if the imperial government did not immediately lay the foundations of a colonial church establishment by appointing a bishop, deans, and archdeacons, and by arranging for the payment of all clerical salaries out of the quit rents.<sup>15</sup> In later reports presented after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, Knox again emphasized the need for a local ecclesiastical hierarchy and a state-supported clergy in British North America. He also put forward two recommendations that had not been mentioned earlier, namely the creation of an Anglican college in Nova Scotia, and the setting aside of two or three thousand acres in each township in British North America for Anglican glebes and schools.<sup>16</sup>

The British government in the years immediately after the conclusion of the revolution also took the view that the time had come to place the colonial church establishment on a firmer footing. Besides sharing Knox's belief that the future of the empire depended upon the implementation of the policy of church establishment,<sup>17</sup> the imperial authorities of the 1780s were convinced that the presence of large numbers of Anglican loyalists in British North America would provide

<sup>15</sup> Vincent T. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-93, 2 vols., II (London, 1964), 736.

<sup>16</sup> See the following: John M. Norris, "Proposals for Promoting Religion and Literature in Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick," CHR, XXXVI (1953), 335-401; William Knox, Extra Official State Papers (London, 1789); Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, pp. 2-3 and 9-11; Wilson, The Clergy Reserves, pp. 9-10.

<sup>17</sup> Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, II, 735-42 and 755.

the established Church of England with a solid base of popular support.<sup>18</sup> Acting on these twin assumptions, the imperial government saw fit to adopt a number of measures designed to bolster the position of the Anglican establishment: in 1783 the Colonial Office instructed the governor of Nova Scotia to set aside one thousand acres of glebe lands for the support of Anglican clergy and schools;<sup>19</sup> in 1787 Charles Inglis, a loyalist who had served as assistant rector of Trinity Church, New York, was appointed first bishop of British North America, with jurisdiction over Quebec, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick;<sup>20</sup> in 1787 and 1788 the Church of England in Nova Scotia was provided with imperial government grants totalling £3,000 to assist in the construction of churches in new settlements;<sup>21</sup> and, last but not least, in 1790 a grant of £1,000 was made to one of Inglis's pet projects, the Windsor Academy, an institution whose central purpose was to create a body of locally educated Anglican clergymen.<sup>22</sup>

This new awareness of the need to strengthen the colonial church establishment was also at the heart of the Constitutional Act of 1791, a measure which, more than any other, bore witness to the widely shared

<sup>18</sup> Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, pp. 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 74. For information on the life of Bishop Inglis, see also Reginald V. Harris, Charles Inglis: Missionary, Loyalist, Bishop (1734-1816) (Toronto, 1937).

<sup>21</sup> Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, p. 74.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 149-51.

perception of the Church of England as the most effective safeguard against the forces of revolution. The origins of this bill dated to the mid-1780s, when the loyalists settled west of the Ottawa River began petitioning for a separate representative government and freehold land tenure, two essential British rights which they had enjoyed in the American colonies but which were now denied them in the old province of Quebec. In responding to these appeals, Prime Minister Pitt and Colonial Secretary William Grenville, the main authors of the Constitutional Act, adhered to a set of basic principles. Both these individuals had no doubt whatsoever that the imperial government had an obligation to redress the legitimate grievances of the loyalist exiles, a group that had suffered so much for the sake of their allegiance to the crown; nor did they have any doubt that a sympathetic response to the demands of the loyalists would be in the best interests of the empire, for in their view at least, a loyalist community that felt well treated under British rule would remain a stalwart defender of the imperial connection. At the same time, however, Pitt and Grenville made it plain that in working out their ideas on the changes needed in the province of Quebec, they were primarily motivated not by a desire to placate the loyalists, but by a determination to avoid the mistakes that had led to the outbreak of the American Revolution. According to their analysis of the period before 1776, the movement for independence had gained steadily in momentum because of the overwhelming strength of the "democratic element" in each of the thirteen colonies. It therefore followed, they felt, that if the province of Quebec was to be granted representative government, care would have to be taken that the new

colonial constitution made provision for the three checks on the popular will that had been noticeably absent in the American colonies --that is, a landed aristocracy, an executive branch that was financially and politically independent of the House of Assembly, and an established Church of England. To ignore the need for these institutional safeguards would not only sow the seeds of social and political instability. It would also lead directly to another colonial revolution, a result that would be calamitous both for the empire as a whole, and for those loyalists who had emigrated north in the hope of finding a place on the North American continent where they could live, happily and securely, as subjects of the motherland.<sup>23</sup>

Seen in this light, the provisions of the Constitutional Act relating to the establishment of the Church of England were merely one aspect of a wider experiment in counter-revolution. An order-in-council that followed the passage of the Constitutional Act divided the old province of Quebec into the colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, thus meeting the demand of the loyalists for a government of their own. Under the act itself, the executive branch was rendered independent both by the extensive sources of revenue placed at its disposal and by its lack of constitutional responsibility to the assembly, the members of the legislative and executive councils being appointed by the governor. In order to encourage the growth of a landed aristocracy, crown reserve lands were set aside, and it was stipulated that

<sup>23</sup> For Pitt's and Grenville's ideas on these issues, see Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, II, 735-42, and 755-73.

appointments to the legislative council were to be made for life. Finally, as a means of providing the established church with the financial resources it needed if it was to fulfill its responsibilities as a bulwark of the social order, one-seventh of the public lands of the two Canadas was reserved for the maintenance of a "Protestant Clergy."<sup>24</sup> On the last point, it must be stressed that while the ambiguity of the phrase "Protestant Clergy" would return to haunt Upper Canadian politics in the years ahead, there can be no question that the only denomination established under the Constitutional Act was the Church of England. To substantiate this claim, it is only necessary to examine the clause of the act dealing with the creation of rectories. This clause authorized the Governor to endow rectories and "to present to every such Parsonage or rectory an Incumbent or Minister of the Church of England, who shall have been duly ordained according to the Rites of the said Church."<sup>25</sup>

The conservative ideological perspective underlying the Constitutional Act was well personified by the man chosen to head the civil administration of the new colony of Upper Canada. John Graves Simcoe, throughout his five years as lieutenant-governor, was ablaze with an astonishing variety of schemes for the development of a colony whose cause he adopted as his own. As one who had fought in the American

<sup>24</sup> The terms of the Constitutional Act may be found in Shortt and Doughty, Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, I, 694-708 (clauses 35-42 related to the Church of England and are listed between pp. 702-6).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 704.

Revolution, Simcoe retained to the end an unwavering conviction that that event--"the most scandalous and swindling Transaction that has disgraced the Annals of Mankind"<sup>26</sup>--had been instigated by a devious, conspiring minority. It was his view that if Upper Canada could be fashioned into an economically prosperous community, stable, contented, devout, a colony with an institutional and social structure patterned, in the minutest particular, after that of England, the majority of Americans would soon begin to appreciate the blessings showered down upon any people fortunate enough to live under British rule. The reconstruction of the empire would then be only a matter of time.<sup>27</sup>

This plan to make Upper Canada an "image and transcript" of the British constitution accorded a central place to the established Church of England. Simcoe incessantly campaigned for the erection of the two Canadas into a separate diocese, the appointment of archdeacons, and the founding of a church-controlled university. He was equally vigorous in repressing any incipient dissatisfaction with the Church of England's privileged status in the colony. Before Simcoe had even seen Upper Canada, he was convinced that "every establishment of Church and State that upholds the distinction of ranks and lessens the undue

<sup>26</sup> E. A. Cruikshank, ed., The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe, 5 vols., IV (Toronto, 1926), 116, Simcoe to Portland, 30 Oct. 1795.

<sup>27</sup> On the career and thought of Simcoe, see G. M. Craig, Upper Canada, 1784-1841: The Formative Years (Toronto, 1963), pp. 20-41; and S. R. Mealing, "The Enthusiasms of John Graves Simcoe," CHAR, 1958, 50-62.

weight of the democratic influence, ought to be introduced."<sup>28</sup> One year's residence in Upper Canada did not induce him to change his mind. He was adamant in insisting in 1792 that "all just Government has for its existence is founded [sic] on the Morality of the People, and that such Morality has no true basis but when placed upon religious Principles," adding that it was for these reasons that "I have always been extremely anxious, both from political as well as more worthy motives that the Church of England should be essentially established in Upper Canada."<sup>29</sup> Inspired by such a fervent commitment to the idea of church establishment, Simcoe did not hesitate to take a leading part in the passage of the restrictive Marriage Act in 1793. Under this measure, the solemnization of marriages was confined to Anglican clergymen; and civil marriages were only permitted when neither partner lived within eighteen miles of an Anglican clergyman.<sup>30</sup> When Baptists and Presbyterians in the eastern section of the colony complained that the Marriage Act made them "aliens in their own country," Simcoe responded with the rebuke that their petition was "the Product of a wicked Head and a most disloyal Heart."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Wilson, The Clergy Reserves, p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Cruikshank, The Correspondence of John Graves Simcoe, I (Toronto, 1923), 251, Simcoe to Dundas, 6 Nov. 1792.

<sup>30</sup> J. S. Moir, Church and State in Canada, 1627-1867: Basic Documents (Toronto, 1967), pp. 142-43.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 144-45.

It was not long before one of Simcoe's proposals for strengthening the colonial church--the formation of the two Canadas into a separate diocese--was accepted by the British government. In the summer of 1793 the imperial authorities, revealing once again their heightened awareness of the importance of the church establishment in British North America, erected the colonies of Upper and Lower Canada into the separate diocese of Quebec. A few months later, in early November, Jacob Mountain, the first occupant of the new see, arrived in Quebec City to begin an episcopate which was to last until his death in 1826. From one point of view, it might be argued that Mountain, a scholarly, ambitious, and rather austere divine of the Hanoverian church, was ill suited for a diocese which sprawled over a vast territory of nearly 2,000 miles, from the Gaspé coast in the east to the western tip of Lake Erie in the sparsely settled frontier colony of Upper Canada. Yet, in another sense, it is also true that if the imperial government was searching for a churchman who, as bishop of Quebec, would act as an uncompromising champion of the interests of the colonial church, a stronger candidate than Jacob Mountain could not have been selected. Throughout his episcopate Mountain never wavered in the belief that the established Church of England in the diocese of Quebec, and indeed in all of British North America, was entrusted with the task not only of disseminating the principles of sound religion, but also of checking the spread of sectarian "enthusiasm," maintaining social and political stability, and defending the imperial connection. Inspired with this view, Mountain lobbied tirelessly on behalf of the Anglican establishment, pleading again and again for additional clergymen and waging an



unrelenting campaign for an increase in the imperial government's financial assistance to the colonial church. He also felt little hesitation in repeatedly criticizing the civil administration of Lower Canada for encouraging the claims of the Church of Rome and, equally serious, failing to make adequate provision for the established Church of England, an institution whose prosperity, as he told the Colonial Secretary in 1804, was absolutely vital "not only for the Interests of His Majesty's Government, & of his Protestant subjects in this Province, but for the progressive improvement & happiness of his Canadian subjects also."<sup>32</sup>

Although Mountain spent most of his time in the lower province, he did visit Upper Canada on his episcopal tours of 1794, 1799, 1803, 1809, 1810, 1813, 1816, and 1820.<sup>33</sup> After the first of these tours, in 1794, Mountain had few illusions about the position of the Church of England in Upper Canadian society. Writing on 15 September to Henry Dundas, the Secretary for War, Mountain emphasized that in terms of "Religious Instruction, the state of these settlers is, for the most part, truly deplorable." He wrote that

from Montreal to Kingston, a distance of 200 miles, there is not one clergyman of the Church of England, nor any house of Religious Worship, except one small Chapel belong'g to the Presbyterians. The Public Worship of God is entirely suspended or performed in a manner which can neither tend to improve the people in Religious Truth, nor to render them

<sup>32</sup> Millman, Jacob Mountain, p. 15. The above interpretation of Mountain is based on this work.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

useful members of Society. . . . The great bulk of the people have and can have no instruction but such as they receive occasionally from itinerant & mendicant Methodists, a set of ignorant Enthusiasts whose preaching is calculated only to perplex the understanding & corrupt the morals, to relax the nerves of industry, and dissolve the bonds of Society.

Things were much better in Kingston itself, where Mountain was pleased to report that "there is a small but decent church: a respectable congregation (much too numerous to be properly seated in it:) and a Minister greatly and justly esteemed by the people." But in the area between Kingston and Niagara, religious destitution of appalling proportions was once again the order of the day. In this section of the province, Mountain wrote, there were only two clergymen, and the buildings set aside for religious worship were totally inadequate. One of these clergymen ministered to settlements along the Bay of Quinté, conducting services in "3 or 4 small log huts which are used as churches, but which are altogether insufficient for the decent accommodation of their respective congregations." The other clergyman was responsible for a "numerous & respectable" congregation in Niagara, where "service is performed sometimes in the chamber of the L[egislative] C[ouncil] and sometimes at Free Mason's Hall, a house of Public Entertainment."<sup>34</sup>

Mountain's comments on the shortage of clergymen and churches in Upper Canada provide a good starting-point for any discussion of the state of the Church of England in the pre-1820 period. During these years the Upper Canadian church had to come to terms with the weakness

<sup>34</sup> Richard A. Preston, ed., Kingston before the War of 1812 (Toronto, 1959), Mountain to Dundas, 15 Sept. 1792, p. 292.

of its own position in Upper Canadian society, the uselessness of the clergy reserves as a source of ecclesiastical revenue, and the niggardliness of the Anglican laity in contributing to the financial support of parish clergymen. Needless to say, these various problems made a mockery of the Church of England's established status under the Constitutional Act. Yet it also has to be stressed that while the Church of England had more than its share of difficulties, the handful of clergymen appointed before 1820 took an extremely hopeful view of the religious future of Upper Canada. From the 1790s until the immediate post-war period, Anglican clergymen operated on the assumption that if the Church of England built up a larger supply of clerical labourers and at the same time displayed a tolerant attitude towards other denominations, the vast majority of Upper Canadians, not yet being firmly established in their religious loyalties, would eagerly embrace a church noted for its doctrinal purity and apostolic character.

## II

In examining the state of the Church of England in the pre-1820 period, it is first necessary to dispel a myth about the religious complexion of the Upper Canadian loyalists. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century there seemed to be a general assumption amongst Anglican clergymen that most of the loyalist settlers in Upper Canada were members of the Church of England. For example, in 1827 John Strachan, then Archdeacon of York, wrote that "the Province of Upper Canada was settled by loyalists from the United States, formerly

British Colonies, soon after the termination of the American Revolution, the greater part of whom were Episcopalians, and sincerely attached to the Church of England."<sup>35</sup> Although such claims reinforced the Church of England's image as a bulwark of social stability and the imperial tie, they bore no relationship to historical reality. Historians are now in general agreement that the loyalists represented a cross-section of American society, and in the case of Upper Canada several studies have substantiated the view that the loyalists came from a variety of religious, ethnic, and class backgrounds.<sup>36</sup> During the revolutionary war and in the years immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, approximately 6,000 loyalists settled west of the Ottawa River in the old province of Quebec. The vast majority of these settlers, contrary to the assertions of nineteenth-century purveyors of loyalist mythology, were not educated "gentlemen" but humble farmers from the frontier regions of the colonies of New York and Pennsylvania.<sup>37</sup> What is more, this same group of loyalist exiles were not primarily Anglican in their religious background, but rather belonged to a number of different denominations. Apart from the Church of England, no fewer than seven denominations--Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Mennonites, Quakers, Baptists, and Methodists

<sup>35</sup> John Strachan, Observations on the Provision Made for the Maintenance of a Protestant Clergy (London, 1827), p. 37.

<sup>36</sup> The best study of the loyalists in the thirteen colonies is W. H. Nelson's The American Tory (New York, 1961). For a good introduction to the loyalists in British North America, see L. F. S. Upton, ed., The United Empire Loyalists: Men and Myths (Toronto, 1967).

<sup>37</sup> Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, pp. 7-8.

--put down roots in Upper Canada during the period of loyalist settlement.<sup>38</sup>

Religious pluralism was further reinforced in the period between the early 1790s and the War of 1812, when roughly 90,000 "late loyalists" from the United States were lured into Upper Canada by the promise of free land grants. The denominations that benefited most from this second wave of immigration were the Baptists and Methodists. In the case of the first denomination, by 1812 over fifteen Baptist congregations had been formed in the Niagara region and along the north shore of Lake Ontario,<sup>39</sup> and these congregations were served by nine resident Baptist ministers and a number of travelling missionaries from the United States.<sup>40</sup> Even more remarkable was the strength of the Methodists. The turning point for this denomination came in 1790 with the appointment of William Losee of the New York Conference to a circuit that embraced Kingston, Ernesttown, Fredericksburgh, Adolphustown,

<sup>38</sup> See J. S. Moir, Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto, n.d.), pp. 48 and 52-53; Stuart Ivison and Fred Rosser, The Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada before 1820 (Toronto, 1936), pp. 105-7; C. R. Cronmiller, A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada (1961), pp. 73-76, 82-83, and 87-88; C. J. Burkholder, A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario (1935), pp. 29-30 and 43-52; A. G. Dorland, A History of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada (Toronto, 1927), pp. 50-52; George F. Playter, History of Methodism in Canada (Toronto, 1862), pp. 10 and 15; and H. A. Scott, "The Roman Catholic Church East of the Great Lakes, 1760-1917," in Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, eds., Canada and Its Provinces, XI (Toronto, 1913), 24-27.

<sup>39</sup> Ivison and Rosser, The Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada, pp. 82-120.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 121-54 and 34-55.

Marysburg, and Sophiasburg.<sup>41</sup> The success of Losee and other preachers in sparking a religious revival led in 1794 to the formation of Upper Canada into a separate district under the New York Conference, the appointment of Darius Dunham as Presiding Elder, and the creation of the Niagara circuit.<sup>42</sup> Progress would now be rapid and continuous, as Methodism swept like wildfire across the length and breadth of Upper Canada. By 1797 there were 795 members and five preachers; in 1800, 936 members and seven preachers; in 1805, 1787 members and ten preachers; and in 1810, the year which also witnessed the foundation of the Genesee Conference to tend the spiritual welfare of western New York state and Upper Canada, 2603 members and thirteen preachers.<sup>43</sup>

While the War of 1812 temporarily halted the growth of some denominations, it did little to reverse the growing pluralism of Upper Canadian society. To take one example, the Roman Catholic Church, which made significant strides after the arrival in 1804 of a large flock of highlanders under the leadership of the Reverend Alexander Macdonell,<sup>44</sup> had become firmly entrenched by the late 1810s: in 1817 there were seven priests in Upper Canada, serving a flock which, in

<sup>41</sup> Playter, History of Methodism, pp. 20-25.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 54, 67, 84, and 98.

<sup>44</sup> For the life of Macdonell, see J. E. Rea, Bishop Alexander Macdonell and the Politics of Upper Canada (Toronto, 1974).

Macdonell's estimate, numbered approximately 17,000.<sup>45</sup> As for the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, three denominations that had suffered serious reverses during the war, the return of peace in 1815 inaugurated an era of steady progress. In the period 1815-1820 the Baptists and Presbyterians grew significantly in popular support as a result of immigration from the British Isles, and equally important, by 1820 these two denominations had also succeeded in increasing their clerical manpower to the level that had been achieved before the war.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, the Methodists, whose membership had dwindled to 1,635 in 1815,<sup>47</sup> regained lost ground with the burst of revivalism that followed the 1817 meeting of the Genesee Conference in Elizabethtown. In 1820 Upper Canadian Methodism numbered over 5,000 members and twenty-four preachers, and the colony was divided into nineteen circuits, from the Ottawa River circuit in the east to the Thames River circuit in the west.<sup>48</sup>

The diversity that characterized Upper Canada's religious landscape in the pre-1820 period becomes even more apparent when the position of the Church of England is studied. Throughout the 1790s

<sup>45</sup> Scott, "The Roman Catholic Church East of the Great Lakes," p. 50.

<sup>46</sup> See Moir, Enduring Witness, pp. 48-53 and 66-68; and Ivison and Rosser, The Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada, pp. 82-120.

<sup>47</sup> Playter, History of Methodism, p. 143.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 193. Included in the total of twenty-four preachers were a few British Wesleyan missionaries stationed in eastern Upper Canada.

there were only three Anglican clergymen in Upper Canada, John Stuart in Kingston, Robert Addison in Niagara, and John Langhorn in Ernestown, Fredericksburgh, and Adolphustown, and in later years this number increased only gradually, reaching the total of six in 1812 and nine in 1819.<sup>49</sup> More serious still was the church's lack of substantial popular support in all parts of the province, including those areas that were served by Anglican clergymen. For instance, in 1787 John Stuart claimed that Upper Canada's inhabitants were "principally Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Dutch Calvinists, & New England Sec-taries,"<sup>50</sup> and in his own parish of Kingston he was not long in coming to the conclusion that Anglicans were greatly outnumbered by the members of other denominations.<sup>51</sup> In Niagara, Robert Addison reported as early as 1796 that the majority of settlers in the Niagara district were Presbyterians,<sup>52</sup> and eight years later he warned that many of the

<sup>49</sup> The clergymen stationed in Upper Canada in 1819 were Robert Addison, John Langhorn, George O'Kill Stuart, John Strachan, Richard Pollard, John Gunther Weagant, Ralph Leeming, Salter Mountain, and William Sampson.

<sup>50</sup> PAC, MG 17, B1, SPG Journals, vol. 27, 16 Nov. 1787.

<sup>51</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Inglis, 6 July 1788, pp. 133-38. Although Preston claims that during Stuart's ministry Kingston was an island of Anglicanism in a sea of dissent, he fails to advance convincing evidence to support this assertion. True, Stuart was quite successful in repulsing the incursions of the Methodists into his mission, and Anglicans were more numerous in Kingston than in other parts of the province. But at the same time it is indisputable that other denominations, particularly the Presbyterians, were extremely powerful in Kingston. In this regard it is interesting to note Stuart's statement, noted on p. 41 of this thesis, that only one-eighth of his flock were Anglicans.

<sup>52</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 27, 18 March 1796.



settlers flocking over the border into his mission were dissenters.<sup>53</sup> Westwards, in Langhorn's parishes of Ernesttown, Fredericksburgh, and Adolphustown, a similar situation prevailed. In 1788 Langhorn informed the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel<sup>54</sup> that only 300 of the 1500 people in his mission were Anglicans, the rest being Moravians, Quakers, Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and "New Lights."<sup>55</sup> Things became even worse a few years later when William Losee of the New York Methodist Conference began his work in the Bay of Quinté region. By 1802 Langhorn was describing Ernesttown, which then possessed the services not only of a Methodist preacher but also of one Presbyterian and one Lutheran minister, as "a sore refractory town against the Church of England,"<sup>56</sup> and in the following year he estimated that this settlement contained 160 Anglicans, 398 Methodists, 250 Lutherans, 498 Presbyterians, 11 Quakers, 63 Universalists, 16 "Papists," 33 Deists, 10 Baptists, and 688 people who professed no religion.<sup>57</sup> With good reason did Langhorn complain in 1806: "what a tedious piece of ground Providence has cast me upon and what great opposition there is made to me. . . . The people here encourage them

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., vol. 29, 18 Nov. 1804.

<sup>54</sup> Hereafter referred to as the SPG.

<sup>55</sup> PAC, MG 17, B1, SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/38, no. 439, 14 Aug. 1788.

<sup>56</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 28, 19 Nov. 1802.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 8 Nov. 1803.

[American Presbyterian ministers], and such like trash to come hither, and run after them with great eagerness."<sup>58</sup> While Fredericksburgh on the eve of Langhorn's departure from the colony was "much better affected," Ernesttown by this time could boast only thirty-seven Anglicans in a population he now estimated at 509.<sup>59</sup>

The men who entered the ranks of the Anglican clergy in the first decade of the nineteenth century echoed Addison and Langhorn's comments on the Church of England's weakness at the local level of religious life. In 1803 George O'Kill Stuart informed the SPG that Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, and Methodists abounded in the parish of York.<sup>60</sup> John Strachan was confronted with the same sort of problem in Cornwall. "My flock is not numerous," he wrote to Dr. Brown, an old friend in Scotland, soon after his ordination in 1803. "A great part of my Parish belongs to the Lutheran persuasion, a greater has no religion at all. A number of the people are Catholics, and plenty of Presbyterians, with a few Methodists &. You see I am in a pickle."<sup>61</sup> His concern was shared by Richard Pollard, the Anglican clergyman in Sandwich. Although there were few dissenters in Sandwich itself, the state of the church in the surrounding district was far from flourishing. Nathan Bangs established a Methodist mission on the Thames River in 1803 and six

<sup>58</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/38, no. 439, 10 Oct. 1806.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 18 April 1811.

<sup>60</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 28, 18 Feb. 1803.

<sup>61</sup> OA, Strachan Papers, Strachan to Brown, 27 Oct. 1803.

years later ignited a religious revival which swept through the settlements on the shorelines of Lake St. Clair and the western end of Lake Erie.<sup>62</sup> Pollard, only too aware of the spiritual dangers facing the large number of Anglicans in this area, warned that the absence of Church of England clergymen was allowing the Methodists to gain converts.<sup>63</sup> In 1810 he made a journey to York to see Lieutenant-Governor Gore. He noted that

my route to the Capitol being among people connected with my Mission I endeavoured to make my voyage, a ministerial visit to the inhabitants as I had reason to think the Methodists had made great progress (by the means of the most illiterate teachers), I distribute Sermons, explaining the Orthodox faith of our Church . . . calling the families together of an evening and endeavouring to establish our holy faith . . . strip of the fascinating garb, of Superstition & Enthusiasm.<sup>64</sup>

After the War of 1812 Anglican clergymen continued to complain about the enfeebled condition of the Church of England in relation to other denominations. John Wilson, Headmaster of the Midland District Grammar School and Chaplain to the naval forces in Kingston, took time off from his official duties between 1818 and 1819 to serve the vacant mission of Ernesttown on alternate Sunday afternoons. His labours went unappreciated. He reported in 1817 that Presbyterians vastly outnumbered the few Episcopalians in Ernesttown, and that at a recent meeting

<sup>62</sup> Playter, History of Methodism, pp. 80-83 and 160.

<sup>63</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 30, 19 Jan. 1810.

<sup>64</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/38, no. 441, 20 March 1810.

dissenters outvoted churchmen and prohibited the purchase of Anglican prayer books.<sup>65</sup> Similar stories were told by other clergymen: in 1818 John Gunther Weagant of Williamsburg and Osnabruck attributed his diminished number of baptisms and communicants to the activities of Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist "Itinerants" in the vicinity of his mission;<sup>66</sup> William Sampson claimed that Grimsby and its neighbourhood was "almost wholly composed of Dissenters who have left the Church from want of a regular Minister";<sup>67</sup> and Ralph Leeming, stationed in Ancaster, estimated that there were 600 Methodists, 200 Presbyterians, and only 200 Anglicans in his parish.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to the church's weak position in a religiously pluralistic society, Anglican clergymen also had to worry over the negligible amount of revenue yielded by the clergy reserve lands, that landed endowment which, in theory at least, formed the basis of the policy of church establishment. While surveys setting aside the clergy reserve lands were carried out between 1794 and 1798, by 1819 the total number of reserve lands leased was only 650, and a mere 100 of these lessees were bothering to make their rental payments.<sup>69</sup> In part, this failure to turn the reserves into a lucrative source of income was attributable to the problems encountered in collecting land rents in a

<sup>65</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 31, 18 July 1817.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 16 Jan. 1818.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 20 June 1817.

<sup>69</sup> Wilson, The Clergy Reserves, pp. 18-25 and 37.

society where a small population was scattered over an immense stretch of territory. But more fundamentally, it was primarily due to the fact that few settlers were willing to lease clergy reserve lands as long as other lands in the province were granted free of charge to anyone who applied. This basic flaw at the heart of the government's plans for the development of the reserves meant that until the policy of free land grants was brought to an end in the mid-1820s, the Church of England's landed endowment was destined to remain of little monetary value. It also meant, as a necessary consequence, that in the pre-1820 period the Church of England was unable to rely on the clergy reserves for the revenue it needed to build up a larger supply of clerical manpower, the very thing it could not do without if it was to improve its fortunes in Upper Canadian society. Throughout these years the unproductiveness of the clergy reserves made the Church of England totally dependent for its financial support on the SPG and the local government.<sup>70</sup>

Compounding the problems posed by the uselessness of the clergy reserves was the reluctance of the Anglican laity to contribute to their church's support. Soon after John Langhorne arrived in the colony in 1787, he was forced to perform service in his own lodgings when one of his congregations refused to contribute the necessary £10 for church expenses.<sup>71</sup> Several years later, in 1806, he was still complaining that his people, despite their greatly improved material circumstances,

<sup>70</sup> For the role of the state and the SPG in the payment of the Upper Canadian clergy, see chapter seven, pp. 277-79.

<sup>71</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/38, no. 439, 14 Aug. 1788.

were unmoved in their selfishness,<sup>72</sup> and just before his return to England in 1813 he again reflected caustically that "these people here seemingly have a notion they do me a huge favour, if I am permitted to do anything for them."<sup>73</sup> The fate of Robert Addison in Niagara was no better. When Addison assumed the charge of his mission in 1792, he was assured by some of his more prominent parishioners that they would contribute £100 annually to his support.<sup>74</sup> These promises proved barren. Not having received a shilling by 1795, Addison contemplated removing to Oswegatchie or Nova Scotia.<sup>75</sup> In 1799 he informed the SPG that for the past eight years his people had only contributed the paltry sum of £200, and in the last two or three years even these meagre donations had been withheld.<sup>76</sup> He certainly had cause to repine in 1801 that "he expected better things when he came out, & he thinks it hard to spend nine of the best years of his life in Canada, in the humble, but honest discharge of his duty, & most of that time without any competent support."<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 15 May 1806.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 6 Oct. 1812.

<sup>74</sup> H. P. Thompson, Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1710-1950 (London, 1951), p. 142.

<sup>75</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 27, 18 March 1796. See also Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Mountain, 1 Nov. 1795, pp. 308-9.

<sup>76</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 28, 22 Nov. 1799.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 16 Feb. 1801.

Another clergyman who complained about the stinginess of his flock was John Stuart. When Stuart, a New York loyalist, settled in Kingston, or Cataraqui as it was then known, in 1785, he immediately informed the SPG that his kind-hearted but impoverished flock would be unable to contribute to his support for seven years.<sup>78</sup> By the late 1780s, he was less charitably disposed. Having received only £13 of the £22 subscribed upon his arrival, Stuart now confessed that he never expected to see the remainder. In a letter to Bishop Inglis in 1788, Stuart wrote bitterly that "my parish consists chiefly of the New York, Loyal Refugees, a description of Men, not remarkable for either Religion, Industry or Honesty,--they are careless in their attendance on public worship, dissolute in their morals, and in general, not industrious in providing even for their own families";<sup>79</sup> and in another letter to Inglis in 1790 he emphasized that the unwillingness of his flock to assist him financially was the result not of their "want of ability" but of their selfishness.<sup>80</sup> In 1791 an impatient SPG dismissed the pleas of poverty embodied in a memorial from Stuart's churchwardens, and ordered them to fulfill their financial obligations. Unfortunately, this interference, as Stuart pointed out, only made the Kingston laity

<sup>78</sup> SPG Report, 1785, pp. 47-51.

<sup>79</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Inglis, 6 July 1788, pp. 133-38.

<sup>80</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 27, 21 May 1790.

more stubborn than ever.<sup>81</sup> For the rest of his ministry, which only came to an end upon his death in 1811, Stuart laboured without the financial assistance of his people. He informed Bishop Mountain in 1795 that "I may be permitted to end my Days here in Quietness,-- provided always, that I ask or expect nothing from my Parishioners."<sup>82</sup>

There were a number of reasons for the niggardliness of the Anglican laity, which crippled the church not only in the pre-1820 period but throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. To start with, unlike the members of other denominations, Anglican laymen until the 1830s and 1840s had little incentive to develop habits of financial generosity in their dealings with the church, since in their case the services of religion were provided gratis by the state and the SPG. Secondly, it is quite probable that many Anglican immigrants from the British Isles took it for granted that the church in the colonies, like the church at home, was supported by the government. Finally, the policy of church establishment inevitably gave rise to the belief that the Church of England had abundant financial resources, and, as a result, had no need to depend upon the voluntary contributions of its own members. The importance of the last factor, as will be shown at a later stage, became especially evident in the 1830s and 1840s, when the growing profitability of the clergy reserves convinced many laymen that the revenue accruing from this source was more than

<sup>81</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Inglis, 11 March 1792, pp. 283-84.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., Stuart to Mountain, 1 Nov. 1795, pp. 308-9.



sufficient to meet the church's expenses.<sup>83</sup> But even in earlier years, there is some reason to believe that the church-state connection impeded the efforts of Anglican clergymen to awaken their parishioners to a sense of their financial obligations to the cause of religion. Proof of this fact was provided in 1788, when John Stuart told Bishop Inglis that "as they [the laity] formerly had Pork & Pease . . . a general opinion prevails in this country, that as the Clergy receive Salaries from Government, they ought not to have anything from the people."<sup>84</sup>

In the final analysis, though, the most surprising thing about the Anglican experience in these years was not the Church of England's precarious position in relation to other denominations, the uselessness of the clergy reserves as a source of church revenue, or the laggardness of the laity in contributing to the support of parish clergymen. Rather it was the Anglican clergy's wildly optimistic view of their church's prospects in Upper Canadian society. In this connection it should be noted at the outset that in the eyes of the Anglican clergy, one of the more encouraging signs for the Church of England's future in Upper Canada was the absence of inter-denominational barriers at the parish level. Again and again Anglican clergymen proudly informed the SPG that the members of other denominations were quite friendly towards the Church of England and that in many areas of the province, especially

<sup>83</sup> See chapter seven, pp. 281-82.

<sup>84</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Inglis, Sept. 1789, pp. 149-51.

those communities not served by rival churches, non-Anglicans regularly attended Church of England services. A few examples will suffice: John Stuart reported in 1787 that "several of the principal Inhabitants of C taraqui, though educated Dissenters, constantly attend Divine Service, and in every respect concur in promoting the interest of the Church, though not actual members,"<sup>85</sup> and two years later he estimated that only one-eighth of his flock were members of the Church of England;<sup>86</sup> Richard Pollard wrote in 1805 regarding his parish of Sandwich and Amherstburg that "as there is no establishment of dissenters (except the Roman Church,--) I am willing to place those that come to our church, under the head of Members";<sup>87</sup> Ralph Leeming prided himself on the fact that most people in Ancaster, a stronghold of Methodism, were "well-disposed towards the Church of England";<sup>88</sup> and William Sampson claimed in 1819 that Grimsby dissenters were his "most steady supporters."<sup>89</sup>

These conditions at the parish level convinced Anglican clergymen that the Church of England had a splendid opportunity to realize its most ambitious goals as a religious organization. In spite of the

<sup>85</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 27, 16 Nov. 1787.

<sup>86</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Inglis, Sept. 1789, pp. 149-51.

<sup>87</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/38, no. 441, 26 Sept. 1805.

<sup>88</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 31, 20 June 1817.

<sup>89</sup> SPG Report, 1819, pp. 71-72.

Church of England's precarious position, Anglican clergymen were certain that if their church had a larger supply of clerical labourers, it would be able to capitalize on the friendliness of rival denominations and transform Upper Canada into a predominantly Anglican society. The individuals who best expressed this incredibly optimistic view of the Church of England's future were Richard Pollard and John Strachan. Pollard asserted in 1818 that "the people in every part of the District are willing to assist the Establishment . . . the result of regular ministers and regular worship would be the bringing in the Greatest part of the people within the pale of the Church. . . ." <sup>90</sup> Strachan was equally sanguine in his 1808 report to the SPG, in which he claimed that Methodism, despite its appearance of strength as a result of recent camp meetings, was on the decline and would gradually disappear if there were more Anglican clergymen in the colony. <sup>91</sup> He expressed similar sentiments in an 1815 report on the state of religion in Upper Canada, <sup>92</sup> and in an 1818 letter to Charles Stewart, who later succeeded Mountain as bishop of Quebec. <sup>93</sup>

One of the most interesting statements on the prospects of the Anglican cause was in an article written by Strachan in the Christian Recorder, an Anglican journal which he edited in York for the three

<sup>90</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 31, 18 July 1818.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., vol. 29, 28 May 1808.

<sup>92</sup> Strachan Papers, 1 March 1815.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Stewart, 16 Feb. 1818.

years of its brief existence. In this article, written in March 1819, Strachan made it clear that the Anglican clergy's perception of the religious future of Upper Canada was closely related to their own belief in the Church of England's intrinsic superiority over all other religious groups. Claiming that the Church of England commanded considerable moral influence by reason of its doctrinal purity, its inspiring liturgy, and its status as the established church of the colony, Strachan announced that its position would be further strengthened by the sale of clergy reserve lands and by the measures being adopted for the local education of ministerial candidates.<sup>94</sup> He also confidently predicted on the basis of these facts that the transformation of Upper Canada into a religiously homogeneous society was close at hand; for in his view, as soon as the Church of England had the necessary financial resources and manpower to make its services available throughout the entire colony, the members of other denominations would eagerly embrace a church that was widely known as one of the purest branches of the catholic and apostolic Church of Christ. He declared:

the prospect of obtaining a respectable Clergyman, would certainly unite neighbourhoods together, and though differing in their religious views, or remembering that their Parents were attached to different principles, they may be at first unwilling to give them up, yet settle a Minister among them to answer their doubts and remove their scruples, to accustom them to the form of worship, and to explain the doctrines of the Gospel, and they will soon collect around him and consider themselves his flock.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>94</sup> "History and Present State of Religion in Upper Canada," Christian Recorder, March 1819, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

While such a utopian frame of mind was hopelessly out of touch with the reality of Upper Canadian life, it did have extremely positive results in the realm of inter-denominational relations. Throughout these years Anglican clergymen operated on the principle that since the transformation of Upper Canada into a religiously homogeneous society was within the realm of possibility, the Church of England should adopt the following strategy: it should avoid the temptation to embroil itself in sectarian strife, for the atmosphere of distrust and rancour produced by such feuding would make Anglicanism less and less attractive to those outside the fold; and, at a more positive level, it should cooperate fully and enthusiastically with its religious rivals in meeting the spiritual needs of Upper Canadian society, a course of action which would enhance its popular appeal and thus prepare the way for its eventual triumph. This commitment to the principle of religious toleration was evident in Bishop Mountain's episcopal charge of 1803. On this occasion, it is true, Mountain criticized those "self-appointed Teachers" who propagated "pernicious error" amongst the credulous multitude.<sup>96</sup> But at another point in his charge he made an eloquent plea for inter-denominational harmony. Besides urging Anglican clergymen to display "charity, meekness, long suffering, forgiveness of injuries" in their relations with other groups of Christians,<sup>97</sup> Mountain argued passionately that "nothing can be more palpably unreasonable and

<sup>96</sup> Jacob Mountain, A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Quebec in August, 1803 (Quebec, 1803), pp. 26-27.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

absurd, than to persecute and hate each other because we differ . . . nothing can be more preposterous, than to condemn men without mercy, merely because we are persuaded that they err!"<sup>98</sup>

Equally revealing were Mountain's and John Stuart's criticisms of the conduct of John Langhorn, the one clergyman in the pre-1820 era who had little use for the principle of religious toleration. To understand the causes of this internal split in the ranks of the Anglican clergy, it is first necessary to comprehend something of Langhorn's personal character. Throughout his twenty-six-year ministry in Upper Canada, Langhorn was an object of curiosity to Anglicans and non-Anglicans alike. Apart from his obesity, two of Langhorn's most striking peculiarities were his habit of bathing daily in Lake Ontario, even in the depths of winter, and his insistence on walking rather than riding between his various missions, with a rucksack containing all his earthly possessions slung over his back.<sup>99</sup> Another was his obsessive concern with rubrical regularity. Langhorn had nothing but contempt for what he regarded as Stuart's negligence in observing the rubrics of the marriage ceremony,<sup>100</sup> and when Stuart's son, George O'Kill, dared to officiate without a surplice, Langhorn informed the SPG that he would have nothing further to do with this "presbyterian preacher," adding that "if I could get safely to England, I could wish I was there to tell

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>99</sup> Ernest Hawkins, Annals of the Diocese of Toronto (London, 1848), pp. 30 and 43.

<sup>100</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/38, no. 439, 8 May 1810.

the people what use their charity is applied to."<sup>101</sup> Moreover, in his own parishes of Adolphustown, Fredericksburgh, and Ernesttown, Langhorn decided not to church two women when they expressed their unwillingness to kneel during the ceremony;<sup>102</sup> he solemnized marriages only in buildings set aside for religious worship and only within certain specified hours;<sup>103</sup> and finally, not willing to depart from the forms of prayer set down by the church, he would refuse to comfort and pray with a sick person unless his prayer book was ready at hand.<sup>104</sup> In sum, considering his unusual behaviour, Langhorn had no reason to be startled when his Hallowell and Fredericksburgh congregations decided in 1805 that they no longer wanted his services.<sup>105</sup>

The same obstinacy and simple stupidity were evident in Langhorn's relations with dissenters. Believing that dissenters from the Church of England were sinful schismatics who were doomed to damnation in the world to come,<sup>106</sup> Langhorn would go to any lengths to avoid coming into contact with them. He would not walk on the same side of the road as a dissenter,<sup>107</sup> and he refused to enter the house of a woman who had been

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 6 Oct. 1812.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 14 Aug. 1788.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., "Memorandum of . . . Rev. John Langhorn," Series C, Box V/46, no. 545.

<sup>104</sup> ADO, Stuart Papers, Folio 2, Stuart to Inglis, 8 Oct. 1791.

<sup>105</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 29, 15 Nov. 1805.

<sup>106</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Mountain, 29 Oct. 1802, pp. 321-23.

<sup>107</sup> Hawkins, Annals of the Diocese of Toronto, p. 40.

married by a Presbyterian minister.<sup>108</sup> When this same minister once offered Langhorn a ride in his buggy, the latter self-righteously replied: "Sir, you are a promoter [of] Schism in the flock of Christ. I cannot therefore have any intercourse with you, much less accept any favour from you. Please keep at your side of the road & go your way."<sup>109</sup> More seriously, in order to ridicule Methodism, he composed a song which he circulated throughout his mission and on occasion even sang himself;<sup>110</sup> and in the late 1790s he took the ludicrous position that all marriages performed by non-Anglican clergymen before the passage of the Marriage Act of 1793 were invalid and the parties concerned living in a state of adultery--a state from which he would gladly help them escape by re-marrying them, to each other or to any other partner they might desire.<sup>111</sup> When two couples who had been married by a Lutheran minister actually announced their wish to exchange partners, Langhorn was willing to accommodate them. Only the decision of the couples themselves to draw the prank to an end extricated the Church of England from a highly awkward situation.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> SPG Letters, "Memorandum of Rev. John Langhorn," Series C, Box V/46, no. 545.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 29, 17 Jan. 1805.

<sup>111</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Mountain, 18 April 1797, pp. 312-13.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.




It is interesting to examine Stuart's comments on the behaviour of John Langhorn. At first, Stuart was inclined to take an indulgent attitude towards Langhorn's eccentricities. In a letter to Bishop Inglis in 1788, Stuart began by noting that Langhorn "has so many Singularities in Manner & Dress that the real Friends to the Interest of our Church have often wished him in England again"; but he then added that "nothing can be objected to his moral character, or his attention to Church Rituals," and that "his Neighbours, being now accustomed to his Oddities & Absurdities & discovering Honesty & Simplicity at Bottom are more and more reconciled to their Fate."<sup>113</sup> However, Stuart was far less forgiving when it gradually became obvious that Langhorn's antics were not only alienating members of the Anglican communion, but also driving a wedge between the Church of England and dissenting denominations, the very groups whose good will would have to be retained if Upper Canada was to be transformed into an Anglican society. After the late 1790s Stuart's growing exasperation with Langhorn, a clergyman he now regarded as an "incorrigible animal,"<sup>114</sup> was abundantly apparent in a number of letters to Bishop Mountain. In 1797 he reported that Langhorn's offer to re-marry couples not originally married by Anglican clergymen "has made much Noise, and given Occasion to Dissenters to use great Freedom of Speech";<sup>115</sup> in 1801 he expressed

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Stuart to Inglis, 6 July 1788, pp. 133-38.

<sup>114</sup> ADO, Stuart Papers, Folio 2, John to James Stuart, 11 Oct. 1802.

<sup>115</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Stuart to Mountain, 18 April 1797, pp. 312-13.

his opinion that "Mr. Langhorn's uncouth Manners and illiberal Conduct, have given the Methodists, and a dissenting Minister in his Neighbourhood, an Opportunity of drawing away many of his former Congregation";<sup>116</sup> and when he learned of Langhorn's musical parody of Methodism, he angrily complained that "he is untaught, unteachable, & incorrigible . . . his conduct . . . has been such, as to bring a scandal not only on the clerical dignity, but on our profession as Churchmen . . . unless he alters his conduct, he will be forsaken & left to himself without the appearance of a Congregation."<sup>117</sup>

These reports on Langhorn's conduct placed Bishop Mountain in an awkward position. Like Stuart, Mountain was convinced that Langhorn's misguided zeal and simple-minded bigotry posed a serious threat to the interests of the Church: in 1797 Mountain told Stuart that Langhorn's behaviour with regard to non-Anglican marriages was "unquestionably impolitic, injudicious, & absurd . . . tell him that I hope he will conduct himself with greater circumspection & decorum for the future";<sup>118</sup> and a few years later he sadly stated that "I wish with all my heart  were removed from a situation for which he is so utterly unqualified & from the exercise of functions which he disgraces."<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., Stuart to Mountain, 11 May 1801, p. 319.

<sup>117</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 29, 17 Jan. 1805.

<sup>118</sup> Preston, Kingston before the War of 1812, Mountain to Stuart, 21 May 1797, pp. 313-14.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., Mountain to Stuart, 10 Oct. 1804, pp. 324-25.

Yet at the same time Mountain was only too aware that he was powerless to do more than admonish and rebuke, since Langhorn's actions, as Stuart himself admitted, were legally unimpeachable.<sup>120</sup> Of course, with any other clergyman the mere expression of episcopal displeasure would have been regarded in a serious light. But in the case of John Langhorn, things were not so simple. When the SPG, on information supplied by Mountain and Stuart, severely reprimanded Langhorn for his endless bickering with Methodists, he responded with one of the oddest ad hominem attacks ever delivered by an Anglican clergyman in Upper Canada. In his 1805 report to the SPG Langhorn wrote bitterly that "I hope you did not send me here to be railed at and abused by the Methodists, and that I should be still, and hold my tongue. . . ." He also asked how he could be expected to obey the orders of his bishop when that individual was "a free mason, and converses by masonic signs, and expects that his meaning is to be understood by his mumping, it is no wonder if I oftentimes transgress."<sup>121</sup>

Strange though it may seem, Mountain and Stuart's commitment to religious toleration was shared by John Strachan, a clergyman who in the 1820s and 1830s was to lead the Anglican crusade against "sectarianism." Before 1820 Strachan's prejudices against dissent were always balanced by his awareness that the progress of the Church of England depended upon the maintenance of amicable relations with other denomina-

<sup>120</sup> ADO, Stuart Papers, Folio 2, Stuart to Inglis, 8 Oct. 1791.

<sup>121</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/38, no. 439, 4 Oct. 1805.

tions. One result of this sensitivity to the religious reality of Upper Canada was that during these years, as will be shown in chapter four, Strachan's attacks on dissent were relatively few in number and restrained in tone.<sup>122</sup> Another result was that in this same period Strachan felt little hesitation in publicly professing his own belief in the ideal of religious toleration, since from his point of view the preservation of inter-denominational harmony was a vital part of the Church of England's strategy as it struggled to become the "national" church of Upper Canada. Thus, in a sermon preached in 1804, Strachan denounced those self-righteous and narrow-minded zealots who thought that their church alone was holy in the sight of God. If such persons were sincere in their faith, he noted, they "would perceive that God had servants among every denomination of Christians and that it was not for them to pass judgment upon their brethren."<sup>123</sup> Similarly, an article he wrote for the Kingston Gazette in 1811 under the pseudonym of "The Reckoner" specifically criticized religious bigotry as one of the manifestations of that spirit of exclusiveness which was so prevalent in society.<sup>124</sup>

The pages of the Christian Recorder also revealed Strachan's belief in the importance of fostering the good will of rival denominations at

<sup>122</sup> See p. 128.

<sup>123</sup> AO, Strachan Sermons, "So the last shall be first and the first last" (23 Dec. 1804). This date refers to the first time the sermon in question was preached. The same applies to all subsequent references to the Strachan Sermons.

<sup>124</sup> Kingston Gazette, "The Reckoner," 29 Jan. 1811.

this critical point in the Church of England's history. When outlining his plans for the Christian Recorder to Bishop Mountain, Strachan remarked that "I will gradually lead my readers in favour of the Church taking care to insert nothing particularly offensive to Dissenters; as the work gains ground we can be more explicit, but caution is necessary as the whole of the population not of our Church is ready to join against us."<sup>125</sup> Caution was certainly the keynote of the first issue of the Recorder. In an article on the "History and Present State of Religion in Upper Canada," Strachan was lavish in his praise of the Presbyterian and Catholic clergy.<sup>126</sup> What was even more interesting, the Methodist itinerants, to whom Strachan admitted there were "serious political objections," were extolled for "preserving a religious feeling in many parts of the Province, where it was becoming dead," and for "undergoing many fatigues and privations to reclaim the vicious, and to soften the hardened." After stating that "such benevolent exertions ought to be applauded . . . they are entitled to the respectful consideration of their fellow Christians," Strachan concluded his article by urging all denominations to cooperate in the dissemination of the Gospel.<sup>127</sup>

Perhaps the best case in point of the strategy of moderation pursued by the Church of England in the pre-1820 period was the work

<sup>125</sup> BRMTL, Strachan Papers, Scadding Collection, Strachan to Mountain, 12 March 1819.

<sup>126</sup> Christian Recorder, March 1819, pp. 14-15.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.

of the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society of Upper Canada. This organization dated its origins to November 1816, when Robert Addison established a Niagara auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, an inter-denominational body founded by Anglican evangelicals in protest against the exclusively Church of England character of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. In his address on this occasion, Addison announced that Britain, recently the divine instrument of preserving the "blessings of civil government" in Europe, was now to be the divine instrument of spreading the word of God through Upper Canada. He also praised the cooperation between various denominations which had characterized the parent Society's work, and expressed the hope that the widespread possession of bibles would effectively combat the vice of drunkenness amongst the lower orders.<sup>128</sup>

Addison's initiative was possibly responsible for the formation in York one month later of the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society of Upper Canada.<sup>129</sup> The decision to make the dissemination of the Prayer Book one of the responsibilities of the new Society was not meant to discourage the involvement of dissenters, for subscribers could confine their financial support to the distribution of bibles--a provision which, as Strachan declared, opened the door "to all denominations of Christians, to all who are anxious to extend the limits of vital religion."<sup>130</sup> The Upper Canadian Society, moreover, was formally

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-37.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

connected with the inter-denominational British and Foreign Bible Society, which Strachan lauded for its success in extinguishing "all party spirit and narrow views" and infusing "into all ranks such a charitable zéal for the general interests of Christianity, as cannot fail to produce the happiest effects."<sup>131</sup>

In 1818 the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society was divided into two sections, one distributing bibles and the other prayer books, and in the following year the new Prayer Book Society became a branch committee of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.<sup>132</sup> These changes, however, far from being a reflection of increasing tension between Anglicans and dissenters, were actually defended as a means of allaying the suspicion that the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society was a Church of England organization. Under the altered arrangements the Bible Society, while open to all denominations, permitted dissenters to distribute the Scriptures unaccompanied by the Anglican prayer book.<sup>133</sup> The Church of England had thus been instrumental in forging an inter-denominational structure which accommodated sectarian differences, an achievement which many of its clergymen regarded with some pride. In November 1819 a British missionary by the name of Fenton declared that he saw the work of the Upper Canada Bible

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., December 1819, pp. 377-81. In these pages an address by Strachan clarifies the complicated structural evolution of the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society of Upper Canada.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., pp. 378-79.

Society as evidence of the enlightened atmosphere of the age: "we live in days of candour, when party distinction is lost, when sectarian opposition is absorbed by Christian charity, when all are uniting and assimilating into one spirit and making a simultaneous effort for the distribution of the Bible, and that without comment."<sup>134</sup> Strachan echoed these remarks at a meeting of the District Committee of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the very meeting at which the dissolution of the Prayer Book Society was announced. With reference to the creation of a separate Bible Society, Strachan stated that

we are taught to have respect to the weakness of a brother, and his scruples, should we think them wrong, are entitled to favour, as they indicate the force of conscience. In this country, where all the various denominations of Christians meet together, far from their native homes and the lively and interesting scenes of their childhood, there is generally a disposition to be kindly and affectionate one towards another. This spirit should be cherished, and no society can promote this more than one for disseminating the Scriptures. . . . this is the age of religious and moral improvement. . . . Christianity is extending on every side, it is breaking down the walls of partition, and it calls for all its friends to assist in the gracious work.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., November 1819, p. 360.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., December 1819, pp. 378-79. Significantly enough, it also appears that Strachan remained actively involved with the Bible Society of Upper Canada. See the Christian Recorder, December 1820, pp. 357-63. For Strachan's changing attitude towards this organization in the 1830s, see chapter four, pp. 147-49.



## III

Clearly, then, the Church of England's record in the period from the 1790s until the years immediately after the War of 1812 had more than its share of anomalies. In setting aside one-seventh of the public lands in Upper and Lower Canada for the support of a "Protestant Clergy," the imperial government had acted on the belief that the Church of England had an important role to play in shielding British North America from the revolutionary fervour that had recently resulted in the loss of the thirteen colonies. Yet, as it turned out, the policy of church establishment enshrined in the Constitutional Act was in sharp contrast to the actual position of the Church of England in Upper Canadian society. In terms of the church's popular support, Anglicans had represented only a small proportion of the loyalist settlers who had flocked to Upper Canada in the late 1770s and early 1780s, and in subsequent years the arrival of thousands of non-Anglican immigrants from the United States and the British Isles, together with the growing strength of Methodist revivalism, reinforced the Church of England's minority status in the Upper Canadian community. To make matters worse, in this period the total number of Anglican clergymen was so inadequate that the Church of England was hardly able to meet the needs of its own flock, let alone spread its message to the members of other denominations; and the Anglican laity, despite the fact that the clergy reserves did not begin to yield revenue until the 1830s, showed a marked reluctance to contribute to their church's support.

Another paradoxical feature of the Church of England's pre-1820

experience was the Anglican clergy's extraordinarily optimistic view of the religious future of Upper Canada. While acutely conscious of their church's enfeebled position, Anglican clergymen were firmly convinced that a tolerant and well-manned Church of England would not only be able to minister effectively to its own flock, but would also succeed in transforming Upper Canada into a religiously homogeneous society. Underlying this point of view was the assumption that in a society such as Upper Canada, where denominational loyalties were in a state of flux, the vast majority of inhabitants could not help but feel an irresistible attraction towards a church whose apostolic purity and awe-inspiring liturgy marked it out as a branch of the true Church of Christ.

II

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND UPPER CANADIAN RELIGIOUS LIFE,  
1820-1840

The Anglican experience in the 1820s and 1830s had more than its share of paradox. During these decades the Church of England made significant progress at a number of levels: the Anglican population of Upper Canada grew dramatically as a result of immigration from Britain, the number of Anglican clergymen increased steadily, and the first steps were taken to enhance the church's effectiveness as a missionary organization. In these circumstances it might have been expected that Anglican clergymen would be more optimistic than ever when reflecting on their church's position in Upper Canadian society. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Admittedly, like clergymen in the pre-1820 period, the clergy of the 1820s and 1830s continued to believe that the Church of England had an opportunity to draw the vast majority of Upper Canadians into the Anglican fold. Yet at the same time they also made it plain that they were far from ecstatic about their church's record in meeting the needs of its flock. The most serious of their concerns revolved around the church's failure to alleviate the religious destitution that afflicted thousands of recently arrived Anglican immigrants.

## I

The 1820s and 1830s were a period of expansion for all of Upper Canada's major religious denominations. In these years the Methodists, with their shrewd revivalist techniques and superbly efficient organizational structure, continued to make impressive strides: in 1825 there were 35 preachers and 6,875 members;<sup>1</sup> in 1830, 55 preachers and 11,348 members;<sup>2</sup> and in 1835, two years after the creation of a union between the Upper Canadian Methodist Conference and the English Wesleyans, 77 preachers and 15,056 members.<sup>3</sup> Three other denominations, the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics, received an immense boost with the influx of thousands upon thousands of English, Scottish, and Irish immigrants. By 1835 the Baptist cause, greatly strengthened by the settlement of large numbers of Scottish Baptists in eastern Upper Canada, was represented by forty resident ministers and sixty to seventy churches, a dramatic increase from the ten clergymen and fifteen congregations of 1820;<sup>4</sup> the Church of Scotland and its various secessionist offshoots, also strengthened by the arrival of Scottish immigrants, had over forty clergymen and sixty congregations by the time of the

<sup>1</sup> Playter, History of Methodism, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> J. E. Sanderson, The First Century of Methodism in Canada, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1908), I, 241-42.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 355-56.

<sup>4</sup> S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada (Toronto, 1948), pp. 101-2.

rebellion;<sup>5</sup> and the Roman Catholic Church, which by 1820 had only seven priests and 15,000 members, could boast by 1840 over 34 priests, 48 parishes, and approximately 60,000 members, most of whom were immigrants from the south of Ireland.<sup>6</sup>

As for the Church of England, phenomenal progress was made during these years. In the pre-1820 period, as explained in chapter one, Anglicans were greatly outnumbered by the members of other denominations in every section of the province. This situation, however, changed dramatically in the 1820s and 1830s: in this period Anglican immigration from the British Isles transformed the Church of England from the beleaguered denomination of earlier years into a denomination that surpassed all its rivals in popular support. In 1839 a religious census of Upper Canada showed that the Church of England was the single largest denomination in the London, Niagara, Home, Newcastle, and Johnstown districts. In the Eastern, Prince Edward, and Bathurst districts, Anglicans were outnumbered by Presbyterians and Methodists, but this could be attributed to the fact that the various denominational divisions within these two religious groups were not taken into account. No statistics were provided for the Western, Gore, Midland, and Ottawa districts.<sup>7</sup> The accuracy of this 1839 census was

<sup>5</sup> These figures are based on a collation of data found in pp. 55-86 of Moir's Enduring Witness.

<sup>6</sup> Scott, "The Roman Catholic Church East of the Great Lakes," pp. 53-54.

<sup>7</sup> This census was published in the Church in instalments on 25 May, 1 June, 15 June, 22 June, 13 July, 14 Sept., and 12 Oct. 1839. The compilers are unknown.

corroborated by the census of 1842, which revealed that the adherents of the Church of England outnumbered the adherents of any other denomination. In that year the Church of England possessed 107,291 members, while its closest rivals, the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Methodists, counted only 77,929, 65,203, and 55,667 members respectively.<sup>8</sup>

Thanks to the efforts of the SPG, which after 1813 found its financial position greatly improved as a result of annual parliamentary grants,<sup>9</sup> the Upper Canadian church also had the advantage of a larger supply of clergymen. The first sign of better days came in 1818 and 1819, when five clergymen, Joseph Thompson, Michael Harris, Romaine Rolph, William Stoughton, and William Macaulay, were appointed to Upper Canadian parishes, bringing the total number of Anglican clergy in the colony to thirteen.<sup>10</sup> In subsequent years the position of the church was further bolstered by a steady stream of clergymen from the British Isles, and by SPG financial assistance to ministerial candidates who were receiving their divinity training under clergymen already stationed in the colony.<sup>11</sup> The resulting increase in the church's supply of

<sup>8</sup> This census has been reprinted in Moir's Church and State in Canada West, p. 185.

<sup>9</sup> See Thomas R. Millman, The Life of Charles James Stewart (London, Ont., 1953), p. 114.

<sup>10</sup> See ibid., pp. 186-223 for short biographical sketches of these clergymen.

<sup>11</sup> From 1815 to 1834 SPG scholarships were granted to twenty-nine ministerial candidates in the two Canadas. See Millman, Jacob Mountain, pp. 186-92; and Millman, Stewart, pp. 93-94.

clerical manpower was so great that by the 1830s a force of Anglican clergymen had been built up which was almost equal in strength to the army of itinerant preachers employed by the Methodists: in 1833 there were forty clergymen in Upper Canada,<sup>12</sup> and by 1836 this figure had increased to sixty-eight.<sup>13</sup>

Yet the Church of England's success in the Upper Canada of the 1820s and 1830s cannot be attributed exclusively to the arrival of Anglican immigrants from the British Isles and to a substantial increase in the number of clergymen sent to the colony. It was also due, at least in part, to the conviction of Anglican clergymen themselves that the Church of England could best advance its interests by adopting a more aggressive approach to missionary activity. To appreciate fully the significance of this attitude on the part of the Anglican clergy, it is necessary to know something about the church's record as a missionary organization in the period from the 1790s until the years immediately after the War of 1812. First of all, it must be emphasized that the three clergymen resident in Upper Canada in the 1790s, John Stuart, John Langhorn, and Robert Addison, showed a good deal of energy and determination in spreading the Anglican message. In that decade Stuart regularly visited the 2nd and 3rd townships, which were fifteen miles from his parish of Kingston; he occasionally visited the Iroquois settled on the far distant Grand River in the Niagara district; he made semi-annual trips to the Mohawk settlement

<sup>12</sup> SPG Report, 1833, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> The Church, 30 Dec. 1837.

on the Bay of Quinté; once a year he made an extended missionary tour of the "lower settlements" in the vicinity of Cornwall; a journey which covered 140 miles; and these extra-parochial labours were in addition to his travels in the Kingston area, which annually entailed a demanding trip of 200 miles. Similarly, while Langhorn's sphere of missionary activity was restricted by his refusal to ride a horse, he too served a district in the 1790s which was by no means inconsiderable in extent: excluding Fredericksburgh and Ernesttown, which he visited on alternate Sundays, and Adolphustown, which he visited on a less regular but still frequent basis, Langhorn had eight other stations, each of which he visited approximately ten times a year; these pastoral tours meant grueling walks of fifty to seventy miles. Even the scholarly Addison was something of an itinerant. Although Stuart claimed that Addison was ill equipped, by reason of his "temper and qualifications," to minister effectively to the "generality of the vulgar" on the Upper Canadian frontier,<sup>14</sup> Addison himself in the years before 1800 was far from negligent in fulfilling his responsibilities as a clergyman. Besides serving his Niagara congregation, Addison made a point in the 1790s of undertaking an annual circuit of 150 miles, and also of visiting the Grand River Mohawks, seventy miles from his own parish, a few times each year.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> ADO, Stuart Papers, folio 2, Stuart to Inglis, 22 Oct. 1792, and 25 June 1793.

<sup>15</sup> These conclusions with regard to the missionary labours of Stuart, Langhorn, and Addison are based on a collation of data included in the SPG Reports, Journals, and Letters.



For some strange reason, the Anglican clergy's missionary zeal declined sharply in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. In these years John Stuart generally restricted his labours to Kingston and the Mohawk settlement on the Bay of Quinté, while Robert Addison abandoned his missionary journeys and instead contented himself with visiting "neighbouring villages" once a month and making the occasional visit to the Mohawk mission on the Grand River. Equally lethargic were the clergymen appointed after 1800: John Gunther Weagant did not venture out beyond his two missions of Osnabruck and Williamsburg; Salter J. Mountain seldom left the secure confines of Cornwall; Ralph Leeming remained entrenched in Ancaster until 1818, when he began assisting Addison in serving the Grand River Mohawks; Richard Pollard, though performing only a weekly service in Sandwich and a monthly service in Amherstburg, did not pay regular visits to the Anglican settlements on Lake Erie and the Thames River until 1816; during his twelve years as the incumbent of York, George O'Kill Stuart had virtually no duties outside of his immediate parish, and after his appointment to Kingston in 1812 he waited until 1815 before undertaking his first missionary journey--in this case a 160-mile trip to the vacant parish of Elizabethtown and Augusta; while John Strachan was stationed in Cornwall from 1803 to 1812 he made only the occasional visit to Oswegatchie and Augusta, and he itinerated even less after his move to York in 1812--indeed in 1821 he was relieved of his "country church" at York Mills when he complained that it detracted from his responsibilities in the

parish of York.<sup>16</sup>

This decline of missionary zeal makes the Church of England's crusading spirit in the 1820s and 1830s all the more striking. In this period the unparalleled growth of rival denominations, together with the problems posed by the arrival of hordes of Anglican immigrants from the British Isles, convinced Anglican clergymen that the Church of England's future depended not only on an increase in clerical manpower, but also on its own willingness to exert itself to the utmost in furthering its own interests. On the political front, as will be shown in the next chapter, this new perspective on the church's position underlay Strachan's efforts to place the clergy reserves on a sounder footing and to lay the foundations of an Anglican-controlled educational system. In the religious sphere, the same determination to improve the church's fortunes gave rise to a renewed interest in missionary activity. Unlike the clergymen of the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the clergy of the 1820s and 1830s were only too willing to pay regular visits to those neighbouring settlements which lacked the services of a resident minister. Indeed, by the time of the rebellion the average Anglican clergyman, much in the manner of John Stuart in the 1790s, served two or three parishes in addition to his own immediate charge, and all these stations were separated by distances of anywhere from five to fifty miles. A few examples will serve to illustrate. Joseph Thompson had four congregations in his parish of

<sup>16</sup> Once again, all the above conclusions are based on material found in the SPG Reports, Journals, and Letters.

Cavan, and besides visiting these stations every Sunday and occasionally on week days, he also paid monthly visits to Port Hope, Monaghan, Smith's Creek, Emily, and Ops. From 1819 to 1827, when he was transferred to Hallowell, William Macaulay made occasional visits to the Carrying Place, Belleville, Cavan, and Darlington--stations which were twenty to forty-eight miles distant from Hamilton township.

Michael Harris's sphere of labour encompassed Perth and its back settlements, Lanark, Richmond, Beckwith, and March, the last of these stations being fifty miles distant from Perth. Robert Blakey had regular stations in Prescott, Four Corners, the Blue Church, and Maitland, and he also paid occasional visits to the townships of Oxford and Scarborough. John Grier claimed with some justice that his mission, which embraced the Carrying Place, Pleasant Bay, Murray, Cold Creek, Frankford, Hillier, and Ameliasburg, could employ the services of four clergymen. A. N. Bethune conducted services in Cobourg on Sunday mornings and evenings, on festivals and fast days, and on weekdays during the Lenten season; he also served the Cobourg gaol and court house, Grafton, Hamilton township, and Haldimand; from November to April he paid monthly visits to a schoolhouse five miles distant from Cobourg; during the same months he held weekday lectures in houses. His mission covered forty miles, and he estimated that he performed 240 services a year, or an average of four every week.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See SPG Reports, Journals, and Letters.

The Anglican clergy's heightened awareness of the importance of proselytization also led to a growing demand for itinerant missionaries. In the 1820s the Upper Canadian church enjoyed the services of two itinerant missionaries: Charles Stewart held the position of visiting missionary in the two Canadas from 1819 until his elevation to the episcopacy in 1826;<sup>18</sup> and George Spratt was a travelling missionary in the townships of Yonge, Wiltse, and Bastard from 1824 until his departure for the United States in 1826.<sup>19</sup> Shortly after Spratt left the colony, Stewart, now bishop, informed the SPG that the appointment of another travelling missionary was imperative if the Church of England was ever to be planted in the more isolated settlements of the colony.<sup>20</sup> These representations had the desired effect, for in 1827 George Archbold became travelling missionary in the diocese of Quebec.<sup>21</sup> The continued influx of immigrants in the late 1820s, however, created an impossible burden for the unaided Archbold, and in 1828 John Strachan suggested that additional travelling missionaries be appointed to Upper Canada so that Anglican ministrations might be frequently offered to isolated and religiously destitute settlements. "In every township in this province," he wrote to the SPG after the completion of his first

<sup>18</sup> Millman, Stewart, pp. 44-59.

<sup>19</sup> SPG Report, 1827, pp. 105-6; SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/39, no. 454.

<sup>20</sup> SPG Report, 1827, p. 106.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 1828, pp. 50-51. Archbold travelled 3000 miles in a missionary tour of Upper Canada in 1829.

archdiaconal visitation,

the travelling Missionary discovers here and there scattered episcopal families, some times one or two, some times a more considerable number, who are entirely deprived of the ministrations of the Church. Their children are growing up ignorant of our Church, and wandering from her communion. These families were many of them emigrants from England and Ireland, and were formerly attached to the doctrines, constitution, and worship of that Church, under whose nurturing care they were born and brought up. In every district there is ample room for one or more additional Missionaries, but there are few places where a congregation can be collected at once sufficiently numerous to employ his undivided services. Yet frequent visits of a month or two at a time, would preserve their attachment to the worship of their fathers. At present they labour under the most serious disadvantages in a new and thinly settled country: many of them will be lost, if Missionaries come not among them. . . . It is not meant by this, that there should be any delay in settling clergymen so far as our means permit, wherever congregations can be formed. But as we are not always able to place clergymen in every township where they might be useful, the next step is to do all we can, by sending some one round from time to time to greet them in the Lord.<sup>22</sup>

The formation of the Society for Converting and Civilizing the Indians and Propagating the Gospel Among Destitute Settlers of Upper Canada<sup>23</sup> was directly due to the Anglican clergy's belief that the religious needs of the colony's emigrants could best be met by a force of itinerant missionaries. The origins of this body dated to 29 October 1830, when a group of Anglican clergy and laity founded the Society for Converting & Civilizing the Indians, an organization whose sole concern was spreading the Anglican message amongst the Indian communities on

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1829, pp. 159-59.

<sup>23</sup> Hereafter referred to as the SCCIPGDS.)

the Bay of Quinté, the Grand River, Lake St. Clair, and the north shore of Lake Huron.<sup>24</sup> At the Society's next meeting on 22 November a decision of major importance was taken: it was then resolved that missionaries would be sent not only to various Indian settlements, but also amongst the religiously destitute white people of the colony. In taking such a step, the Society announced that its objective was to provide the "British Emigrant" with "a continuance of the ministrations to which he is attached--(thus, to him, divesting the wilderness of half its terrors, and preserving unimpaired in his bosom the fear of God and submission to lawful authority, so sincerely inculcated and faithfully exemplified by that communion)."<sup>25</sup>

Although the SCCIPGDS never flourished financially (in 1838 its funds from all sources amounted to only £411<sup>26</sup>), it was able to appoint a number of missionaries in the course of the 1830s. Four of these clergymen were appointed to Indian missions: J. D. Cameron served Sault Ste. Marie from 1831 to 1832; J. O'Brian was stationed at the Indian mission on the St. Clair River for an indeterminate length of time; William McMurray replaced Cameron at Sault Ste. Marie in 1832 and remained there until 1840; Saltern Givins was sent to the Mohawk village

<sup>24</sup> First Annual Report of the Society for Converting & Civilizing the Indians, and Propagating the Gospel Among Destitute Settlers in Upper Canada, for the Year Ending October, 1831. To which is Prefixed an Introductory Account of the Particulars Attending the Formation of the Society (York, 1832), pp. 7-8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> See the Society's reports for the 1830s.

on the Bay of Quinté in 1833, and he retained this charge until 1850, eight years after the SCCIPGDS had been supplanted by the Church Society.<sup>27</sup> Another four clergymen appointed by the Society served as travelling missionaries: Adam Elliot was a travelling missionary in the Home district from 1832 to 1835, when he moved to the Grand River to take up a permanent charge at the Six Nations mission; W. F. S. Harper was a travelling missionary first in the Midland district and then in the Newcastle district before being transferred to the parish of March in 1838; C. T. Wade served as travelling missionary in the Newcastle district from 1836 to 1838; and G. C. Street was appointed as Wade's replacement as travelling missionary in the Newcastle district in 1839, and here he remained until his transfer to the parish of Emily some time in 1840 or 1841.<sup>28</sup>

Elliot, Harper, Wade, and Street were assisted by other travelling missionaries in the 1830s. When the imperial government decided in 1831 to terminate its annual grant to the SPG—a decision whose ramifications for the Upper Canadian church will be explored in depth in chapter seven<sup>29</sup>—Bishop Stewart published an address calling on the

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of the Church Society, see chapter seven, pp. 296-308.

<sup>28</sup> For the appointments and activities of these clergymen, see the Society's reports for the 1830s. Wade and Street are not mentioned in these reports; still, since a Newcastle district branch had been established in 1835 to collect funds for the support of a travelling missionary, it is likely that both Wade and Street were supported by the Society.

<sup>29</sup> See pp. 278-309.

British public to come to the assistance of the Canadian church.<sup>30</sup> Although the response to Stewart's appeal was disappointing, an English clergyman by the name of Waddilove promptly established a fund to provide the Church of England in the Canadas with additional clerical manpower.<sup>31</sup> In the 1830s this Upper Canadian Travelling Missionary Fund, as it was known, supported Richard Flood as a missionary to the Lake St. Clair Indians, John Gibson as a missionary at Georgiana, Ebenezer Morris as a travelling missionary in the Bathurst, Johnstown, and Eastern districts, and Thomas Green and George Petrie as travelling missionaries in the London district. It also contributed to the support of W. F. S. Harper in the Midland district, James Padfield in March and Huntley, Frederick Mack in Amherstburg, James Usher in Brantford, R. V. Rogers in Richmond, and J. G. Geddes in Hamilton.<sup>32</sup>

Another British organization responsible for the support of travelling missionaries was the Upper Canada Clergy Society. Founded in 1835 by a group of lay evangelicals,<sup>33</sup> this Society appointed H. H. O'Neill as travelling missionary in the Niagara, Gore, and Home districts,

<sup>30</sup> Address from the Bishop of Quebec to the British Public in behalf of the Church of England in Canada, received in July, 1834. Included in W. J. D. Waddilove, ed., The Stewart Missions (London, 1838), pp. 137-40.

<sup>31</sup> Millman, Stewart, pp. 128-30.

<sup>32</sup> The Stewart Missions, pp. 141-43. See also the photocopies of the Upper Canadian Travelling Missionary Fund reports located in the GSA, especially the letters dated 6 March 1839, 10 June 1839, and 9 July 1839 (included in the report for 1838).

<sup>33</sup> Millman, Stewart, pp. 131-34; AO, Osler Family Papers, Series II-F, F. L. Osler Diaries and Journals, "Sketch of My Life," p. 4.



Featherstone Lake Osler as missionary in Tecumseth, West Gwillimbury, and the surrounding countryside in 1837, Frederick O'Meara as travelling missionary in the Home district in 1838, B. C. Hill as travelling missionary in the sprawling Grand River tract in 1838, William Morse as missionary in the town of Paris in 1839, and T. M. Bartlett as missionary at Shanty Bay on Lake Simcoe. As a further proof of its generosity; the Upper Canada Clergy Society supported Dominick Blake after his appointment to the parish of Adelaide in 1833,<sup>34</sup>

The labours of Anglican travelling missionaries in the 1830s equalled those of any Methodist itinerant. Adam Elliot's charge in the Home district embraced thirty-six townships, a sphere of duty which necessitated almost daily sermons and services in houses, barns, and fields.<sup>35</sup> W. F. S. Harper had seventeen stations in the Midland district, and he, like Elliot, was compelled by the very size of his mission to preach sermons and perform services on virtually every day of the week and in any building that was available, including dissenting schools and meeting houses.<sup>36</sup> Thomas Green had sixteen stations in the London district, and at fourteen of these he conducted services every third week; he also preached sermons daily, and on many Sundays

<sup>34</sup> Millman, Stewart, p. 134. The First Report of the Upper Canada Clergy Society (London, 1838); The Third Report of the Upper Canada Clergy Society (London, 1840). The Upper Canada Clergy Society merged with the SPC in 1840.

<sup>35</sup> Third Annual Report of the SCCIPGDS (1833), p. 42. See also the Fourth Annual Report of the Society (1834).

<sup>36</sup> Fifth Annual Report of the SCCIPGDS (1835), pp. 20-93. See also Harper's journal in the Sixth Annual Report (1837).

he performed services at three stations which were ten to fifteen miles apart.<sup>37</sup> In the Grand River tract B. C. Hill served thirteen stations which were eight to forty-nine miles distant from his residence in Hamilton, and to tend the spiritual welfare of this immense mission he held frequent scripture classes to supplement his daily sermons and services.<sup>38</sup> Ebenezer Morris's mission covered nineteen townships and 370 miles.<sup>39</sup> George Petrie had eighteen stations scattered throughout an almost equal number of townships, and some of these stations were from thirty to sixty miles apart.<sup>40</sup> F. L. Osler, in fact if not in name a travelling missionary in a huge 240-mile mission which had the parishes of Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury for its nucleus, served twenty townships and twenty-eight congregations.<sup>41</sup>

Many of the congregations of these travelling missionaries, like the congregations of so many Methodist circuit riders, assembled in surroundings which were hardly conducive to spiritual contemplation. F. L. Osler, for example, regularly preached in a stable at Bond Head. He noted that during one of his services in this stable "a calf was

<sup>37</sup> The Stewart Missions, Green to Waddilove, 4 July 1836, pp. 152-53; 21 Oct. 1836, pp. 154-56; 23 Feb. 1837, pp. 157-61:

<sup>38</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVB/42, no. 452, Hill to Upper Canada Clergy Society. See also Series G, vol. 3, journal no. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Upper Canadian Travelling Missionary Fund reports, 1840, letter from E. Morris, 19 Nov. 1839.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 1841, letter from G. Petrie, 26 Jan. 1841.

<sup>41</sup> Osler, "Sketch of My Life," p. 10.

tied up in the stall, at the front of which, on a barrel, I was standing, and by frequent bleating would drown my voice. These things at first used almost to distress me, but now I am almost accustomed to them."<sup>42</sup> On another occasion he remarked that in one of his barely finished frame churches "we were much disturbed by the barking of numerous dogs who had followed their owners, the screaming of babies, and the chattering of many swallows disturbed in their resting places."<sup>43</sup>

It was the distance between various missions, however, rather than the primitive facilities for religious worship that Anglican travelling missionaries found most trying. Osler wrote many years later in his autobiography that

the more distant places were from six to twelve miles apart and in these I used to manage to have two services a day, except in Winter. All my journies were taken on horseback and alone, at times riding from one hundred to one hundred and fifty miles during the week and holding services five or six times. In many places the roads were little more than cattle tracks leading through the woods, many miles without a house or clearing.<sup>44</sup>

Such exertions took their toll. In 1838 Osler informed an English clerical friend that

during the last three months especially my duties have been almost too much for me. I have risen on the Sunday Mornings with a feeling of almost overpowering weariness, yet could

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

not rest for who was to take my duties? and on reaching home at night some times between 10 and 11 o'clock, it has required an exertion to sit up for a few moments . . . but there never having been a clergyman settled here before, every thing I establish will be a precedent, and all may not be strong in body as myself indeed I may not be capable of enduring as much fatigue in a little time as at present.<sup>45</sup>

Underlying this willingness to endure almost unspeakable hardships were a remarkable spirit of self-dedication and an unwavering faith in divine providence. These qualities were best revealed in a story related by Thomas Green, travelling missionary in the London district, in 1836. He wrote in his journal of that year that on a trip to Woodhouse he

found much difficulty in passing, with the cutter, some of the streams which were swollen by the thaw, and the ice so weakened as not to support the horse. How uncertain are all the things in this life! When I hoped that I had overcome all my difficulties, and to reach the end of my journey, I was upset; the ice broke in one place, upon which the horse became so much frightened, that in endeavouring to free himself, he became so hampered with the sleigh and harness, that he was dragged under the ice by the stream; my life was in imminent danger, and I was struck down twice by his plunges amid the broken ice and water. After some danger and much difficulty, I succeeded in raising his head above the water, and resting it upon a piece of broken ice, so as to prevent his being smothered; and after some delay, I procured the assistance of an old man, who was living at no great distance from the place. With his help I contrived at last to free the horse; but had he remained only a few minutes longer in the water, he must have died from the extreme cold. I was apprehensive that my own legs were frozen; but happily, through the care and keeping of the Most High, I suffered no further inconvenience than what I

<sup>45</sup> Osler Family Papers, Series I-I, vol. 2, Osler to Proctor, 27 July 1838.

endured at the time--May I show forth my gratitude for this preservation, by a life devoted to the honour and glory of God my saviour.<sup>46</sup>

## II

Obviously, there is a striking contrast between the Church of England's fairly impressive record as a religious organization in the post-1820 period and S. D. Clark's claims concerning the failure of "church types" on the Upper Canadian frontier. In his Church and Sect in Canada Clark argued that the Church of England's character as an old world church type hindered the Anglican cause in two basic ways: first, the Church of England's organizational rigidity, particularly its devotion to the parish system, prevented it from ministering effectively to a population that was scattered over an immense stretch of territory; and second, since the formal and structured nature of Anglican religious services was totally unsuited to a frontier society, the Church of England's popular appeal was confined almost exclusively to the ranks of the urban gentility. He also maintained, as a necessary corollary, that Methodism gained such widespread support in Upper Canadian society because of its natural resourcefulness as a sectarian religious organization. Specifically, he argued that Methodism outstripped other denominations in popular support because its organizational structure--with its class meetings, societies, circuits, districts, conferences, local preachers, and itinerants--enabled it to spread its message with

<sup>46</sup> The Stewart Missions, p. 190.

unrivalled efficiency; and because its emotional religious "style" was perfectly adapted to the tastes and needs of isolated and culturally deprived backwoods settlers.<sup>47</sup>

There are a number of basic flaws in this combination of Turnerian frontierism and the church-sect typology of Troeltsch and Niebuhr. To begin with, since the Church of England by the late 1830s was the single largest denomination in Upper Canada, it can hardly be described as a perfect case in point of the failure of traditional church types in a frontier environment. Further, it cannot be emphasized enough that at the heart of Clark's analysis is a highly questionable view of the nature of Upper Canadian society. In the course of examining the divergent religious styles of Methodism and the Church of England, Clark puts forward a double-barrelled argument: at one level he argues that the Methodist camp meeting, perhaps the most striking feature of that denomination's approach to proselytization, was perfectly suited to the needs of a frontier society; and at another level he argues that Upper Canadian frontiersmen, having little use for the elaborate ritual and doctrinal sophistication of traditional churches, turned instead towards those denominations whose religious message was both simple and emotionally compelling.<sup>48</sup> The first of these arguments undoubtedly has a good deal of merit, for Upper Canadian historians are in general agreement that Methodist camp meetings alleviated the

<sup>47</sup> See Church and Sect in Canada, esp. pp. 102-32.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

loneliness of isolated frontier settlers, and at the same time provided an ideal outlet for the frustrations that were an inevitable part of life in the bush. The second argument, however, is much weaker.

Clark's claims concerning the failure of the Anglican religious style rest on the a priori assumption that frontier societies by their very nature are anti-intellectual, suspicious of tradition, and hostile towards anything savouring of the cultural elitism of the old world--an assumption which, besides being totally unproven, is sharply at variance with the conclusions of recent historical scholarship.<sup>49</sup>

Equally important, even if one shares Clark's frontierist perspective, the possibility still exists that the formalism and intellectualism of the Church of England's religious style was a positive advantage in the more urbanized and commercially oriented Upper Canada of the 1820s and 1830s. Of course, Clark himself is keenly aware of the changing nature of Upper Canadian society in these decades: one of the central themes of his Church and Sect in Canada is the connection between the social and economic development of the post-1820 era and the transformation of Upper Canada's sects, including Methodism, into church types.<sup>50</sup> Yet curiously enough, this awareness of the importance of social and economic change is the element most notably lacking in Clark's treatment of the historical experience of the Church of England. Even when deal-

<sup>49</sup> A good introduction to the controversy surrounding the frontier thesis is Michael S. Cross, ed., The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment (Toronto, 1970).

<sup>50</sup> Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, pp. 123-24.

ing with the impact of tractarianism on the Church of England of the post-rebellion period—a subject that will be explored in chapter eight of this dissertation<sup>51</sup>—Clark barely mentions the changing socio-economic life of the colony, and merely reiterates the argument that Anglican ritualism had little appeal for the great mass of Upper Canadians.<sup>52</sup>

Clark shows more insight when discussing the shortcomings of the Church of England's organizational structure. It has already been pointed out that when Clark criticizes the Church of England's organizational rigidity, he particularly focuses on the Anglican clergy's attachment to the parish system, a system which in his view was totally impractical in a frontier society. In one sense, this argument is clearly off the mark: the appointment of travelling missionaries and the revival of extra-parochial missionary activity in the 1820s and 1830s—two developments that receive little attention in Church and Sect in Canada—make it obvious that the Church of England displayed far more flexibility than Clark is willing to admit. Yet in another sense, it also has to be stressed that Clark's claims regarding the church's devotion to the parish system are well founded. From the 1790s onwards Anglican clergymen subscribed to the position that the spiritual well-being and social stability of Upper Canadian society depended on the maintenance of a parish system. For example, in 1838

<sup>51</sup> See pp. 310-79.

<sup>52</sup> Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, pp. 120-25.



the Church, an Anglican newspaper established the previous year, declared that

among the various links and connexions which, in the order of Providence; bind society together, there is none of a more amiable and endearing nature than that of PASTOR AND FLOCK. The former may be regarded as the head of a large and extended family, over whose temporal and spiritual interests he is appointed to watch with a kind of parental care; and although there must unavoidably be, in this extended range, various grades and classes,--some rich, some poor, separated by different shades of intellectual endowment or of secular occupation,--yet there seems a common centre to which all the radiated lines converge; one person upon whom the eyes of all are fixed with equal regard and affection; one who is alike looked up to as the rich man's counsellor and the poor man's friend; and through whom all the blessings of heaven are alike conveyed to all without distinction; as the purchase of a common Redeemer's blood;--and that one is the PASTOR OF THE PARISH. He is the link by which all are joined together in one bond of Christian brotherhood,--the spiritual teacher by whom they are instructed in those divine lessons which "make wise unto salvation",--the regularly commissioned guide who points to heaven and leads the way.<sup>53</sup>

This attachment to the parish system helps to explain why Anglican clergymen in the pre-1820 period displayed such a conspicuous lack of missionary zeal. It might also explain why the Anglican missionary campaign of the 1820s and 1830s stopped far short of replacing the parish system with the circuits and itinerant preachers of the Methodist organizational structure. During these decades it was never once suggested that travelling missionaries should outnumber resident clergymen or that resident clergymen themselves should itinerate through

entire districts; nor was it ever suggested that extra-parochial missionary activity would always be necessary in the religious conditions of Upper Canada. As a matter of fact, the Anglican clergy's commitment to the parochial system seemed to go hand in hand with the hope that the church would one day be able to dispense with the services of travelling missionaries and transform all Anglican circuits into closely-knit parishes. Strachan explained in 1840, just after his consecration as first bishop of Toronto, that "intervening stations will be taken up, so as gradually to make the field of each Missionary smaller and smaller, till such fields approach towards very large parishes instead of counties, and even districts, which many of them resemble at present."<sup>54</sup>

Yet, if Clark has good reason to draw attention to the Church of England's commitment to the parish system, he also opens himself to attack when he argues that the church's organizational structure was conclusive proof of its character as an old world church type. In this respect the first point that has to be made is that the parish system, far from being an intrinsic characteristic of the church type, enjoyed the support of most Upper Canadian sects, including the Baptists and secessionist offshoots of the Church of Scotland. Another point deserving of emphasis is that a denomination's approach to missionary activity, contrary to Clark's assertions, must be viewed in relation to religious and social factors which are largely irrelevant to the

<sup>54</sup> SPG Report, 1840, p. lxi.

theoretical framework of Turnerian frontierism and the church-sect typology of Troeltsch and Niebuhr. For instance, the Methodist organizational structure was not a product either of the influence of the frontier or of the natural missionary zeal of sectarian religion; on the contrary, Methodism had originated in eighteenth-century England, and the development of its circuit system had been a pragmatic response to the religious needs of a country where urbanization and industrialization were rendering the Anglican parochial system obsolete. Similarly, since the Church of England displayed a remarkable degree of institutional flexibility in the 1820s and 1830s, and since both churches and sects in Upper Canada supported the idea of a resident clergy, the commitment of Anglicans to the parish system cannot be blamed on the blindness of the church type to the needs of the frontier. It must rather be ascribed to an inability to transcend values and ideas which had deep roots in the Anglican historical experience and which were entirely independent of the Church of England's character as a church type.

Of course, these criticisms of the Clark thesis should not be interpreted to mean that the Church of England was an unqualified success in the Upper Canada of the 1820s and 1830s. Indeed, at this stage it should be pointed out that Anglican clergymen themselves displayed a curious ambiguity when reflecting on their church's place in the colony's religious life. On the one hand, it is perfectly true that the Anglican clergy of these years were just as utopian in their view of the church's future as the clergy of the pre-1820 period. From the 1790s until the years immediately after the War of 1812, as

was explained in chapter one, Anglican clergymen operated on the conviction that if the Church of England built up a larger supply of clerical labourers and at the same time cultivated the good will of other denominations, it would soon attract the allegiance of the vast majority of Upper Canadians.<sup>55</sup> In the 1820s and 1830s this utopian perspective continued to be a central feature of the Anglican mind. A. N. Bethune wrote in an 1830 letter to the SPG that "where the church has a fair trial in Canada, it will universally gain a preeminence [over] every other religious sect & denomination merely on its own foundation & by its own inherent strength."<sup>56</sup> The same point of view was expressed in the pages of the Church. In an 1837 editorial the Church argued that a well-manned Church of England would inevitably become the church of the Upper Canadian majority,<sup>57</sup> and three years later one of the Church's correspondents wrote that if the Church of England was "faithfully exhibited in her Scriptural doctrines and worship, and in her Apostolic Ministry, by zealous and laborious Missionaries," dissent would "vanish before her as noxious vapours before the genial sun."<sup>58</sup>

On the other hand, however, it is also true that, as far as the church's position in the 1820s and 1830s was concerned, Anglican clergymen saw little reason for self-congratulation. Although they

<sup>55</sup> See pp. 40-55.

<sup>56</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/40, no. 462, 1 July 1830.

<sup>57</sup> The Church, 7 Oct. 1837.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 5 Sept. 1840.

took great pride in the progress of the Anglican cause during these years, they also were convinced that the Church of England was still far too undermanned to prevent many of its own members from either lapsing into infidelity or, equally serious, drifting into the arms of the "sectaries." In July 1834, for instance, Adam Elliot informed the SCCIPGDS that Anglicans were constantly complaining of the inability of their church to make its ministrations generally available. He was confident that the Church of England was the single largest denomination in Upper Canada, but he noted that "many persons who originally belonged to our communion, have joined other persuasions, on account of their destitution of the public means of grace."<sup>59</sup> He was just as depressed about the state of his church in 1835. In that year he reported that he often heard people "observe with deep regret that though they belong to the Established Church, they are the most neglected and destitute denomination of Christians in this flourishing country. They are, indeed, at present an unhappy and scattered flock."<sup>60</sup>

Similar statements on the religious destitution of the Anglican community were made by other clergymen. W. F. S. Harper wrote in 1835 that in the township of West Loughboro in the Midland district the absence of a "regular Ministry" made the settlers susceptible to "every kind of doctrine that may chance to come among them." While Harper,

<sup>59</sup> Fourth Annual Report of the SCCIPGDS (1834), p. 62.

<sup>60</sup> Fifth Annual Report (1835), p. 64.

like Elliot, believed the Church of England to be the largest denomination in the colony, he too warned that many Anglicans in his district had "been induced to leave our Communion and to join other denominations, from being unable to obtain the ministrations of their own."<sup>61</sup>

H. H. O'Neill claimed that in the Niagara, Gore, and Home districts "the children of hundreds of Emigrants, who are members of our Church, are growing up in perfect ignorance of her doctrines, discipline and government, from the want of Clergymen, and the parents are gradually becoming lukewarm and indifferent."<sup>62</sup> George Petrie asserted that the religious destitution of the London district, where there were only two Anglican clergymen for thirty-six townships and 7000 people, was

"appalling."<sup>63</sup> On 3 August 1837 a disconsolate Thomas Green informed Waddilove that "gloomy, dark, and lowering is the scene around: very many possessing and boasting of the name of Christian, yet live and die in Pagan darkness."<sup>64</sup> Green claimed on another occasion that "the total want of sound and evangelical teaching" in the London district allowed "the seeds of Socinianism [*sic*] and Universalism" to be "disseminated and cherished."<sup>65</sup> The lack of an Anglican clergyman in townships such

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 73 and 91.

<sup>62</sup> Seventh Annual Report of the SCCIFGDS (1838), p. 16.

<sup>63</sup> Upper Canadian Travelling Missionary Fund reports (1839), letter from G. Petrie, 10 Sept. 1839.

<sup>64</sup> The Stewart Missions, p. 170.

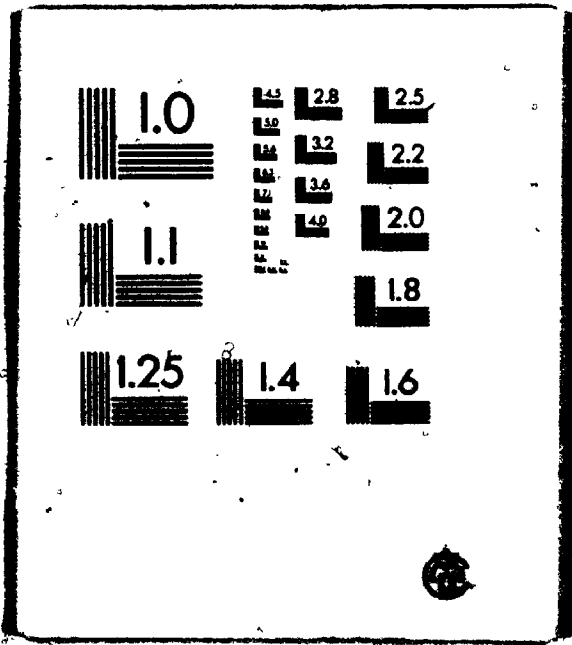
<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Green to Waddilove, 21 Oct. 1836, p. 155.

Another travelling missionary, George Petrie, was even more blunt. In an 1839 report Petrie denounced Britain's policy of sending out twenty to sixty thousand emigrants annually, without making any provision for their religious and educational needs. He also claimed that the imperial government's abandonment of the SPG had weakened the Upper Canadian church to such an extent that designing demagogues from the United States had been able to spread their revolutionary ideas without resistance. As he put it:

the Americans, shrewdly perceiving the advantage to be obtained by this blind and infatuated neglect of the English Government, and what a favourable opportunity it presented to disseminate their pernicious, and democratic notions . . . both in Religion and Politics, amongst these poor and neglected British Settlers, soon pounced upon the Prey spread to their hand by Christian England. . . Yankee Teachers, and Preachers were soon poured into Canada, under the pretext of this neglect. I need not tell you they were received with open arms--by these forlorn people, who comparing their apparently disinterested benevolence, with the cruelly parsimonious conduct of the British Government--viewed them, AS THE BENEFACTORS OF MANKIND.

To Petrie, then, it was clear that Britain should repent for its past errors and take immediate steps to plant "throughout the two Provinces proper Churches, Schools, Preachers and Teachers, so that instead of a system of Mischief . . . the people being nourished and brought up in principles based on Religion, Peace and Tranquility may once more be established in Canada." If this course of action was not taken, and if the Church of England in Upper Canada continued to labour under "the mark of Pestilence," Britain would have to contend with a social and political upheaval "which, ere long, shall shake the throne to its foundation, and scatter Royalty, and Title, and Property, and Peace,

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as Biddulph, McGillivray, Osborne, and Missouri, he noted, "leaves them most lamentably open to the pernicious and anti-christian doctrines which are daily and actively disseminated by the busy agents of Satan."<sup>66</sup>

In 1837 F. L. Osler related an anecdote which starkly underlined the Church of England's failure to meet the needs of many of its own members. He wrote that at Bolton Mills

a granary was filled with seats. Whilst waiting for the people to assemble, many having to come a considerable distance, an old man named Pringle accosted me. After some conversation he said, "I was always brought up a member of the Church. Twenty years I have been in this country, and but four times during that period have I seen the face of a minister." The reflection that he was thus deprived of the means of grace seemed to overpower him, for he covered his face with both his hands and turned away to conceal the tears which trickled down his furrowed cheeks. I told him that he still had his Bible and that God was to be found even in the wilderness. "I know it, Sir, I know it," he replied, "and I well know that being a member of the Church of England will not save me; but we want a minister to guide and direct us, we want God's word preached to us." I deeply felt for the old man, and, indeed for the destitute state of Canada, for hundreds, nay thousands, like him mourn over the blessings of the Gospel which they once enjoyed in their native land.<sup>67</sup>

Predictably, this concern about the religious destitution of Upper Canadian Anglicans went side by side, with a violently hostile attitude towards the imperial government's policy of withdrawing financial assistance from the SPG. Throughout this period travelling missionaries,

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>67</sup> Osler, "Sketch of My Life," pp. 99-100.

the clergymen most intimately acquainted with conditions at the local level of religious life, complained angrily that the niggardliness of the British government was preventing the Church of England from fulfilling its responsibilities to Upper Canada's rapidly growing immigrant community. They also warned that by depriving the Church of England of the support it needed to spread its message to every corner of Upper Canadian society, Britain had seriously undermined the one institution that could have preserved the colony's social and political stability. Typical in this regard were statements made by Thomas Green in an 1838 report to Waddilove. After noting that "the cruel aggressions of ruthless and infidel marauders from the States, have once more disturbed the peaceful firesides and happy homes of the loyal Canadians," Green declared that "had those who have presided over the destinies of the Kingdom . . . acted faithfully towards the emigrants . . . many, if not all, of our present dangers and disturbances would never have occurred." He then went on to declare:

sending out annually such an enormous mass of poor emigrants, without making even the slightest provision for their religious instruction--what in the name of common sense, could Statesmen expect? This state of things is but the natural, the inevitable, result; and it cannot surprise any thinking man to find that, (themselves neglected, and their children left entirely without instruction,) all alike forget the obedience due to the "Powers that be," as ordained of God, when the "Powers that be" set them the example of thus forgetting God. . . . what have we else to expect than that if we persist in the same system of neglecting the true interests of the Colony, at no very distant day, a majority may be found (if not seeking it) at least quietly acquiescing in a change of Government. . . .<sup>68</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Upper Canadian Travelling Missionary Fund report, 1838, letter from T. Green, 24 Nov. 1838.

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and every social comfort to the four winds of Heaven."<sup>69</sup>

### III

Clearly, the 1820s and 1830s marked a significant watershed in the Church of England's experience in Upper Canadian society. In this period the church made considerable progress in building up a larger supply of clerical manpower and in expanding its base of popular support. What was even more significant, religious conditions during these decades--in particular, the continued growth of rival denominations and the arrival of thousands of Anglican immigrants from the British Isles--produced a general consensus in Church of England circles that far more attention would have to be paid to missionary activity. One manifestation of this new commitment to proselytization was the Anglican clergy's rediscovery of the importance of extra-parochial labours, a practice which had been common in the early years of the church's history in Upper Canada, but which had fallen by the wayside in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Another was the founding in 1830 of the SCCIPGDS. Along with two English bodies, the Upper Canada Travelling Missionary Fund and the Upper Canada Clergy Society, the SCCIPGDS attempted to strengthen the Anglican cause through the building up of a force of itinerant clergy.

All these developments were important steps forward in the history of the Upper Canadian church. Yet from the standpoint of Anglican

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 1840, letter from G. Petrie, 23 Dec. 1839.

clergymen, the Church of England's record in the 1820s and 1830s left much to be desired. Although the clergy of these years continued to hold a utopian view of the religious future of Upper Canada, they also were certain that the Church of England still lacked the manpower it needed to meet its responsibilities to a rapidly growing Anglican population. Their concern about this state of affairs was best expressed in their attacks on the British government's decision in the early 1830s to cut off financial assistance to the SPG. To them, there could be no doubt whatsoever that Britain's short-sighted retrenchment was endangering not only the interests of the Church of England, but also the social and political stability of the entire province.

### III

#### JOHN STRACHAN, THE CLERGY RESERVES, AND EDUCATION

At the same time as a campaign was being waged to alleviate the religious destitution of the Anglican community, John Strachan was taking important steps to bolster the Church of England's institutional foundations. Like other Anglican clergymen, Strachan came to the conclusion in the 1820s that the time had come for the Church of England to be far more active in advancing its own interests. This conviction, together with an equally firm belief in the importance of a strong Church of England to Upper Canada's future as a stable British colony, led Strachan to move in two directions simultaneously. On one front, he attempted to turn the clergy reserves into a more lucrative source of income, a step which he regarded as indispensable if the church was to have the necessary financial resources to enhance its effectiveness as a missionary organization; in this regard his major accomplishments were the creation in 1819 of the Clergy Reserves Corporation, and the inauguration in 1826 of a system whereby the leasing of the reserves was ended and replaced by a more practical sales policy. On another front, he extended the Church of England's influence in the educational sphere by laying the foundations of a state-supported, Anglican-controlled common school system, and by persuading the imperial government to agree to his plans for a university which, though open to the members of all denominations, was to be closely tied to the Church of

England. In this case, the underlying assumption was that an educational system controlled by the Church of England would serve both as a safeguard of social stability and the imperial connection, and as a source of the clerical manpower that the church so desperately required if it was to become the dominant religious force in the colony.

Like the campaign to make the Church of England a more effective missionary organization, however, Strachan's attempts to strengthen the church's institutional foundations encountered serious obstacles. In this area, the church's problems stemmed from the fact that in the 1820s and 1830s Strachan's plans with regard to the clergy reserves and Upper Canada's educational system ran directly counter to the voluntarist demand for the complete separation of church and state. During these turbulent decades reform politicians and various religious denominations gained increasing support in their efforts to secularize the clergy reserves, a landed endowment which was the cornerstone of the Church of England's established status. Equally important, in the field of education, widespread opposition to King's College blocked the opening of that institution in the years before the rebellion, and the growing clamour in favour of a non-sectarian and democratically structured common school system led to the abolition of one of Strachan's personal creations, the General Board of Education, in 1833, and to the introduction of legislative measures in 1835 and 1836 which were passed by the Assembly but rejected by the Legislative Council.

Naturally, these developments in the world of politics left Strachan angry and embittered. Again and again in these years he lashed out violently against those Upper Canadians who were attempting to

overturn the policy of church establishment enshrined in the Constitutional Act, a policy which in his view was designed to further the interests of the colony as a whole. He also attacked the imperial government for ignoring the wishes of Upper Canada's conservative elements and instead giving encouragement to the colony's "demagogues." In his mind, such a policy would inevitably lead not only to the destruction of the Church of England, but also to the disintegration of the British constitution itself.

## I

In the immediate post-war period Strachan's central objective was the creation of a strong Church of England. To him it was now apparent that unless immediate action were taken to strengthen the Church of England, the future of the Anglican cause would be seriously jeopardized and the most effective guarantee of Upper Canada's social and political stability would be irretrievably lost. This frame of mind, with its underlying assumptions about the Church of England's role in the preservation of Upper Canada's character as a socially stable and loyal colony, was an important factor in Strachan's decision to take a more active part in political affairs. In an 1816 letter discussing his possible appointment to the Legislative Council, Strachan explained that "I have little or nothing personal to expect but I have plans to prepare which I think useful & expedient for the temporal & eternal interests of the people."<sup>1</sup> His desire to serve Upper Canada in a

<sup>1</sup>AO, Robinson Papers, Strachan to Robinson, 7 May 1816.



position of authority was stimulated even further when in 1817 the Legislative Council defeated a bill intended to appropriate £500 annually for the education of ministerial candidates. In a letter to Bishop Mountain he expressed his disappointment with the action of the Council, and noted that "the time is come when the Church ought to have in the Legislative Council several Friends judiciously alive to her Interests." Claiming that the Church of England could count on the vote of only one Legislative Councillor, he concluded that his own presence in the Council would be of invaluable assistance to the cause of the establishment. He also asserted that a seat in the Council would enable him to take advantage of the influence he possessed over those of his former pupils who were now members of the House of Assembly, a body which, as was evidenced by the recent passage of resolutions against the clergy reserves, was becoming increasingly hostile to the Church of England.<sup>2</sup>

With the realization of his political ambitions--he was appointed to the Executive Council in 1817 and to the Legislative Council in 1820 --Strachan led the way in formulating measures designed to strengthen the structural foundations of the Church of England. In the early 1820s, for example, he began reminding the Colonial Office that the creation of a separate Upper Canadian diocese, with himself as its first bishop, was both "essential and pressing" if the Church of England was "to be placed on anything like an equality with the Roman

<sup>2</sup> George Spragge, ed., The John Strachan Letter Book, 1812-34 (Toronto, 1946), Strachan to Mountain, 12 May 1817, pp. 129-32.

Catholics, or to acquire a decided superiority over the Sectaries."<sup>3</sup>

In addition, in 1824 he conducted a vigorous campaign against the projected union of the two Canadas, arguing that such a union would produce an assembly dominated by Roman Catholics, who in league with the "sectaries" of Upper Canada would succeed in despoiling the Church of England of its landed endowment. He suggested a number of amendments to the proposed bill, but emphasized that the wisest course for the imperial authorities to follow would be to shelve this project and instead establish a general union of the British North American colonies--a measure which would effectively curtail the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and thus improve the position of the established Church of England.<sup>4</sup>

Strachan's desire to strengthen the Church of England's position was also revealed in his efforts to increase the profitability of the clergy reserves. He first commented upon the clergy reserves in an 1817 letter to Bishop Mountain, in which he emphasized the importance of turning the reserves into a more lucrative source of income but offered no suggestions as to how this objective was to be accomplished.<sup>5</sup> In the following year he became more specific, proposing in a memorial to Lieutenant Governor Gore that the clergy reserves fund be used to endow parsonages, and that the reserves themselves be placed under the

<sup>3</sup> Strachan Papers, Strachan to Horton, 10 July 1824.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Horton, 25 May 1824 and 25 June 1824.

<sup>5</sup> Spragge, Strachan Letter Book, 1812-34, Strachan to Mountain, 10 Nov. 1817, p. 142.

management of a corporation--a step which he hoped would result in a more efficient leasing system and the punctual payment of rents.<sup>6</sup> The latter suggestion led to the creation in 1819 of the Clergy Reserves Corporation, one of the most notable of whose members was Strachan himself.

When the policy of free land grants came to an end in the 1820s Strachan reached the conclusion that the Church of England could most effectively augment its financial resources by selling rather than renting its clergy reserve lands. In May 1824 he informed Robert Wilmot Horton of the Colonial Office that "an authority to sell [the clergy reserves] would I am persuaded enable us to get in a few years so much ahead of the Sectaries, that they could never again become formidable."<sup>7</sup> Two years later, after having blocked single-handed the transfer of a portion of the reserves to the Canada Company, he persuaded the imperial government to authorize the sale of one-half of the reserves at a maximum yearly rate of 100,000 acres. According to his calculations, this measure would after a period of twenty-one years produce an annual revenue of £38,000--an income sufficient to support two or three hundred Anglican clergymen.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Strachan Papers, Draft of a memorial to Lieutenant Governor Gore, 1818.

<sup>7</sup> BRMTL, Strachan Papers, Scadding Collection, Strachan to Horton, 15 May 1824.

<sup>8</sup> Observations on the provision made for the maintenance of a Protestant Clergy (London, 1827), pp. 9-10.

No less impressive were Strachan's efforts to further the Anglican cause by creating an educational system that was supported by the state and controlled by the Church of England. As early as 1815 Strachan submitted a memorial to the lieutenant governor which proposed the establishment of a university at some future date, the creation of a scholarship fund to support poor students at the grammar schools that had been erected in each district by an act of 1807, an annual government grant of £30 to teachers at common schools, and the formation of a board of education.<sup>9</sup> This memorial led to the Common Schools Act of 1816, which provided the annual sum of £6,000 for the support of common schools and an annual government grant of £25 to all teachers, and which stipulated that teachers had to be British subjects and that the lieutenant governor was to be responsible for appointing members of the district boards.<sup>10</sup> Strachan's imprint on Upper Canadian education became even greater in subsequent years: in 1817, upon his appointment to the Executive Council, he was vested with the responsibility of providing textbooks for the common schools;<sup>11</sup> in 1819 one of

<sup>9</sup> Strachan also recommended that of the lands reserved in 1798 for education, 200 acres be given to the grammar schools, 1400 acres to the common schools, and 400 acres to a university. The Board of Education was to be composed of Executive Councillors, judges, trustees of the district grammar schools, and the clergyman of the Home District. See Spragge, Strachan Letter Book, 1812-34, Strachan to Drummond, 26 Feb. 1815, pp. 75-80.

<sup>10</sup> George W. Spragge, "Elementary Education in Upper Canada, 1820-1840," OH, XLIII (July 1951), 109. It is unlikely that Strachan was associated with the Grammar School Act of 1807. See George W. Spragge, "John Strachan's Contribution to Education, 1800-23," CHR, 22 (June 1941), 148.

<sup>11</sup> Spragge, "Strachan's Contribution to Education," p. 154.

the central recommendations in his 1815 memorial--the provision of government financial assistance to poor students--was implemented with the passage of an amendment to the Grammar School Act which enabled ten students from each common school to be educated free of charge at the district grammar school;<sup>12</sup> and finally, in 1823 he was made superintendent of the newly created General Board of Education. The latter position placed all schools in the colony under Strachan's personal supervision and gave him the power to recommend textbooks to local authorities.<sup>13</sup>

One of the most important objectives of this state-supported, centralized school system was to make the Church of England the supreme authority in the field of education. In March 1816 Strachan informed Bishop Mountain that the Common School Act would give the Church of England "the power of directing the books to be used, and the qualifications of the Masters."<sup>14</sup> Later in the same year he told Mountain that his own appointment as "inspector of Education" would set a precedent that this post should always be filled by the Anglican clergyman stationed in York. "By this means," he wrote, "the Established Religion would have had a paramount influence over the education of the people & [this] indirectly placed under the control of the Bishop who could have

<sup>12</sup> Spragge, "Elementary Education in Upper Canada," p. 109.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>14</sup> Strachan Papers, Scadding Collection, Strachan to Mountain, 19 March 1816.

advised with & instructed the Inspector."<sup>15</sup>

Of course, an Anglican-controlled educational system would be of great assistance in advancing the interests of the Church of England. Throughout this period Strachan's educational policies were based on the belief that a properly designed school system would serve as a vehicle for the inculcation of sound religious principles in Upper Canadian society. Thus, on 19 February 1821 he informed Mountain that "the most effectual method of supporting our Establishment is by getting the Education of the rising generation to be placed under the direction and control of the regular Clergy."<sup>16</sup> Shortly afterwards he reiterated in another letter to Mountain that the "true foundation of the prosperity of our Establishment must be laid in the Education of Youth the command and direction of which must as far as possible be concentrated in our Clergy," and he added that "this hitherto [has] been the silent policy of all the measures taken for the Education of Youth adopted in this Province."<sup>17</sup>

For Strachan, an educational system under the control of the Church of England would also play a vital role in maintaining social stability and defending the imperial connection. After the War of 1812 Strachan felt certain that the security of Upper Canada hinged upon the ability of religious and political authorities to discredit republican

<sup>15</sup> Spragge, Strachan Letter Book, 1812-34, Strachan to Mountain, 30 Sept. 1816.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Mountain, 19 Feb. 1821, p. 210.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Mountain, 26 Feb. 1821, p. 212.

ideology. Closely linked to this conviction was the view that the political loyalty of Upper Canadians would be virtually guaranteed if responsibility for the operation of the educational system was vested in the Church of England, a denomination which was known for its devotion to the imperial tie. Accordingly, in 1815 Strachan insisted that McGill University, which he hoped would make the young men of the Canadas "friendly to our different establishments and attached to the Parent State," should retain a religious character, and with this end in mind he recommended that its principal should always be an Anglican clergyman.<sup>18</sup> Five years later his praise of the "great excellence" of an education "flowing naturally from a regular establishment" was coupled with his warning that a university was essential if Upper Canada was to survive as a British colony.<sup>19</sup>

As the last statement suggests, Strachan's objectives in the field of education were revealed most clearly in his campaign to establish an Anglican-controlled university. The origins of Strachan's plan for an Upper Canadian university date to just after the war, when on three separate occasions he attempted to prod the legislature into founding a college at York, a college which would be under his personal control.<sup>20</sup> Some years later, in February 1826, he was responsible for drawing up

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Sam Sherwood, Andrew Stuart, and James Stuart, 14 Feb. 1815, p. 68. See also the draft version of this letter, 14 Feb. 1815, p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> A Visit to the Province of Upper Canada in 1819. By James Strachan (Aberdeen, 1820), pp. 128-31.

<sup>20</sup> Spragge, "Strachan's Contribution to Education," p. 153.

an Executive Council report which emphasized that tutors in an Upper Canadian university should be "not merely eminent for their learning, but for their attachment to the British Monarchy and to the Established Church," that the university itself should be allied with the Church of England, and that one of the main purposes of such a university was to produce a larger supply of Anglican clergymen.<sup>21</sup>

Strachan's commitment to the principle of Anglican control was again displayed in a draft charter for a university which he submitted to Lord Bathurst in June 1826. While this document, in recognition of the fact that Upper Canada was a religiously pluralistic society, did not require religious tests for professors and non-divinity students, it stated that the president and vice-president of the university were to be Anglican clergymen, that the Bishop of Quebec was to be the official visitor, and that only Anglican professors could be members of the governing council.<sup>22</sup> The imperial authorities were evidently impressed with these proposals, for in 1827 King's College, Upper Canada, with Strachan as its president, received a royal charter and was endowed with 225,944 acres of crown lands and annual payments of £1,000 from the Canada Company.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Strachan Papers, "Extract from a Report of the Executive Council relative to the founding of an University in Upper Canada," 3 Feb. 1826. The tone of this report bears a close resemblance to An appeal to the friends of religion and literature, in behalf of the University of Upper Canada. By John Strachan, D.D. Archdeacon of York, Upper Canada (London, 1827).

<sup>22</sup> Strachan Papers, Strachan to Bathurst, 15 June 1826.

<sup>23</sup> Gerald M. Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841 (Toronto, 1963), p. 184.



Historians have made a number of errors in their analyses of the founding of King's College. One of these errors concerns Strachan's draft charter of 1826. In his biography of Strachan, J. L. H. Henderson has written that the charter of 1827 required all professors to be Anglican,<sup>24</sup> and this argument is echoed in J. S. Moir's Church and State in Canada West, where it is stated that Bathurst was responsible for making subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles mandatory for professors and members of the college council, and that Strachan regarded this alteration of his draft charter as "injudicious."<sup>25</sup> On this score, it is certainly true that Bathurst insisted upon an Anglican teaching staff, and that Strachan accepted this provision rather half-heartedly.<sup>26</sup> However, it must be emphasized that the 1827 charter, contrary to the claims of Henderson and Moir, required only professors on the college council to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles<sup>27</sup>--a fact which seems to indicate that in the end Bathurst had been swayed by Strachan's arguments. This is borne out by

<sup>24</sup> J. L. H. Henderson, John Strachan, 1778-1867 (Toronto, 1969), p. 41. Henderson's error is all the more glaring since it contradicts his own statements and the material quoted in his John Strachan: Documents and Opinions (Toronto, 1969), pp. 123-27. In this work Henderson correctly states that religious tests were required only of council members.

<sup>25</sup> Moir, Church and State in Canada West, p. 83.

<sup>26</sup> Strachan Papers, Bathurst to Strachan, 22 June 1826; and Strachan to Bathurst, 26 June 1826.

<sup>27</sup> The Charter of the University of King's College, at York, in Upper Canada (London, 1827).

Strachan's declaration in 1831 that "it cost me more trouble than I can well express to get the students freed from any test, and still more to get the professors relieved from signing the Standards."<sup>28</sup>

Moir is also on weak ground when he argues that the Anglican council of King's College was the handiwork of a Colonial Secretary who ignored Strachan's appeals for a liberal university. While Strachan in 1831 claimed that the provision for an Anglican council had been forced upon him by the imperial authorities,<sup>29</sup> his own statements and actions in the preceding decade belied this assertion. The draft charter of 1826, as has been shown, indicates that Strachan had always been a supporter of the idea that the council should be open only to Anglicans, and his correspondence on the subject of a university in June 1826 clearly reveals that he and Bathurst disagreed not over the composition of the council but over the need of religious tests for professors.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, as president of the college council Strachan was responsible in 1832 for proposing a series of amendments to the 1827 charter which did little to curtail Anglican influence. One of these amendments, while abolishing the requirement that appointment to the college council was conditional upon a subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, maintained the principle that all professors on

<sup>28</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-34, Strachan to John McLaurin, 3 Oct. 1831.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> See, once again, Strachan Papers, Bathurst to Strachan, 22 June 1826; and Strachan to Bathurst, 26 June 1826.

the council were to be members of the Church of England.<sup>31</sup> Strachan adopted a similar position in 1837, when a bill was introduced into the assembly which stipulated that members of the council should not have to be Anglicans or to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles.<sup>32</sup> He was on the Select Committee of the Legislative Council which had been established to study this bill, and which recommended in its report that professors on the college council should be members of either the Church of England or the Church of Scotland. When the King's College bill was passed in its original form by the assembly, Strachan supported it in the Legislative Council.<sup>33</sup> This reversal in position, however, was not prompted by a conversion to the idea of religious equality. Strachan later explained that he supported the 1837 bill not because he was convinced of its intrinsic merits as a piece of legislation, but because he was anxious to end the wrangling which for the past ten years had blocked the establishment of King's College.<sup>34</sup>

The charter of 1827 has been misunderstood in yet another sense. Both J. D. Purdy and Moir subscribe to the opinion that Strachan's rejection of religious tests for professors and non-divinity students was testimony to his tolerance and his progressive philosophy of education.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> J. G. Hodgins, ed., Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, Vol. III: 1836-40 (Toronto, 1895), pp. 34-35.

<sup>32</sup> See ibid., pp. 60-70 for the provisions of this bill.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>35</sup> J. D. Purdy, "Strachan and Education in Canada, 1800-51," Diss. Toronto 1962, pp. 194-203; and Moir, Church and State in Canada West, p. 83.

This interpretation of the evidence is undoubtedly valid from one point of view: the charter of 1828 was extraordinarily liberal in comparison to the exclusively Anglican nature of Oxford and Cambridge, and Strachan was certainly sincere in his desire to make the first university of Upper Canada accessible to individuals of all religious persuasions. It is debatable, though, whether Moir and Purdy are correct when they claim that Strachan's plans for King's College were based on a commitment to the idea of religious toleration. In the 1820s, Strachan was an uncompromising defender of the privileges of the established church and a violent critic of dissenters, whom he saw as sinful schismatics from a branch of the Church of Christ and as fanatics determined to destroy the social and political order of society.<sup>36</sup> It is thus hardly likely that Strachan, the personification of Anglican intolerance, was inspired in his educational endeavours by an attachment to the principle of religious equality. A far more convincing explanation of the liberal features of the 1827 charter is that since Strachan's university, as will shortly be seen, was to play a central role in the creation of a stable, loyal, and Anglican community, it could not, by its very nature, confine its influence to the members of a single denomination. In Strachan's mind, dissenters admitted to King's College, an institution where the teachings of all professors, be they Anglicans or non-Anglicans, were supervised and monitored by Anglican administrative authorities, would

<sup>36</sup> See chapter four.

obviously be encouraged to become God-fearing citizens, eager to maintain social stability and to defend the imperial connection. The King's College charter of 1827, therefore, far from embodying the "liberality and breadth of Strachan's views on higher education,"<sup>37</sup> rather reflected his belief in the relationship between education, loyalty, and the Church of England.

Strachan never made a secret of the fact that King's College was to act as a guardian of the imperial connection. In his report for the Executive Council in 1826 he noted that an Anglican-controlled university would disseminate British values and sound political principles throughout the colony. He declared that such a university "from its natural relation with an increasing Clergy would gradually infuse into the whole population, a tone and feeling entirely English and by a judicious selection of Elementary Books issuing from its Press render it certain that the first feelings, sentiments, and opinions of the youth should be British." In the same document he also emphasized that the students of an Upper Canadian university, drawn from "the most opulent Families," would in later years constitute a political and professional élite which, by the mere force of its example, would foster patriotism amongst all sectors of the community. "The effects of the university," he wrote,

would soon be visible in the greater intelligence and more confirmed principles of Loyalty of those who would be called to the various public duties of Magistrates, and Legislators,

<sup>37</sup> Moir, Church and State in Canada West, p. 83.

and in the Members of the learned Professions, whose principles and conduct have inevitably so great an influence in Society. . . . It is quite evident that such an Institution, in alliance with the Church, would tend to establish a most affectionate connexion between this Colony and the Parent State. . . .<sup>38</sup>

This argument was repeated almost verbatim in an 1827 pamphlet which urged the British public to contribute financially to the support of King's College. In his Appeal to the Friends of Religion and Literature Strachan asserted that the youth of Upper Canada, lacking a university of their own, were forced to complete their education in the United States, where they were encouraged to renounce their British heritage and embrace the destructive theories of American republicanism. He was thus convinced that a university was indispensable if Upper Canadians were to love Great Britain and appreciate the merits of the British constitution, if men in public life were to be noted for their intelligence and their sound political views, and if lawyers, doctors, and clergymen--the three classes which, as the élite of colonial society, formed the values of the entire population--were to have loyalty "implanted upon their hearts."<sup>39</sup> Believing that Upper Canada could never be secure as long as its young men received their higher education in a country characterized by social anarchy and the rule of the multitude, Strachan warned that any delay

<sup>38</sup> Strachan Papers, "Report of Executive Council relative to the founding of an university," 3 Feb. 1826.

<sup>39</sup> An appeal in behalf of the University of Upper Canada, pp. 5-11.

in the creation of a university "may be attended with evil consequences, which may never be retrieved." In the United States, he declared,

politics pervade the whole system of education; the school books from the very first elements are stuffed with praises of their own institutions and breathe hatred to everything English. . . . To such a country our youth may go strongly attached to their native land and to all its establishments, but by hearing them continually depreciated and those of America praised, this attachment will in many be weakened, and some may become fascinated with that liberty which has degenerated into licentiousness, and imbibe, perhaps unconsciously, sentiments unfriendly to things of which Englishmen are proud. . . . Nor can it be expected that any of them on their return will give up their hearts and affections to their Parent State with the same cordiality nurtured within the British Dominions. What indeed can be more important to the true prosperity of the Province, than the careful education of its youth? In what other way can we ever obtain a well-instructed population by which to preserve our excellent constitution and our connexion with the British Empire, and give that respectable character to the country which arises from an intelligent magistracy and from having public situations filled by men of ability and information.<sup>40</sup>

The same pamphlet also revealed Strachan's perception of the relationship between King's College and the cause of the Church of England. Announcing that twenty-four Anglican clergymen served a population which was scattered over 28,260 square miles,<sup>41</sup> Strachan argued that the limited manpower resources of the Church of England had produced a state of religious and political anarchy. "Nothing can be more manifest," he wrote, "than that Upper Canada has not yet felt the advantage of a religious establishment. What can twenty-four clergymen do

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p., 12.

scattered over a country of nearly six hundred miles in length? Can we be surprised that under such circumstances . . . sectaries of all descriptions have increased?"<sup>42</sup> Strachan estimated that 112 additional clergymen were needed immediately, and that a total of 272 clergymen would be needed by 1846 to tend to a population which would then number in the vicinity of 400,000.<sup>43</sup> It would be the task of the newly chartered King's College to provide the Church of England with the clergymen it required if it was to defend Upper Canada against the designs of disloyal and subversive dissenting preachers who came from the "republican states of America."<sup>44</sup> Even more important, the clergymen provided by King's College would enable the Church of England to embark on a campaign of missionary expansion which would not only save the souls of "our brethren who are perishing or falling away for lack of instruction,"<sup>45</sup> but also lead dissenters to return to the Anglican fold. Strachan predicted that Upper Canada would one day possess a population of twelve to sixteen million, and he asserted that "it is impossible to set limits to the influence which the University of the Upper Province, if wisely and piously directed, may acquire over this vast population--the greater portion of which may, through the Divine blessing, be brought up in the Communion of the Church of England."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 18 and 10.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 17.



This belief in the capacity of King's College to create an Anglican Upper Canada prompted Strachan to emphasize that "it is chiefly on religious grounds that this appeal for the University of Upper Canada is made, which, while it offers its benefits to the whole population, will, for a century to come, from the peculiar circumstances of the country be essentially a Missionary College. . . ."47

He was equally candid in a letter to the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in which he solicited financial assistance for King's College. "In the Canadas," he wrote in reference to the purpose of an institution he again described as a "Missionary College,"

there are about three hundred thousand British Protestants without any seminary beyond a Grammar School. Of this number only a portion are Churchmen—but all may become so under good management. . . . the demand for Clergymen is at this moment so great in Upper Canada and from the rapid increase in population continually becoming greater that the College will have for a long period to furnish more candidates for the Church than for all the other professions put together.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 12. Purdy claims that Strachan's Appeal was inconsistent "with his policy enunciated in various schemes over the past fifteen years," and was possibly designed "to deceive the British public in seeking their financial assistance for this institution. An Anglican college would be more apt to attract their support than one open to all denominations" (see Purdy, "Strachan and Education in Canada," p. 207). This argument is based on the false assumption that Strachan's liberal educational philosophy was embodied in the King's College charter of 1827. It also ignores the fact that Strachan had always seen King's College as an institution closely connected with the Church of England.

48 Strachan Papers, Strachan to SPCK, 1827.

## II

Strachan's plans for strengthening the Church of England's institutional foundations encountered violent opposition in the Upper Canada of the 1820s and 1830s. During these decades an increasingly vocal and powerful reform movement campaigned on a wide range of issues touching the social, political, and religious fabric of Upper Canadian society. In the religious sphere, one of the most significant features of the reformers' campaign was the growing demand for the secularization of the clergy reserves, a demand which was echoed by many of the Church of England's denominational rivals. Criticism of the Church of England's landed endowment was first voiced in 1817, when the assembly adopted resolutions condemning the reserves as "unsurmountable obstacles" to settlement and calling on the imperial government to authorize the sale of all clergy reserve lands.<sup>49</sup> Two years later, in 1819, the reserves once again became the subject of controversy when a Presbyterian congregation in Niagara-on-the-Lake petitioned the colonial authorities for a government grant, from the clergy reserves or any other source, to assist in the restoration of their church and in the maintenance of a resident clergyman.<sup>50</sup>

Lieutenant Governor Maitland forwarded this petition to the Colonial Office, but not without adding his own opinion that the Presbyterian

<sup>49</sup> John S. Moir, Church and State in Canada, 1627-1867: Basic Documents (Toronto, 1967), p. 160.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

claim was inadmissible.<sup>51</sup> To his amazement, however, the Law Officers of the Crown ruled that the religious clauses of the Constitutional Act made provision for the endowment of the Church of Scotland, and that on this basis Presbyterian congregations were entitled to a share of clergy reserve revenues. Although this decision, so damaging to the political status of the Church of England, was kept secret by Maitland,<sup>52</sup> the clergy reserves continued to be a principal cause of religious discord: in 1823 resolutions were passed in the provincial legislature recognizing the Church of Scotland as a co-established church of Upper Canada and upholding the Presbyterian claim to a share of the reserves.<sup>53</sup>

Ironically, Strachan was the person primarily responsible for transforming the discussion on the possibility of "co-establishment" into a vigorous assault against the idea of establishment itself. In a sermon preached after the death of Bishop Mountain in 1825, Strachan set forth an aggressive defence of the established Church of England and cast aspersions on the loyalty of "itinerant preachers."<sup>54</sup> Other denominations now entered the fray, and in the process the terms

<sup>51</sup> Wilson, The Clergy Reserves, p. 67.

<sup>52</sup> For the terms of the Law Officers' decision and Maitland's reaction, see Moir, Church and State in Canada, pp. 161-62; and Wilson, The Clergy Reserves, p. 67.

<sup>53</sup> Moir, Church and State in Canada, pp. 164-65.

<sup>54</sup> A Sermon, preached at York, Upper Canada, third of July, 1825, On the Death of the late Lord Bishop of Quebec (Kingston, 1826).

of the debate were fundamentally altered. In a lengthy letter published in William Lyon Mackenzie's Colonial Advocate, Egerton Ryerson, newly appointed preacher on the Yonge Street circuit, refuted Strachan's claims about Upper Canadian Methodism, and what was more important, advanced a detailed philosophical critique of the principle of church establishment.<sup>55</sup> The controversy escalated further in 1827, when the calumnies and inaccuracies of Strachan's Ecclesiastical Chart, a document which purported to be an analysis of the Church of England's position in relation to other denominations, became public knowledge.<sup>56</sup> The following year a select committee of the House of Assembly and the Canada Committee of the British House of Commons criticized the policy of church establishment as totally impractical in a religiously pluralistic society, and recommended that the clergy reserves be devoted to education and internal improvements.<sup>57</sup> Although the local and imperial authorities turned a deaf ear to these appeals, the voluntarist crusade for the separation of church and state continued to gain momentum in the course of the next decade. Indeed, when the clergy reserves finally began to yield revenue in the early 1830s, the drive to abolish the Church of England's endowment became more intense than ever: in 1830 an organization known as the Friends of Religious Liberty was founded to spread the message that churches should be supported not by the state but "by the people among whom they labour,

<sup>55</sup> Craig, Upper Canada, pp. 173-74.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>57</sup> Moir, Church and State in Canada, pp. 173-77.

and by the voluntary contribution of benevolent Societies in Canada and Great Britain";<sup>58</sup> and in subsequent years bills which provided for the secularization of the reserves were passed annually by the Assembly but rejected by the Legislative Council.<sup>59</sup>

This voluntarist campaign for the separation of church and state had even greater success in the educational sphere. In 1828 the Select Committee of the House of Assembly denounced the proposed King's College for its close connection with the Church of England, the Assembly itself petitioned the king to revoke the charter of 1827, and the Canada Committee of the imperial parliament recommended that religious tests for council members be abolished and that provision be made for a Church of England divinity professorship.<sup>60</sup> The new lieutenant governor, Sir John Colborne, used his authority as chancellor to block the establishment of the controversial university, and in its place he laid the groundwork of a preparatory school, soon to be in operation as Upper Canada College, which he believed was far better suited to the needs of a primitive frontier colony.<sup>61</sup>

Strachan's hopes for the development of higher education in Upper Canada received yet another setback in 1831, when the Colonial Secretary, believing that a more liberal university was essential if public discontent was to be placated, asked the council of King's College to surrender the charter of 1827. Strachan and his fellow council members

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 180-81.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 181-82.

<sup>60</sup> Craig, Upper Canada, p. 75.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

refused to comply with this request,<sup>62</sup> but their truculence only served to strengthen the resolve of those who were campaigning for the revocation of the King's College charter and the creation of a non-sectarian university. In 1832 a select committee of the House of Assembly introduced a bill which abolished all religious tests in the College. Although this bill and a similar one in 1835 were rejected by the Legislative Council,<sup>63</sup> it was now apparent even to Strachan that adherence to the terms of the 1827 charter was an untenable position. In 1837 the Legislative Council bowed to popular pressure and accepted the King's College bill passed by the assembly, a measure which, in addition to abolishing religious qualifications for members of the college council, stated that visiting rights were to be transferred from the Bishop of Quebec to the Court of King's Bench; that the President did not have to be the incumbent of any ecclesiastical office, and that doctrinal tests were unnecessary for degrees in divinity.<sup>64</sup> Even these concessions, however, failed to quell the controversy over the university question. There was still no provision in the projected King's College for a non-Anglican divinity professorship--a fact which led many to conclude that such a narrowly denominational institution had no right to a lavish public endowment. Thus, voluntarist denominations, such as the Baptists, continued to denounce

<sup>62</sup> For the relevant documents on this episode, see Hodgins, Documentary History of Education, III, 32-37.

<sup>63</sup> See ibid., pp. 62-65 for the provisions of these two bills.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-70.

the policy of state support for sectarian education, while other denominations, such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Scotland, and the Methodists, remained firm in their demand for a share of the King's College endowment. This opposition to the revised charter, combined with financial difficulties, postponed the establishment of King's College until 1843.<sup>65</sup>

Opposition to Strachan's projects in the field of elementary education was equally intense.<sup>66</sup> In 1833 the General Board of Education, resented because it was beyond the reach of legislative supervision and because Strachan was its superintendent, was abolished by the House of Assembly. This accomplishment inspired Upper Canadian reformers to greater efforts, and during the remainder of the decade they attacked every facet of the educational system whose foundations had been laid with the Grammar School Act of 1807 and the Common Schools Act of 1816. Strachan had told George Jehosaphat Mountain in 1827 that the district grammar schools "should be filled with gentlemen attached to the Church,"<sup>67</sup> and in the 1830s reformers maintained that in these

<sup>65</sup> See chapter six for an analysis of the university question in the 1840s.

<sup>66</sup> This analysis of tory and reform positions on the issue of common school and grammar school education is based on the following: Spragge, "Elementary Education in Upper Canada"; Susan E. Houston, "Politics, Schools, and Social Change in Upper Canada," CHR, LIII (Sept. 1972), 249-71; J. D. Purdy, "Strachan and Education in Canada," and "John Strachan's Educational Policies, 1815-1841," OH, LXIV (March 1972), 45-64; and Craig, Upper Canada, pp. 186-87.

<sup>67</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-41, Strachan to G. J. Mountain, November 1827.

schools Anglican teachers were being hired to the exclusion of teachers of other denominations. They were equally incensed by the disproportionately high number of Anglican trustees and by the exorbitant tuition and boarding fees which made a grammar school education accessible to only the privileged few. As a solution to this state of affairs, they demanded that trustees be locally elected and that the endowment of King's College be used to support a free grammar school system.

Similar recommendations were made with regard to the common schools, which throughout the 1830s were criticized as hopelessly inadequate. This criticism, in one sense, was somewhat unfair: it has recently been claimed that 90% of the Upper Canadian population in the pre-1840 period was literate, and that this remarkably high rate of literacy was attributable in part to the existence of common schools, which numbered 340 in 1829.<sup>68</sup> In the religious and political climate of the 1830s, however, it was difficult to view educational issues in an impartial light. The common schools were perceived as creatures of the "family compact," and as such they were the victims of almost uninterrupted abuse. Reform politicians repeatedly denounced the common schools for their anti-democratic administrative structure and their low educational standards. They insisted that the educational

<sup>68</sup> R. D. Gidney, "Elementary Education in Upper Canada: A Reassessment," OH, LXV (Sept. 1973), 169-85. The "private sector" also deserves a share of the credit for Upper Canada's high literacy rate. See Allan Greer, "The Sunday Schools of Upper Canada," OH, LXVII (Sept. 1975), 169-84.



system would flourish and gain the general acceptance of the Upper Canadian community only when common school trustees were locally and annually elected, and when the schools themselves were supported with funds accruing from the sale of clergy reserve and school reserve lands.

The educational proposals advanced by reformers were rejected by Strachan and his fellow conservatives, who tended to favour appointed trustees and a combination of local assessment and government grants. While it is true that reformers and conservatives gradually reached a consensus on the manner in which schools were to be financed--in 1836 Charles Duncombe, after an examination of the American educational system, introduced a bill which matched government grants to the revenues raised by local assessment--the issue of appointed versus elected trustees remained as contentious as ever. For conservatives, the election of trustees was a republican innovation which, besides being awkward and expensive to implement, would make it impossible to maintain a centralized educational system. Reformers, for their part, were no less convinced that appointed trustees were the mainstay of a system which vested control over education in an oligarchy at York and enabled this oligarchy to extend its influence throughout the colony.

These opinions hardened as Upper Canadian political life became more tumultuous. In 1835 the Legislative Council rejected a bill providing for the election of common school trustees, on the grounds that a town meeting was not "a proper place to select those who are to preside over the morals and intellectual improvement of the rising

generation; such superintendents ought to be persons of competent education and moral worth, or they cannot discharge the duties of their office."<sup>69</sup> In the following year Duncombe's bill, which included a similar provision, was also rejected by the Legislative Council. Such obstruction, however, could not continue indefinitely. By the late 1830s it was evident that Upper Canadians of all political persuasions were becoming increasingly "discontented with the educational structure founded by Strachan in the immediate post-war years and the early 1820s. In 1839 a commission which included two conservative Anglican clergymen, John McCaul and H. J. Grasett, and one reformer, S. B. Harrison, called for the election of township directors of common schools. Their report, while not translated into legislation, was evidence of a non-partisan commitment to the ideal of a more democratic educational system. This ideal would soon be embodied in the Common School Act of 1841, a measure which Strachan rightly regarded as a repudiation of his plans for the educational development of Upper Canada."<sup>70</sup>

Predictably, these reversals for the Anglican cause made Strachan more determined than ever to defend the Church of England's interests. A good example of his belligerent, inflexible attitude was his position on the subject of King's College. In the 1830s Strachan was prepared,

<sup>69</sup> Houston, "Politics, Schools, and Social Change in Upper Canada," p. 253.

<sup>70</sup> See chapter six for an analysis of Anglican attitudes towards the common school system.

as his support of the act of 1837 indicates, to open the council and administrative posts of King's College to non-Anglicans. But he was not prepared to agree to any proposal for the division of the college's endowment, for in his eyes such a proposal would be a futile concession to unscrupulous and subversive agitators. Thus, when A. N. Bethune claimed in 1831 that the Church of England should accept the Colonial Secretary's suggestion that the endowment of King's College be shared between two separate institutions, one to be under Anglican control, the other to be inter-denominational, he was reproved by Strachan for acting "quite contrary to what I consider the true interest of the Province as well as of the Church . . . to agree to two Universities of different religious principles is to entail the curse of division in the Province for ever."<sup>71</sup> Strachan expressed an identical point of view in 1839, when he learned of proposals to divide the King's College endowment between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. "If the Church tries to bribe the Kirk by offering it a share of the Univ endowment," Strachan warned, "other denominations will demand their share & we shall be left with nothing . . . [the Church of England] . . . can never be served by compromising her principles or by consenting to what is unjust either directly or indirectly--it were far better to lose all."<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-39, Strachan to Bethune, 5 Nov. 1831.

<sup>72</sup> AO, Macaulay Papers, Strachan to John Macaulay, 28 Dec. 1839.

Yet, if Strachan was belligerent in defending the Church of England's privileged status, he also became increasingly bitter and frustrated as he followed the course of religious and political life in the 1820s and 1830s. On a number of occasions during these years Strachan reflected angrily that local "incendiaries" were being encouraged by British radicals and the British government itself, and that the end result of this process would be the destruction not only of the Church of England but also of the constitutional fabric of the empire as a whole. In 1828 he claimed that the effect of the report of the Canada Committee would be "to prostrate everything British to nourish discontent--to depress the Friends of Good Govt and to strengthen levellers & Democrates."<sup>73</sup> Similarly, in 1831 he criticized the imperial government for pandering to Upper Canadian "grievance Mongers," while the "steady and enlightened supporters of good Govt" were slighted and sometimes insulted.<sup>74</sup>

Strachan's disgust with Britain's colonial policy even threatened to undermine his loyalty to the imperial connection. He told John Macaulay in 1832 that a deputation should be sent to England to warn the government that "if they continue to attend to such persons as Ryerson & Mackenzie & to break down the Constitution the Conservative Party will turn round upon them & first trample on the necks of those

<sup>73</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-39, Strachan to Hall, 29 Dec. 1828.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Hargreave, 7 March 1831.

miscreants and then govern themselves."<sup>75</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by Strachan in a memorandum of 1828, a particularly bitter piece of writing which formed the basis of his Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis on the subject of the recommendations of the Canada Committee. In this document Strachan declared that he was striving to defend the established status of the Church of England, "but the progress of liberalism is bringing everything into disorder." The liberalism he had in mind was at work in Upper Canada, where the Church of England, assailed both by Roman Catholics and dissenters, was being accused of "bigotry persecution & Intolerance." It was also at work in Britain, where the government appeared anxious to scorn the supporters of the Upper Canadian church and to discard the Constitution "which used in former days to be the envy of the world the model for Politicians the theme of the Eloquent & the meditation of the Philosopher." This apostasy on the part of a nation chosen by God to act as a barrier against subversive ideas led Strachan to the edge of despair. "Of late years," he lamented, "there appears in England a merit in giving up all principles . . . the Protestant Church & State which used to be the glory of our Ancestors is now considered an antiquated thing. . . . It is sickening to the heart to read the language of Ministers of State & Members of the House of Commons."<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Macaulay Papers, Strachan to Macaulay, 12 March 1832.

<sup>76</sup> Strachan Papers, "Church Establishment," circa 1828.

These feelings were expressed in an almost identical form in Strachan's Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis. Emphasizing that "the policy which has been adopted towards the Canadas for some years past is producing a similar state of things to that which existed in America before the Revolution," he warned that acceptance of the "levelling recommendations" of the Canada Committee would destroy the constitution in Britain itself and establish a "ruthless democracy." He then denounced those British politicians who were supporting the campaign of Upper Canadian revolutionaries against the established Church of England. The majority of Upper Canadians, he wrote,

have peculiar claims to protection and indulgence. Driven from their homes by rebellion, or emigrating from the Parent State in quest of comfort and tranquility, they find all hopes blasted by a turbulent and clamorous minority. . . . This small, but ferocious, minority, is encouraged by the attention paid to their representations, and the more they shew themselves the enemies of British principles, and the Church of England, the more are they caressed by the opposition in Parliament, and sometimes even by the Ministry themselves, while the true friends of the Constitution are treated with scorn and neglect. Thus encouraged, and restrained by no principle, they are busily employed in poisoning the minds of the people by a regular system of deception, calumny and slander. . . . And after all, how can we condemn them, when we see a Report by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, as deserving of all these remarks as any which they have promulgated.<sup>77</sup>

### III

From Strachan's vantage point, of course, there was good reason to feel angry and embittered. After the conclusion of the War of 1812

<sup>77</sup> A Letter, to the Right Honorable, Thomas Frankland Lewis, MP. (1830), pp. 97-99.

Strachan had taken a number of steps to increase the Church of England's financial resources and to extend Anglican influence in the field of education. Unfortunately, these efforts to further the Anglican cause met with violent opposition from that growing number of Upper Canadians who were pledged to the complete separation of church and state. Such a situation, in Strachan's view, had serious implications both for the Church of England and for Upper Canadian society as a whole. For one thing, demands for the secularization of the clergy reserves, a landed endowment which was the foundation of the Church of England's established status under the Constitutional Act, threatened to deprive the church of the money it needed if it was to prosper in the religious life of Upper Canada. Further, the failure to establish King's College severely handicapped the Church of England in its efforts to build up a larger supply of clergymen, something which was essential if it was to cope with the challenge posed by rival religious denominations. And finally, since the Church of England's interests, at least from Strachan's perspective, were intertwined with the social and political fabric of Upper Canadian society, every blow to the Anglican cause jeopardized the colony's future as a bulwark of stability and British patriotism on the North American continent.

#### IV

#### THE END OF TOLERATION

The religious and political developments of the 1820s and 1830s-- in particular, the failure of the church's missionary "crusade" to achieve intended objectives, the growing momentum of the campaign against the clergy reserves and the common school system, and the success of the church's opponents in blocking the opening of King's College--led to a drastic change in the Anglican attitude towards other denominations. During the pre-1820 period, as was shown in chapter one, Anglican clergymen operated on the conviction that since denominational loyalties were in a state of flux, the Church of England could most effectively advance its own interests by cultivating the good will of rival religious groups. In the 1820s and 1830s, however, the spread of "enthusiasm," combined with mounting criticism of the Church of England's privileged status, shattered this commitment to inter-denominational harmony. While there was still a general feeling in Anglican circles that the Church of England was destined to triumph over other denominations, the old belief in the value of toleration now seemed totally irrelevant to the religious conditions of Upper Canadian society. Accordingly, John Strachan, the most prominent Anglican clergyman in the colony, reacted to the Church of England's increasingly beleaguered position by repudiating the principle of religious toleration and repeatedly attacking those Methodist "sectaries"



who, from his standpoint, were the root cause of the turbulence of Upper Canadian life. He also joined several correspondents of the Christian Recorder in calling for an end to Anglican participation in all inter-denominational organizations, including those bible societies which he had played a large part in launching a few years before. In justifying this startling about-face, he claimed that by joining inter-denominational bodies the Church of England was furthering the cause of dissent and sullyng its own image as a representative of the true faith.

## I

The first denunciation of the errors of sectarian religion was issued by Bishop Mountain in the episcopal charge delivered in Kingston on 25 July 1820. Unlike his 1803 charge, which had urged Anglican clergymen to maintain good relations with the members of other denominations,<sup>1</sup> the charge of 1820 made it clear that the growing strength of the sects, particularly the Methodists, had undermined Mountain's belief in the importance of religious toleration. On this occasion Mountain began by expressing his disgust with those "self-appointed Teachers"<sup>2</sup> who prided themselves on their lack of knowledge. "Observe how rapidly they proceed from error to error," he remarked, "how boldly they discuss, and how confidently they decide upon questions of the

<sup>1</sup> See chapter one, pp. 44-45.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Recorder, November 1820, p. 328.

deepest, and most difficult research, and which they possess no single qualification that can enable them fairly to examine. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Such conduct, inseparable as it was from that "extravagance of enthusiasm, which, however acceptable it may be to the multitudes, is but a miserable excuse for the mischiefs introduced, by ignorance, and folly,"<sup>4</sup> was having a highly destructive effect on the spiritual life of the Canadas. Mountain urged the Upper Canadian clergy to guard their flocks against the infection of "enthusiasm" by instilling in them a respect for the articles, rubrics, and liturgy of the Church of England, by preaching the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and by insisting upon the importance of good works, which "self-styled Evangelist Preachers" overlooked.<sup>5</sup> He also stressed that the Church of England was now morally obliged to defend itself against the attacks of sectarian religious groups:

We are, for the most part, the persons attacked. Where is the fold, into which, under the pretence that the appointed Shepherd is not faithful to his trust, unauthorized, and uninstructed Teachers, do not endeavour to intrude themselves; calumniating the conduct of the regular Clergy, and tearing asunder, the bonds of union, between the Pastor, and his People? . . . When our Doctrine is misrepresented, and our mode of teaching vilified; when our people are not only seduced from us, but taught to believe that we do not preach the Gospel of Christ; can we if we contend against the mischief, be justly censured, as narrow-minded bigots?--No surely: Censure can only justly attach to those, who compel us to the contest.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 328-37.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 337.

John Strachan agreed with his bishop on the need for an aggressive response to the challenge of sectarianism. Before 1820 Strachan's awareness of the importance of inter-denominational harmony had caused him to be rather circumspect in his attitude towards dissenters: during these years he seldom commented publicly on the errors of dissent, and when he did he was careful to avoid making any specific reference to the strongest dissenting denomination in the colony, the Methodists.<sup>7</sup> But after 1820 the turbulence of Upper Canadian religious and political life led Strachan to change his strategy. From this point on he levelled a variety of charges against sectarian religion in general and Upper Canadian Methodism in particular. Some of these charges--notably, that Methodism ignored the importance of good works, relied on the services of an untrained and ignorant ministry, and promoted a barbaric brand of religious "enthusiasm"--had first been advanced by Strachan in the pre-1820 period. Others, however, had never been levelled before, either by Strachan or by any of his fellow Anglican clergymen in Upper Canada. In this respect the most interesting of Strachan's arguments held that all dissenters were sinful schismatics from a branch of the catholic and apostolic church; and that one dissenting denomination, the Methodists, were guilty of such heinous sins as working covertly for the subversion of British institutions and the severance of the imperial tie, and leading the charge against the policy of church establishment, a policy which was sanctioned by the

<sup>7</sup> In this connection, see Strachan's letter of 1803 to Dr. Brown, cited on p. 131. This letter clearly reveals Strachan's tactful attitude towards dissent in these years.

will of God and which was vital to Upper Canada's future as a stable and God-fearing society.

At the heart of Strachan's critique of sectarianism was his view of the respective roles of faith and good works in the process of salvation. Frequently during his career as a clergyman Strachan put forward the position--a position which was, both in its simplicity and ambiguity, the quintessence of orthodox Anglicanism--that salvation was attained through faith and virtuous conduct, the latter being the concrete manifestation of faith in the present life.<sup>8</sup> To him it was inconceivable that a man of depraved morals and vicious habits could possess faith. Good works were the necessary consequence of faith, "the proofs or results of our justification,"<sup>9</sup> and without them faith could only be a sham. Similarly, good works which did not proceed from a love of God could not be expected to gain salvation. On this issue, Strachan claimed in a sermon of 1847, there was no contradiction between the gospels and the Pauline epistles. A straightforward doctrine had been needlessly obscured through the determination of some men to avoid reading the scriptures with "humility" and to perplex

<sup>8</sup> See the following sermons in the collection of Strachan Sermons in the AO: "And it shall be said in that day Lo this is our God" (19 Dec. 1824); "We pray you in Christ's stead be reconciled to God" (14 April 1828); "His commandments are not grievous" (13 Aug. 1837); "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments" (21 Nov. 1847); "And there was also a strife among them--which of them should be accounted the Greatest" (25 July 1848); "But to sit on my right hand and my left is not mine to give" (15 Dec. 1850).

<sup>9</sup> Strachan Sermons, "But to sit on my right hand" (15 Dec. 1850).

themselves with "unnatural explanations and artificial rules."<sup>10</sup> For those sincere Christians who wished to remain faithful to the doctrine of faith expounded by Christ and his apostles, Strachan offered the following advice:

Faith then is not a temporary or impetuous emotion, but a habit, a state of mind, lasting and consistent. . . . Christian faith is essentially practical. Is it belief in God's truth, then it keeps his commandments, for God's truth is practical. Is faith a belief in the teaching and life of Christ?--then it is practical--for his teaching and his life were all living breathing active benevolence. . . . Faith may be considered the Soul opening itself to receive the Divine Spirit for the recovery of that purity which consists in obeying the Law of God. Again, Faith is the yielding up of ourselves to the obedience of Christ--but to obey Christ is to live the life which Christ lived a life pre-eminently of good works. Under whatever aspect therefore we choose to place Gospel Faith it will appear the very element and power of good works or obedience.<sup>11</sup>

This view of the close relationship between faith and good works made Strachan harshly critical of Methodist revivalism. For Strachan, the grace necessary to salvation was obtained through a life-long struggle to trust in God and to live in accordance with Christian teachings. He therefore had little use for the Methodist notion that conversion could occur in a single instant of blinding revelation and in the midst of emotional hysteria. In his mind such a notion struck at the very heart of the Christian message, for its ultimate effect was to downplay the importance of virtuous conduct in the salvation

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., "If thou wilt enter unto life" (21 Nov. 1847).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

process. In 1803 he informed Dr. Brown that in Cornwall "the Methodists make some progress, and as they despair to get to heaven by works, they hope to get there by grace," adding that "I intend next sunday to attack and expose the notions of sudden inspirations, to which the Methodists pretend, not mentioning them by name as that would be to lose my labour. . . ." <sup>12</sup> Many years later, in an article published in the Kingston Gazette in 1812, he emphasized that from his vantage point the "enthusiasm" of the sects bore little resemblance to the holiness on which man's salvation dependend. While he defended the place of emotion in religious worship, he also stressed that "reason must always be the guiding and ruling faculty--the affections must not lead but follow," that the emotions themselves were the "attention and order of mind which consists in the exercise of strong and lively sentiments of virtue and piety," and that good works were the only true test of "rational devotion." He then declared that

enthusiasm is the fruit of deplorable ignorance of pride and presumption. The loud vociferations, the absurd contortions and the vehement language which many use in prayer arise from the little knowledge which they have of true religion, and from their wish to seem pious in the eyes of the world. And tho' some weak persons may be carried away by uncommon transports inward persuasions that they are under the peculiar influence of the divine spirit, they cannot be so easily excused since a little attention on their parts would prove that all these are the effects of blind zeal, and ought to be suppressed as dangerous. <sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Strachan Papers, Strachan to Brown, 27 Oct. 1803.

<sup>13</sup> Kingston Gazette, "The Reckoner," 19 May 1812.

The charge that "enthusiasm" ignored the importance of good works was reiterated in the 1820s and 1830s, when the holding of Methodist camp meetings led to a sharp increase in the number of Upper Canadians claiming to be "converted." In a sermon of 1829 Strachan argued that

altho' we cannot say that good works entitle us to Salvation yet we are supported by reason as well as by Scripture in asserting that they are the necessary sign of our Justification. . . . Let us not wait indolently for the inletting of the Spirit. Let us not expect that we shall be able to mark the very moment of our conversion or that our reformation shall be effected by some miraculous interposition. This is the unmanly and deplorable consequence of a disordered imagination--repugnant to reason--unsupported by scriptures and most prejudicial to the interests of the religion.

He then went on to state that this notion of instantaneous conversion, by encouraging men to turn a blind eye to the role of good works in the salvation of the human soul, threatened to destroy the foundations of the social order. "By vilifying good works," he declared, "the bonds of Society are torn asunder--religion and morality are set at variance all motives to action are destroyed and those under their influence become enemies to God as well as to man. Let us not then imagine that the works of the Law are rendered of no effect by the grace of God."<sup>14</sup>

Similar statements were made in a sermon preached in 1835. On this occasion Strachan criticized the idea that conversion could occur suddenly under intense emotional pressure: insisting that "turning from

<sup>14</sup> Strachan Sermons, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works" (22 Feb. 1829).

sin to holiness from darkness to light from the dominion of evil . . . passions to gospel humility is not to be accomplished in a few minutes or hours or days as it were a miracle," he argued that a true conversion was "the work of time of mature reflexion of continued industry of steady perseverance." At the same time, he emphasized again that society would disintegrate if everyone accepted the idea that conversion had nothing to do with good works. He declared that those who were attempting to divorce "the relative and social duties of life from Christianity would deprive men of the only sure basis of rational freedom & happiness the only pure standard of morals--the only effectual restraint on the bad passions and the true consolations for the miseries incident to human nature while we remain in this lower world." Although this truth seemed to be scorned by many dissenters, Strachan was confident that "as the Gospel is better understood" Christians would "seek rather to fulfill more nobly than others their various duties in life than to busy themselves with internal feelings & severe judgments of their neighbours sudden conversions morbid anticipations of future scenes and rapturous imaginations."<sup>15</sup>

Strachan had other objections to "enthusiasm." To begin with, as a clergyman who prided himself on his rationality, Strachan was disgusted by the more primitive aspects of Methodist religion. His own brand of piety derived from the Hanoverian church, and he had nothing but contempt for those who failed to appreciate the essentially

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., "Another parable he spake unto them" (1 Feb. 1835).



rational nature of Christian faith. Preferring a form of religious worship characterized by restraint and aesthetic beauty, he frequently made it clear that the frenzied outbursts common at Methodist revivals offended his sensibilities and violated those standards of decorum to which, in his view, all civilized men subscribed. In 1806, for example, he told Dr. Brown that "the Methodists are making great progress among us and, filling the country with the most deplorable fanaticism. You can have almost no conception of their excesses. They will bawl twenty of them at once, tumble on the ground, laugh, sing, jump and stamp. . . ."16 Similarly, in a sermon preached throughout the 1820s Strachan drew a distinction between commendable religious zeal and "mysterious raptures which the sober minded may call enthusiasm and which are hardly to be separated from natural constitution and animal fervour."17

For Strachan, the emotionalism of Methodist religion could be primarily attributed to the fact that most of its preachers lacked the requisite educational training. As he saw it, since Christianity was a rational religion, those who were chosen to teach its doctrines had to be men of learning and cultivated tastes. When such was not the case, there could be only one result, the dissemination far and wide of false religious doctrines. In an 1804 sermon Strachan attacked those who "step forward boldly and without preparation to expound the

<sup>16</sup> Strachan Papers, Strachan to Brown, 13 July 1806.

<sup>17</sup> Strachan Sermons, "We are confident and willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (30 June 1822).

darkest mysteries of our religion and which the most learned tremble to touch. Of all the Enemies religion ever had those ignorant expounders are the worst." The sinful pride of such impostors had effects which extended far beyond the immediate circle of their disciples. "To them," Strachan asserted, "we are indebted for almost all that variety of opinions which distract the Christian world." Their "deluded followers," told that "human learning was not necessary to expound them [the scriptures] but on the contrary that the same inspiration that dictated them at first would be present to explain them," regarded "every wild and uncommon reverie a beam of divine illumination which should be carefully treasured up." Religion in the hands of these individuals "became a visionary system without solidity and without morals."<sup>18</sup>

When Methodist religious revivals swept the entire colony in the 1820s and 1830s Strachan's criticisms of "ignorant expounders" of the Christian faith became even more impassioned. In his 1825 sermon on the death of Mountain, Strachan denounced those "uneducated itinerant Preachers, who leaving their steady employment betake themselves to preaching the Gospel from idleness, or a zeal without knowledge, by which they are induced without any preparation, to teach what they do not know, and which, from their pride, they disdain to learn."<sup>19</sup> In another sermon, preached in 1832, Strachan argued that uneducated

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (24 June 1804).

<sup>19</sup> Strachan, Sermon on the Death of the Bishop of Quebec, p. 19.

preachers were endangering the future of Christianity itself. Noting that the New Testament description of Peter and Paul as "unlearned and ignorant men" had given rise to misunderstanding, Strachan was at pains to point out that this description could hardly be taken literally. Both these apostles, he argued, had mastered the scriptures and had been guided by the Holy Spirit; hence, they could be classed as ignorant only in the sense of not being versed in the learning of the Scribes and Pharisees. Strachan was astounded that such a straightforward interpretation of the words "ignorant and unlearned" had eluded the grasp of so many: "thousands taking it for granted that the translation of the Bible is every word and sentence perfectly correct . . . think that no preparation is necessary for preaching the Gospel and assume the duties of the Christian Ministry without being acquainted in any accurate manner even with their own native tongue." It was Strachan's conviction that these pretenders to the ministry had succeeded in spreading distorted views of the gospel message, in rending the Church of Christ into a collection of warring factions, and in marring the distinguished reputation of the clergy as a social class:

do we not see many persons whose opportunities of mental improvement have been exceedingly limited who are unable either to speak or write correctly in their own language much less possessing any knowledge of those in which the revelations of God are written deciding without hesitation upon the most difficult doctrines of Christianity taking upon themselves the office of Evangelists and consigning to eternal misery all who differ from them in opinion--it is to such men that we owe most of the divisions that rend Christ's Church, and that deplorable ignorance of the true spirit of the Gospel which so widely prevails. . . . If therefore any persons assume the sacred office without due preparation they stand guilty before God. . . . Under the Christian dispensation till of late years when a disposition

'seems to prevail among some to level all distinctions social intellectual and spiritual the Ministers of Christ have stood conspicuous in every age among their fellow men . . . who can look upon those who have prostituted the authority of the Gospel Ministry degraded its dignity and polluted its holiness without shame and indignation and alas there have been and still are many such. . . .<sup>20</sup>

Strachan also objected to the American ties of Upper Canadian Methodism. From the time of his arrival in Upper Canada, Strachan remained convinced that the chief hallmarks of American society were unbounded materialism, private and public immorality, licentiousness, factionalism, and infidelity.<sup>21</sup> With this perspective, he naturally came to the conclusion in the 1820s that since the majority of Methodist preachers in Upper Canada came from the United States, it was more than likely that they were the main driving force behind the religious and political discord afflicting the colony. His feelings on this subject were made evident in 1825, when he warned in his sermon on the death of Mountain that Upper Canada's religious teachers, excluding Anglican clergymen and "a very few respectable Ministers" of the Church of Scotland, "come almost universally from the Republican States of America, where they gather their knowledge and form their sentiments,"

<sup>20</sup> Strachan Sermons, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John" (21 Oct. 1832).

<sup>21</sup> For early expressions of Strachan's anti-Americanism, see Strachan Papers, Strachan to Brown, 20 Oct. 1807 and 9 Oct. 1808; A Sermon on the Death of the Honourable Richard Cartwright. With a Short Account of His Life. Preached at Kingston, on the 3d of September, 1815 (Montreal, 1816); A Discourse on the Character of King George the Third. Addressed to the Inhabitants of British America (Montreal, 1810); Kingston Gazette, "The Reckoner," 21 April 1812.

adding that if measures were not immediately taken to strengthen the Church of England, "the mass of the population will be nurtured and instructed in hostility to our Parent Church, nor will it be long till they imbibe opinions anything but favourable to the political Institutions of England."<sup>22</sup> Two years later his Ecclesiastical Chart, besides reiterating his claim about the American origins of most of Upper Canada's preachers, emphasized that "the Methodist teachers are subject to the orders of the Conference of the United States of America," and that the local government could only hope to prevent these preachers "from gradually rendering a large portion of the population, by their influence and instruction, hostile to our institutions, both civil and religious" if the number of "established clergy" were immediately increased.<sup>23</sup> These assertions were repeated almost verbatim in his Appeal in behalf of the University of Upper Canada, and in a slightly modified form in a pamphlet designed to enlighten imperial statesmen on the contentious subject of the clergy reserves.<sup>24</sup>

As recounted earlier, Strachan's aspersions on the Church of England's rivals provoked a violent religious and political controversy in Upper Canada. Eventually, on 6 March 1828, Strachan decided to respond to his critics in a lengthy speech to the Legislative Council.

<sup>22</sup> Sermon on the Death of the Bishop of Quebec, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Canada Church Establishment. Copy of a Letter Addressed to R. J. Wilmot Horton, Esq. . . . dated 16th May, 1827; respecting the State of the Church in that Province (London, 1827).

<sup>24</sup> An Appeal in behalf of the University of Upper Canada, p. 10; Observations on the Provision Made for the Maintenance of a Protestant Clergy, p. 28.

Few dissenters could have been placated by the sentiments he expressed on this occasion. Certainly not in an apologetic mood, he began his speech with a general defence of the Ecclesiastical Chart and then proceeded to congratulate the Methodists on their decision to establish an independent Canadian conference: "at this I rejoice and am so pleased to think that my observations have not been in vain, and that angry as they are, they find it expedient to act in conformity to my advice . . . but it is rather hard that I should become the object of their enmity for urging measures which they find it necessary to adopt." He also stressed that his prime concern was not the actual number of American preachers in Upper Canada but rather the extent to which Methodism, as a denomination with close ties to the United States, had actively fostered the spread of republican principles. In this respect, he noted, the demand of Methodists for the separation of church and state revealed their wholehearted support of the infidelity and social insubordination which were the most distinguishing characteristics of all experiments in revolution. The inference in this argument was unmistakable: the goal of Methodism was the propagation of American democratic philosophy and the destruction of the Upper Canadian social order. As Strachan declared,

my remarks were confined to those Teachers and Preachers who came from the United States where they gather their knowledge and form their sentiments, and so far am I from

being able to soften them that I must extend them to the present Teachers and Preachers, so long as they are found proposing the most slanderous resolutions at public meetings, and going round the country persuading ignorant people to sign the petitions which contain them, and so long as any of them continue to exhibit a rancorous spirit against other denominations. Have not the Methodists in this Province in connexion with the American Conference ever shewn themselves the enemies of the Established Church? Are they not at this moment labouring to separate religion from the State, with which it ought ever to be firmly united, since one of its greatest objects is to give stability to good Government, nor can it be separated with impunity in any Christian country?--Is not Christianity a continual lesson of obedience to the laws and submission to constituted authorities, and has it not been the primary object of all enemies to regular Government to destroy the influence of religious principles, and to pull down religious establishments? To effect this, they have ever considered the consummation of victory.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting facet of Strachan's critique of sectarianism was his belief that all dissenters had to be regarded not as representatives of the reformed faith but as sinful schismatics. In examining this "high church" perspective, it is necessary to offer some preliminary comments on the development of Strachan's theological views. Although his father had introduced him as a boy to the teachings of the non-juring Episcopal Church of Scotland,<sup>26</sup> Strachan himself in the years before 1820 remained faithful to the temper and principles of eighteenth-century latitudinarianism. He displayed no familiarity

<sup>25</sup> A Speech . . . in the Legislative Council, Thursday Sixth March, 1828: on the Subject of the Clergy Reserves (York, 1828), pp. 27-28.

<sup>26</sup> The majority of clergymen in the Scottish Episcopal Church in the eighteenth century only embraced the Hanoverian dynasty in 1778, See William Ferguson, Scotland: 1689 to the Present (Edinburgh, 1969), p. 232.

with the writings of the Hackney Phalanx, that informal association of high church divines which had arisen towards the end of the eighteenth century to champion the ideas of Hooker, Laud, and the non-jurors. His sermons, like the sermons of the "moderate men" he so much admired, were moralistic in tone, less concerned with explaining complex theological questions than with portraying Christianity as a rational religion which provided a powerful incentive for virtuous conduct in the present life. During these years he never addressed himself to the question of church government, and only once did he praise the Church of England for "the excellence of her doctrines and the primitive purity of her worship and discipline."<sup>27</sup>

Strachan's conversion to high church theology did not take place until the 1820s. In that decade he began arguing forcefully that the Church of England was a branch of the catholic and apostolic church, that its episcopal government was sanctioned by tradition, and that its liturgy touched man's innermost spiritual instincts and imposed a degree of uniformity and order on religious worship. In adopting this doctrinal perspective, he quite possibly was influenced by Bishop Hobart of New York state, a man whose high church principles he greatly admired.<sup>28</sup> Be this as it may, there is little doubt that the factor of greatest importance in determining the course of his theological evolution during these years was his growing concern over the fortunes

<sup>27</sup> Strachan Sermons, "And the dead in Christ shall rise first" (25 Aug. 1811, "on the death of Dr. Stuart").

<sup>28</sup> See pp. 146-47 and 149.



of the Upper Canadian church. In a period when the Church of England was engaged in a fierce struggle to spread its own message and stem the tide of religious "enthusiasm," Strachan naturally was attracted to a brand of theology which set forth a clear and inspiring view of the Anglican doctrinal position. Further, high church theology had the advantage of strengthening Strachan's case against many of the Church of England's denominational rivals. Convinced that the Church of England upheld the true faith, Strachan could denounce all dissenters for splitting from the Church of Christ and thereby inflicting a severe blow against the Christian religion. He could also argue that unless dissenters repented of their sins and returned to the Anglican fold, they would soon suffer the consequences of divine wrath.

Strachan first expressed his high church views in the pages of the Christian Recorder. In the November 1820 issue of that journal he wrote an editorial in which he asserted that the government of the Church of England "claims, and most justly claims a Divine origin. It is sanctioned by the practice of the Apostles, which is the Law of Christ." He then advanced the classic high church defence of the liturgy and doctrinal position of the Church of England. Contrasting the unity of the Church of England with the internal divisions of sectarian religion, he stressed that among the Anglican clergy "there is no discordance in doctrine, precept or discipline. The people whom they address are not bewildered with a variety of opinions, all is simple, clear and beautiful. . . ." To him it was obvious that dissent from such a church was a grievous sin, for "all that our religion requires as necessary to salvation is concentrated in its ordinances,

and consequently those who forsake or remove from its ordinances endanger their immortal souls."<sup>29</sup>

These ideas were reiterated in the Recorder in February 1821. At that time Strachan argued that the sermon, if not accompanied by the sacraments and forms of prayer, gave excessive power to the individual preacher, and in support of this contention he pointed to the intolerance with which "sectaries" expounded their ever-changing opinions.<sup>30</sup>

While this argument could have been made clearer, he was certainly straightforward in another article dealing with a charge by Bishop Hobart: here Strachan expressed his enthusiastic agreement with Hobart's view that only a general acceptance of "the great principle that we are saved from the guilt and dominion of sin by the merit and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ received . . . in union with his church, by the participation of [in] its sacraments and ordinances from the hands of her authorized ministry" could restore "purity and unity to that Christian family, which is now deformed and distracted by heresies and schisms."<sup>31</sup> At another point in the same issue of the Recorder Strachan claimed that the absence of a liturgy in sectarian religious worship turned the congregation into passive hearers of prayers spoken by the preacher.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Christian Recorder, November 1820, pp. 321-32.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., February 1821, pp. 410-11.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 448.

The Christian Recorder ceased publication in 1821, but this did not prevent Strachan from publicizing his newly discovered attachment to high church ideas. Abandoning the pen of the journalist for the pulpit of the clergyman, in the 1820s and 1830s he preached numerous sermons devoted to the subject of the apostolic purity of the Church of England and the degeneracy of dissent. In 1825 he insisted that while dissenting denominations were soon "scattered, or divided," the Church of England, with a form of government sanctioned by tradition and Christ himself, proceeded "with all the advantages, which union, discipline and order can produce."<sup>33</sup> He also declared that the liturgy of the Church of England was distinguished both for the clarity and elegance in which it expressed the central truths of the Christian faith, and for the effectiveness with which it united all Anglicans in a closely-knit fellowship:

the form of prayer, which we are bound to use, unites all the congregations of our Church in the principal part of their worship, as if they were only one congregation and assembled in the same temple, and it presents to them with great force simplicity and beauty, the ways, means and appointments of God, to restore our fallen nature to purity, and everlasting life. . . .<sup>34</sup>

Equally interesting are other sermons preached in the early 1830s. In an 1831 sermon Strachan claimed that all those who adhered to the "doctrine, the worship and Government which Christ and his Apostles

<sup>33</sup> Sermon on the Death of the Bishop of Quebec, p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

established" were members of the visible Church of Christ on earth, and that "sinful men" who tampered with the structure of this church were destroying the unity of the Christian religion and thus ignoring the admonitions of Christ and his Apostles.<sup>35</sup> In a sermon of 1832 he asserted that salvation could not be obtained outside the catholic and apostolic church.<sup>36</sup> Another sermon of the same year, ironically entitled Church Fellowship, warned that the goal of inter-denominational harmony should never be pursued if religious principles were to be diluted in the process. "All attempts to reconcile differences among Christians," Strachan stated, "which involve the smallest sacrifice of truth, or seek in any manner to explain away or compromise it, are altogether inconsistent with the Christian character."<sup>37</sup> While expressing his grief over the internal divisions of the Christian community, Strachan criticized those dissenting preachers who rejected the sacraments and liturgy of one of the most illustrious churches in the world.<sup>38</sup>

Two years later Strachan once again attacked that lukewarmness in religious feeling, which, under the guise of tolerance, would compromise the doctrinal purity of the Church of England for the sake of a

<sup>35</sup> Strachan Sermons, "But sanctify the Lord in your hearts" (16 Jan. 1831).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., "Except the Lord build the House their labour is but lost that build it" (7 June 1832).

<sup>37</sup> Church Fellowship. A Sermon Preached on Wednesday, September 5, 1832. At the Visitation of the Honourable and Right Rev. Charles James, Bishop of Quebec (York, 1832), p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-18, passim.

temporary accommodation with dissent. Arguing that Anglicans should regard their church as the true Church of Christ, he emphasized that "religion admits of no coalition between right & wrong--of no compromise between truth & error. As Christians it is our duty to maintain those opinions only which bear the stamp of the Almighty and will be received at the Treasury of heaven in the great day of account." Strachan continued to bemoan the hostile feelings which prevailed between different denominations, but he remained firm in his conviction that religious peace would only be obtained when dissenters repented of their sins and returned to the Church of England. He thus prayed that "it would please God to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived."<sup>39</sup>

Many of these high church ideals were also expressed in a pamphlet written in 1832 as a tribute to the late Bishop Hobart. In this pamphlet Strachan lauded the American bishop for his steadfast support of the institution of episcopacy, his belief in the importance of the liturgy and the sacraments, and his defence of the apostolic character of the Church of England. What is more, at several points in the course of the tribute Strachan made it obvious that Hobart's theological views were identical to his own. When discussing Hobart's loyalty to the episcopal government of the Church of England, Strachan asserted that this government "had continued without interruption [for] fifteen centuries," and that there was not "in the history of Christianity a

<sup>39</sup> Strachan Sermons, "Earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints" (9 March 1834).

single Church which has remained one-third of that time under any other system of government, nor an example of any successful and permanent propagation of the Gospel without the superintendence of Bishops."<sup>40</sup> He also commended Hobart for his refusal to recognize as part of the true church any Christian body which did not subscribe to the doctrines, ordinances, and government of the Church of England.<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly enough, this high church doctrinal perspective went hand in hand with a deeply hostile attitude towards inter-denominational organizations. As indicated in chapter one, the creation in the immediate post-war years of the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society of Upper Canada, a body which was open to the members of all denominations, was a concrete expression of the Anglican clergy's commitment to religious toleration. In later years, however, such attempts at inter-denominational cooperation fell into disfavour. Strachan and other Anglicans as well now put forward the argument that the Church of England could best serve its own interests by working through organizations which were under its exclusive control. In part, this frame of mind reflected the conviction of a growing number of Upper Canadian Anglicans that the Church of England should have nothing to do with those denominations which had shown themselves to be inveterate opponents of the Anglican cause. It also reflected the high church

<sup>40</sup> A Letter to the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D. Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, on the Life and Character of the Right Reverend Dr. Hobart, Bishop of New York, North America (New York, 1832), pp. 19-20.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

position--a position which itself was directly related to the religious and political conditions of the post-war era--that by cooperating with dissenters in inter-denominational organizations Anglicans were tarnishing the Church of England's image as a branch of the true church.

Strachan's new attitude towards inter-denominational organizations was first made known in late 1820. In the Christian Recorder of November 1820 he declared his firm opposition to religious organizations which did not recognize the liturgy and Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England as the purest expression of the Christian faith and which were not based on apostolic principles of church government. On the latter score he insisted that "to neglect discipline and order is to neglect to lay the foundation stone, for all things must be done decently and in order," adding that "those Societies . . . with no form of Church Government, or a form not sanctioned by the primitive times, cannot secure lasting success. Their converts have no bond of union, no common principles of action, no subordination, and consequently can have no permanence as a Christian Society. . . ."42 A few months later, at a meeting of the York committee of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, he declared that "to those who conscientiously differ from us, the utmost charity is due; but in disseminating Christianity among the young, or in reclaiming the careless, we ought most assuredly to inculcate the form prescribed by our own establishment."<sup>43</sup> It was probably at this point that Strachan

<sup>42</sup> Christian Recorder, November 1820, pp. 321-23.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., February 1821, p. 441.

severed his association with the non-sectarian Bible Society of Upper Canada, an organization which he had actively supported in the years immediately following the war. Henceforth he would support the local branches of the SPCK against all inter-denominational rivals.

Opposition to non-sectarian religious organizations was also a keynote of Strachan's tribute to Bishop Hobart. Here Strachan praised Hobart for hostility towards the inter-denominational British and Foreign Bible Society, remarking that if Anglicans sincerely believed their church to be the true Church of Christ, they could never in good conscience associate "for religious purposes with those who differ from us in many of what we believe to be the most essential articles of our holy faith."<sup>44</sup> He also asserted that bishops and clergymen who served as officers of bible societies were "traitors to their own church and promoters of division,"<sup>45</sup> and that Anglicans who contributed to the support of dissenting missionary organizations were guilty of "false liberality."<sup>46</sup>

These views were echoed by other Anglicans. As early as May 1819 an anonymous correspondent of the Christian Recorder called for the creation of branch committees of the SPCK in order to provide schools for the education of the Anglican poor, to enlarge the supply of Anglican clergymen, and to distribute "copies of the Church Liturgy." The Bible and Common Prayer Book Society of Upper Canada could not be

<sup>44</sup> A Letter on the Life and Character of Dr. Hobart, p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 21.



relied upon to perform these tasks, for as he noted, "the Dissenters from our Church, whilst they unite with us in the distribution of the Scriptures, are not unmindful of inculcating by every means in their power, their own doctrines and their own practices." These dissenters, he continued, had their own missionary, school, and tract societies, but in this respect they were hardly to be criticized. "On the contrary we ought to go and do likewise."<sup>47</sup>

Similar points were made by other Recorder correspondents. In late 1819 and early 1820 one correspondent, in a lengthy exposition on forms of prayer, emphasized the importance of distributing prayer books as well as bibles so that the religiously destitute of Upper Canada might be protected against the "delusions of false interpretation, by illiterate teachers."<sup>48</sup> Soon afterwards a correspondent signing himself "C" replied to an earlier article by "A.K." entitled "On the Increase of the Christian Spirit." Addressing himself to "A.K."s argument that the British and Foreign Bible Society was an example of the religious harmony which was the most striking characteristic of the age, "C" denounced "that spurious liberality which seeks to soften down and melt away religious distinctions, however important, and to associate all denominations under some specious rule which implies not even a conviction in the peculiar doctrines of the Christian Faith." Such "liberality," he felt, could be more aptly described

<sup>47</sup> Christian Recorder, May 1819, pp. 104-6.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., December 1819, pp. 368-71; and January 1820, p. 414.

as a cowardly reluctance to defend the doctrines of the true faith. "The principle from which we can never depart," "C" stressed, "is this, that whatever system of Faith we believe to be true, that system we are bound to maintain, even to death."<sup>49</sup>

"C"'s position was reiterated by "Titus," a Lower Canadian Anglican, in the September 1820 issue of the Recorder. Criticizing the Recorder for its praise of the London Missionary Society, this correspondent attacked all inter-denominational organizations for repudiating the apostolic government of the Church of England and thereby fostering "confusion and anarchy." His letter concluded with a plea that all Anglicans support the SPG and SPCK. The chastened editor of the Recorder admitted that "Titus"'s views displayed "much good sense."<sup>50</sup>

In the case of one Anglican clergyman, John Wenham, hostility towards inter-denominational organizations took such a fanatical form that the missionary work of the Church of England was directly threatened. A former dissenter who had come to regard the Church of England as a branch of the catholic and apostolic church,<sup>51</sup> Wenham was appointed in 1824 to the parish of Waterloo, where he noted bitterly that the house provided him was "a wretched tenement, perfectly uninhabitable." Transferred to Brockville in 1825, he continued to

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., March 1820, p. 37.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., September 1820, pp. 249-55.

<sup>51</sup> See A Sermon Preached before the Bishop of Quebec, and the Clergy of Upper Canada, at his Lordship's Primary Visitation, Held in York, on Wednesday, 30th Aug. 1826 (Brockville, 1826).

bemoan the inadequacy of his stipend, and in 1827 he informed the SPG that the large number of "Romanists" and Presbyterians in his parish "precludes any very satisfactory account of the growth of Religion exhibited in a steady attachment to our devotion and worship."

Violently critical of dissenters for their opposition to the established status of the Church of England, Wenham was prepared to suspect the worst when the SCGIPGDS dared to employ a Presbyterian agent in the Brockville area. His own views on this agent's activities were made clear in a virulent and protracted controversy in the pages of the Brockville Recorder. Arguing that the only object of the Presbyterian agent was self-aggrandizement, Wenham went on to claim that the new missionary society was a dissenters' plot to destroy both the SPG and the SPCK. He asserted that religious destitution did not exist in Upper Canada, that churchmen could not "cooperate with those who undervalue the Sacraments & teach men so," and that the Presbyterian agent was an enemy to the Church of England and the state. A redoubtable opponent by the name of "Gulliver" responded to all of Wenham's charges, and in May 1827 a subdued Wenham noted that his career as a controversialist had made him a "marked man." Complaining of poverty, poor health, and the strength of dissent, he resigned the parish of Brockville in 1831. A no doubt relieved SPG transferred him to a parish in England and later to Ceylon.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> On Wenham's career as an Anglican clergyman, see Millman, Jacob Mountain, p. 222; and SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/40, no. 460. The latter source contains the pertinent clippings from the Brockville Recorder.

## II

Strachan's ideological campaign against sectarianism occupies an important place in the history of the Upper Canadian church. In the first place, it seems indisputable that even though in the 1820s and 1830s Strachan was virtually alone in attacking the social, political, and religious basis of sectarian religion, his central objections to Methodism and dissent in general were shared by a large number of Anglican clergymen. Proof of this fact was provided in the 1840s and early 1850s, a period that is examined in the last three chapters of this dissertation. During these years, when the Church of England was engaged in an increasingly futile struggle to defend its established status, several Anglican clergymen and the Church newspaper echoed Strachan's charges against the emotional excesses of "enthusiasm" and the disloyalty of sectarian denominations. What is more, after the Oxford movement began to have a significant impact on the Upper Canadian church in the late 1830s, Strachan's portrayal of dissenters as sinful schismatics gained widespread acceptance amongst Anglican clergymen. In the post-union period it was repeatedly argued that the Church of England was a branch of the catholic and apostolic church, and that dissenters were in danger of suffering eternal damnation unless they repented of their sins and returned to the Anglican fold.

No less important was Strachan's belief that the Church of England should shun inter-denominational bible societies. In this respect it must be noted that Strachan's position on the entire subject of inter-denominational cooperation--a position which seems to have been shared

by many Upper Canadian Anglicans—highlighted a basic feature of the Anglican mind of the post-war era. When Strachan and others called on Anglicans to stop working side by side with dissenters in religious organizations, they underlined the fact that the church as a whole was becoming more introverted in the range of its concerns. While Anglican clergymen were still inspired by the old dream of making the Church of England the dominant religious force in the colony, they were also coming to the conclusion that the church should turn its back on those Upper Canadians who were determined to imperil their souls by rejecting the true faith. This "isolationist" mentality, first evident in the growing opposition to inter-denominational bible societies, became even more pronounced in the 1840s and 1850s. As will be pointed out later, by the time of the secularization of the clergy reserves in 1854 there was a widespread belief amongst Anglican clergymen that the church should respond to reverses in the religious and political spheres not only by cutting its ties with rival denominations but also by withdrawing into itself and concentrating on its spiritual mission as a branch of the Church of Christ.

CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGY, CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT,  
AND THE POLITICS OF UPPER CANADA

In responding to the religious and political developments of the 1820s and 1830s, Strachan did not restrict himself to advancing a wide-ranging critique of the errors of sectarian religion. On the contrary, as if he was determined to reprove Upper Canadians for turning their backs on sound political principles and accepting the leadership of men like Ryerson and Mackenzie, Strachan spent much of his time during these years expounding profoundly conservative views on a number of subjects, including the nature of man, the structure and function of society, and the responsibilities of the individual in relation to the state. He also defended the Church of England's established status against the attacks of those groups who were calling for religious equality. On this front, his strategy involved refuting the claims of other denominations to a share of the clergy reserves, portraying the established Church of England as the most effective safeguard of social stability and the imperial tie, and painting a frightening picture of the fate awaiting Upper Canada if the alliance of church and state were severed.

Without question, this response to developments in Upper Canadian society was a revealing reflection of Strachan's aggressive frame of mind as he did battle with the forces of religious and political reform.

Yet, paradoxically enough, it is also true that Strachan's disquisitions on the major tenets of his conservative ideology, together with his defence of the policy of church establishment, were closely linked to his chastened perception of the future of the Church of England and to his sombre view of the state of Upper Canada and the world as a whole. During the 1820s and 1830s the prospect of disestablishment gradually forced Strachan to the conclusion that the Church of England, an institution he now regarded as an innocent victim of a ruthless campaign of persecution, might soon have to abandon its hope of shaping the destiny of Upper Canadian society. More specifically, he now indicated for the first time that the Church of England could best respond to the attacks of its enemies by placing renewed emphasis on its distinctive spiritual mission, and by evolving into a primarily religious organization whose main responsibility was saving the souls of its own members rather than guiding the development of the entire colony. Equally significant, in this same period Strachan and other Anglican clergymen became more and more alarmed when they studied the demand for change that was reaching fever pitch both at the local level and in the world at large, and by the time of the rebellion they had lost all hope that Upper Canada would be able to act as a guardian of stability and virtue on the North American continent. Indeed, in the 1830s Strachan went so far as to argue, as did his friend and colleague A. N. Bethune, that the cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1834 and the rebellion of 1837-38 were visitations that had been sent down from heaven in order to punish the growing sinfulness of the Upper Canadian people.

## I

Strachan had first articulated his social and political philosophy during the war against Napoleonic France. Like many men of his generation, Strachan had been appalled and disgusted by the events of the French revolution,<sup>1</sup> and in the years before the conclusion of peace in 1815 he had devoted himself to the task not only of refuting the ideas that had led to the upheaval in France but also of setting forth his vision of the good society. During this period he argued in sermons and published writings that human beings, contrary to the claims of American and French revolutionaries, had an innate predilection for evil, and that in the absence of the laws and regulations imposed by the community the animal passions of the race would inevitably produce a state of general anarchy. He also advanced a highly reactionary view of the responsibilities of the individual in society. Drawing on the old Christian notion that the universe was a great "chain of being," a hierarchical structure in which each creature had its distinct place, Strachan asserted that class divisions were ordained by God for the good of the entire community, and that it was the duty of man to accept the inevitability of earthly suffering, to resign himself to the position in which God had placed him, and to be deferential to social superiors. At the same time, since he was convinced that men living in society enjoyed the blessings of liberty, security, and stability, he informed

<sup>1</sup> For the reaction of clergymen in the British Isles to the French revolution, see Richard A. Soloway, Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Thought in England, 1783-1852 (London, 1969), pp. 19-54.



Upper Canadians that they were morally obliged to obey without question the laws of the land and to respect the authority of the "powers that be."<sup>2</sup>

When Strachan reached the conclusion that the radical doctrines of the age had made their way into Upper Canada from Europe and the United States, he became more tireless than ever in propagating his views on the nature of the good society. His concern about the state of the colony was expressed openly in a sermon preached following the outbreak of the War of 1812, in which he announced that Upper Canada was threatened not only by the nation to the south but also by "doubtful characters and secret Traitors" within its own borders.<sup>3</sup> During the war itself he was deeply concerned about the extent of disaffection in Upper Canada,<sup>4</sup> and as a means of ensuring the colony's survival he

<sup>2</sup> Strachan's social and political philosophy during these years was articulated in the following: Strachan Sermons, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous" (18 March 1804); *ibid.*, "But if our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost" (30 March 1806); *ibid.*, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever, ye do all to the Glory of God" (3 Aug. 1806); *ibid.*, "Arise get thee to Zarep" (4 May 1806); Strachan, A Discourse on the Character of King George the Third; Strachan, A Sermon Preached at York, Upper Canada, on the Third of June, Being the Day Appointed for a General Thanksgiving (Montreal, 1814); Strachan, The Christian Religion Recommended in a letter to his Pupils, Andrew Stuart & James Cartwright (Montreal, 1807); Kingston Gazette, "The Reckoner," 16 July and 19 Nov. 1811.

<sup>3</sup> A Sermon Preached at York before the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, August 2nd, 1812 (York, 1812).

<sup>4</sup> The problem of wartime disaffection, and the response of the Upper Canadian elite to that problem, is explored in W. M. Weeks, "The War of 1812: Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada," OH, XLVIII (Summer, 1956), 147-61; and Ernest A. Cruikshank, "John Beverley Robinson and the Trials for Treason in 1814," OHSPR, XXV (1929), 191-219.

urged the local government to adopt the strongest measures, including the suspension of civil law, in dealing with the disloyal.<sup>5</sup> Although his anxieties eased somewhat for a brief period after the war, the respite was only temporary. With the first stirrings of religious and political discontent in the late 1810s and early 1820s, he became convinced that demagogues were once again at work in Upper Canada, and in subsequent years his feelings on this score grew stronger and stronger. Seeing demands for political reform and the crusade against the established church as evidence of a revolutionary spirit, he now clung even more tightly to the principles he had set forth during the contest with Napoleonic France. What was equally important, whereas he had once focused his attention on the chaos afflicting the old world, he left little doubt in the post-1820 era that his conservative pronouncements were inspired by a deep concern about the instability of his own society. Indeed, when he expounded his conservative ideology during these years, it almost seemed that he was reproving Upper Canadians for the folly of their ways and at the same time pleading with them to return to the paths of righteousness.

Of all the conservative ideas put forward by Strachan in the post-1820 period, perhaps the one closest to his heart was the notion that all men were inherently evil. He declared in an 1823 sermon that "it is not from without but from within that our greatest enemies

<sup>5</sup> Strachan to Francis de Rottenburg, 14 Aug. 1813. Included in William Wood, ed., Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, 3 vols. (Toronto, 1920-28), II, 200.

arise," and to substantiate his argument he pointed to "our evil passions our inordinate desires our craving appetites our secret rivalships and jealousies our false estimations of present things."<sup>6</sup> In another sermon preached throughout the 1820s and 1830s he drew attention to the numerous imperfections in body, mind, and spirit which men inherited as "created but fallen beings." Those who doubted that the follies of human beings were a matter of serious concern were reminded of the misery which resulted from the "extravagant indulgence of our appetites and passions."<sup>7</sup> In a sermon preached one year before the rebellion he exclaimed: "how many sources of wickedness are there within us--do not our will, our reason prove the corruption of our nature . . . do we not see vice & wickedness everywhere around us and polluting us by their contamination. . . ." <sup>8</sup>

This view of human nature had important implications for Strachan's view of the function of society. Before 1815, as has already been indicated, Strachan had argued that laws and institutions of civil authority were indispensable if society as a whole was to be protected against the instinctive desire of all men to indulge their appetite for

<sup>6</sup> Strachan Sermons, "And Noah did according unto all that the Lord Commanded him" (9 Nov. 1823).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world but that thou shouldest keep them from evil" (8 May 1825, 25 Sept. 1825, 16 July 1826, 3 June 1837, 16 Sept. 1827, 22 Sept. 1833, 18 March 1838).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (14 Aug. 1836).

self-gratification. He saw no reason to abandon these views when he observed the state of the world, and specifically the state of Upper Canada, in the 1820s. It was still his contention that genuine liberty could exist only in society, and that the abolition of laws would threaten the happiness and prosperity of every individual, even the virtuous. The congregation at St. James's, York, was told in a sermon of 1821 that the legal restraints which controlled the conduct of "all states and conditions of men" were the "surest foundation of true liberty," for in the absence of such restraints men could not expect to "live happily & securely together and enjoy the comforts of society." The reluctance of so many to accept this truth forced Strachan to warn his flock that the absolute freedom of the individual would lead inevitably to anarchy and widespread suffering. "We are too much disposed to look for the sources of felicity," he announced, "in being free from all restraints--and controlled by no law--limited by no authority & with the full power of doing whatever we please. But were all this granted instead of happiness we should reap misery."<sup>9</sup>

According to this ideological perspective, society served to maintain security in "person and property" and act as the foundation of "true liberty," while each individual, in return, undertook to fulfil those social obligations on which his earthly happiness and spiritual well-being depended. Among the most important of these social obligations was one which an Anglican clergyman by the name of Thomas Phillips

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., "Now the Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" (4 Feb. 1821).

emphasized in a sermon of 1826. On that occasion Phillips said that every sincere Christian had a duty to obey those who were in positions of civil authority and to remain contented with his earthly station. "The Almighty, who created men for two worlds," he noted, "has decreed . . . that there should be different orders and classes in society; the high and the low, the rich and the poor; some who have riches, and others who have none; some to bear rule, and others to obey." Distinctions among men relating to worldly possessions and power, far from being the cause of unhappiness, were "calculated to produce the general enjoyment and welfare" of all his creatures. Poverty enabled the poor to display "honest industry," to "shew forth patience & contentment in difficulties," to display their gratitude to God and their fellow men for whatever happiness they did enjoy, and "to fulfill the various useful offices, which it is necessary some of us should perform, in order that the existence, support, and business of society may be maintained." Conversely, the sharing of power amongst all men would lead to a "universal struggle" in which the most evil and powerful would emerge triumphant, ruling with a "rod of iron" over the weak and virtuous, and depriving both rich and poor of "rights, liberties & property."<sup>10</sup>

This rigidly conservative view of the individual's obligations to society was shared by other Anglican clergymen. In 1827 John Hudson, chaplain to the garrison at York, declared that "the Christian Religion

<sup>10</sup> The Canadian Remembrancer. A Loyal Sermon. Preached on St. George's Day, April 23, 1826; at the Episcopal Church in York (York, 1826), pp. 15-18.

sanctions and upholds the authority of Kings, and of all others who lawfully bear rule over us," and that submission and obedience to earthly rulers was a duty enjoined both by Christ and his apostles.<sup>11</sup>

He also argued that while Christians might work to remedy abuses and defects in government, they could never challenge the basis of the political system under which they lived. "Our Saviour and His Apostles," he stated, "did not . . . in any case or under any circumstances, endeavour to bring about a change or reform in the Modes of Government, then existing in the Countries in which they planted the Gospel." On the contrary, their only object was to convert men to a faith which "could not fail to improve the conditions of all Governments, to correct and mitigate the evils of the worst, and to protect the excellencies of the best."<sup>12</sup> Christians in the nineteenth century would be well advised to follow a similar course. Hudson stressed that the abuse of power by those in "exalted stations" should be checked not by experiments in political reform but by the spread of the Gospel. He also put forward an argument that could easily be interpreted as a justification for tyranny. This argument, which was extraordinarily reactionary even by Anglican standards, was implicit in the statement that the Christian view of rulers as "ministers of God's gracious purposes to mankind" would always serve "to soften the rigour of even tyrannical

<sup>11</sup> A Sermon on the Death of His Late Royal Highness the Duke of York, Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces. Preached in the Episcopal Church of York, Upper Canada, at the Garrison Service, on Sunday Morning, March 11, 1827. (York, 1827), p. 5.

Ibid., p. 6.

dominion, and to discipline the hearts of the Mighty to that meekness and moderation, which are so requisite in order to the tempering of justice and judgment with mercy."<sup>13</sup>

Adam Burwell, the Anglican clergyman at Bytown, expressed an identical point of view in his Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, a pamphlet published in 1835. He too believed that rulers were ordained by God and that their subjects were morally obliged to respect their authority and obey their will. Indeed his opinions on this score were even more reactionary than those expressed by John Hudson. At one stage in the pamphlet he made it plain that his own political philosophy owed more to the theory of the divine right of kings than to Locke's Second Treatise on Civil Government. Since he regarded kings as "mortal Gods upon earth," he felt no hesitation in asserting that God

has made it awfully penal for a subject to resist "the power," and "lift his hand against the Lord's anointed." And he makes no exception whether "the power" is in holy or wicked hands. . . . Resistance is the devil's doctrine, and the practice of his children. . . . It is the subjects' duty to suffer under oppression, but not to resist; to entreat, but not to revile; to remonstrate if need be, but not to threaten and "agitate"; to pray to God for deliverance his own way; but not to take his cause into his own hands. Especially he should pray that God would convert wicked rulers and put his Spirit upon them. . . .<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>14</sup> Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: and its Application to the Wants and Interests of Corporate Man under the Providence and Moral Government of God, Stated and Defended from Holy Writ and the Practice of the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and in these days Revived in Britain by the Rev. Edward Irving; Exhibiting the Sole Means of National Reformation and Preservation (Toronto, 1835), p. 107.

Burwell was equally categorical in arguing that the duty of obedience to "the powers that be" was inseparable from the duty of each individual to remain contented with his earthly station. Whereas this axiom of conservative philosophy had only been implicit in Hudson's sermon, Burwell announced that the earthly lot of men, be they rulers or subjects, had been determined by God. He emphasized that only those chosen by God could attain lofty heights of power and influence, and that "it is not education, but God that makes the gift; and if God has not given it, all the art of man cannot confer it." There then followed the classic defence of a stratified society, the notion that all men were allotted a position in the social structure and any attempt to advance beyond this position would be a rejection of God's will which could only result in profound unhappiness. "Hence the grievous disappointments men experience from human selection to places of trust and importance," he wrote, "and the pain and loss, both of money, care, and future usefulness, from the education of children at random, or from ambition for this or that profession or calling, to which God never adopted their proper gift."<sup>15</sup>

Burwell, admittedly, was hardly a representative Anglican clergyman. His Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, along with another 1835 pamphlet entitled A Voice of Warning and Instruction Concerning the Signs of the Times,<sup>16</sup> contained lengthy defences of the Irvingite practice of

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 92-93.

<sup>16</sup> A Voice of Warning and Instruction Concerning the Signs of the Times, and the Coming of the Son of Man, to Judge the Nations, and Restore all Things (Kingston, 1835).



"speaking in tongues" and virulent criticisms of the Church of England's blindness to the role of the Holy Spirit in the affairs of men. So fervent were Burwell's feelings on these subjects that in 1836 he left the Church of England and became an Irvingite preacher. At the same time, however, Burwell's social and political philosophy, unlike his opinions on theological questions, was unusual only by reason of the extreme language in which it was expressed. That its basic tenets were held by other Anglican clergymen was indicated in 1831, when Burwell, admitting that he was the author of the rabidly conservative "One of the People" articles in the Kingston Chronicle,<sup>17</sup> obtained Strachan's support for his proposal to establish a counter-revolutionary Anglican journal. The new journal never went into operation, for Burwell, despite his conviction as a result of a recent dream that he was destined to become a great literary figure, soon concluded that the scheme was impractical. Nevertheless, Strachan's response to Burwell's proposal was extremely revealing. Far from objecting that Burwell's political opinions made him unacceptable for the position of editor, he agreed that his essays were "good" and "very clever," and merely advanced some mild criticisms of his verbose writing style and his tendency to dwell upon the "more difficult doctrines of Theology."<sup>18</sup> Even these reservations about the prospective editor's qualifications were at length overcome and Strachan decided

<sup>17</sup> See the Kingston Chronicle, 28 May 1831-18 Feb. 1832.

<sup>18</sup> Macaulay Papers, Strachan to John Macaulay, 11 Oct. 1831.

to support a journal designed, in Burwell's words, to combat the "destructive doctrines of demagogues."<sup>19</sup> It can therefore be said with a fair degree of certainty that Strachan and Burwell, though different in many ways, shared a common political outlook.

Strachan's first public statement in the post-war era on the role of the individual in society was made in a sermon of 1819, in which he characterized good Christians as "humble & meek charitable lovers of order. They are contented in the lowest ranks of life as well as in the highest anxiously & honestly performing the duties of the meanest offices."<sup>20</sup> The same idea was elaborated upon in a sermon first preached in 1824 and repeated again in 1825, 1827, 1829, and 1836. In this sermon Strachan advanced the time-honoured notion that the hierarchical structure of society reflected the structure of the universe as a whole. He explained:

in the natural world we see objects differing from one another in all the degrees of Beauty & excellence and a mutual connection and independence pervading the whole. The various classes--and the various parts of the individual--all subsisting by their dependence upon one another. . . . It is evident that there is a subordination in the Natural World. We may extend the analogy and suppose that it is the intention of nature that the like subordination should prevail in the Moral world. Accordingly we find an infinite diversity in the tempers dispositions and talents of men. . . . One is formed to rule another to obey. . . . Hence it would appear that they who

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Burwell to John Macaulay, 23 Aug. 1831. For Burwell's plan to establish a conservative journal, as well as Strachan's reaction to this plan, see *ibid.*, 13 Aug. 1831 to 24 Oct. 1831.

<sup>20</sup> Strachan Sermons, "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity" (20 June 1819).

labour in the inferior departments of life are not on that account the slaves of their Superiors. The Magistrate requires the aid of his people. The Master of his servant. They are all dependent upon one another, as they subsist by an exchange of good Offices. . . . The lowest order enjoys its peculiar comforts, and privileges, and contributes equally with the highest to the Support and dignity of Society.

In such a world, he concluded, "all murmuring at the inferiority of our station is most unreasonable." While not condemning the innate human desire for social advancement, he urged those in humble positions to compare their own happiness with the cases which would inevitably be their lot if they attained greatness, cares "which neither the most delicate repast nor costly apparel nor a multitude of friends and dependents nor all the glories of a crown can alleviate." This consolation was coupled with others equally threadbare with age. Strachan emphasized that men would be more contented with their position in life if they reflected on the situation of those who were their inferiors in the social scale. He also declared in his peroration that the earthly sufferings of men were divinely ordained for their temporal and spiritual welfare. "The Father whom we serve," he explained, "will never permit anything to happen to his children but what must in the end promote their happiness." His listeners were consequently urged to bear with "patience and submission the dispensations of their Creator, remembering that "to murmur against those events which he permits is to rebel against his Government and to complete our own misery."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (7 Sept.

Religion held a central place in Strachan's perception of the good society. For him, one of the central functions of religion was to remind the wealthy of their obligations towards the less fortunate, thereby cementing those paternalistic bonds which made the poor more contented with their earthly lot and less disposed to harbour bitter feelings towards their social superiors. At the same time, religion had a particularly important role to play in controlling the baser instincts of man's evil nature, especially those "contending passions," "wicked appetites," "malignant desires," and "secret envyings" which Strachan claimed in a sermon of 1825 were "ever ready to burst into flame."<sup>22</sup> Religion also had a central social function to perform in reminding men, rich and poor alike, of two basic truths: first, that their temporal sufferings were, to borrow a phrase used by Strachan in 1819, "dispensations of Providence" which were meant as trials of faith and to which all Christians were required to submit in a spirit of "ready acquiescence,"<sup>23</sup> and second, that any attempt to rise in the social scale, or any act of disrespect or disobedience towards their

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1824, 24 April 1825, 28 Oct. 1827, 27 Dec. 1829, 13 Nov. 1836). See also the following sermons: "In keeping of them (i.e. thy Statutes) there is great reward" (21 Nov. 1824); "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works" (22 Feb. 1829); "Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities" (13 April 1834); "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them he was received up into heaven" (23 May 1819).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, "Thus saith the Lord stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths" (2 Oct. 1825).

<sup>23</sup> *Christian Recorder*, September 1819, "The Late Duke of Richmond," p. 252.

"betters" and the "powers that be," would lead to misery in the present life and damnation in the next. Strachan pointed out in an 1819 article in the Christian Recorder that the Christian religion, with "its tone of tranquility and peace, its anxiety to inculcate patience, resignation and forbearance, and to give honour to whom honour is due," was the pillar of any stable and civilized society.<sup>24</sup> Many years later, in a sermon preached after the death of one of his grandsons, he declared that to banish the terrors of the Last Judgment from the human mind would result in "general confusion and the total destruction of all the blessings of society." "For it is not the power of reason it is not the sense of duty--it is not even obedience to the commands of our Maker that keeps men to their stations--but it is the love of life . . . the dread of death and the darkness and gloom which cover the eternal world. . . ." <sup>25</sup>

Strachan's deep attachment to the Church of England was directly related to his views on the role of religion in society. Despite the impression fostered by historians, Strachan's fervent Anglicanism was primarily motivated not by a spirit of fanaticism or intolerance, but by a passionately held conviction that the Church of England was the denomination best suited to perform the social functions of religion.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>25</sup> Strachan Sermons, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (14 Aug. 1836). See also the following sermons: "Now the Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" (4 Feb. 1821); "Except the Lord build the House their labour is but lost that built it" (7 June 1832).

Throughout his life he maintained that the Church of England, a church known for its historic role as one of the pillars of the British constitution, was the ideal instrument to remind men of the necessity of "due subordination" in the social and political structure. Thus in an 1824 address on behalf of the Clergy Reserves Corporation to Lieutenant Governor Maitland, he stated that the Anglican clergymen of Upper Canada were engaged in the diffusion of "those principles of piety, loyalty and obedience for which the Church of England has ever been distinguished."<sup>26</sup> The same ideas were expressed in his 1828 speech to the Legislative Council, in which he clearly implied that the established Church of England was the most effective bulwark of the social and political order.<sup>27</sup>

Nowhere was Strachan's belief in the social usefulness of Anglican clergymen more apparent than in his view of the relationship between the Church of England and the imperial connection. Ever since the war against revolutionary France, Strachan's patriotism had rested on a number of social, political, and religious values. In the years before 1815 he had argued that Britain, a nation whose religious and moral life was presided over by a branch of the catholic church, whose incomparable constitution reconciled the claims of individual freedom and public security, and whose social and political structure was founded upon the principle of subordination, had been chosen by God to

<sup>26</sup> Strachan Papers, 1824.

<sup>27</sup> A Speech in the Legislative Council on the Subject of the Clergy Reserves, pp. 27-28.

crush the powers of darkness enthroned in France.<sup>28</sup> During the War of 1812 this messianic perception of the British cause had undergone a subtle shift in emphasis, becoming linked with a nascent sense of Upper Canadian identity. Seeing the War of 1812 as the inevitable product of the degeneracy of American society, Strachan reached the conclusion that Upper Canada had an obligation to act as the guardian on the North American continent of the values it had inherited from the parent state.<sup>29</sup> In the years ahead, therefore, Strachan's imperial patriotism, reinforced and accorded a distinctively Upper Canadian tone by the wars against France and the United States, would always be reflective of a more fundamental loyalty to certain values which Britain embodied and which Upper Canada had a mission to defend. And it is precisely this mingling of imperial patriotism, local nationalism, and conservative ideology that lends such great significance to Strachan's declarations in the 1820s on the subject of the relationship between loyalty to Great Britain and the interests of the Church of England.

Strachan emphasized the Church of England's role as a bastion of the imperial tie in 1824, when he wrote in a letter to the Colonial Office that "the great bond of all attachment between the Colonies and

<sup>28</sup> See Strachan Sermons, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous"; and A Sermon Preached at York, Upper Canada, on the Third of June (1814).

<sup>29</sup> See: A Discourse on the Character of King George the Third; Strachan Sermons, "Fear not the sentence of death" (n.d.); A Sermon Preached at York, August 2nd, 1812; and A Sermon Preached at York, Upper Canada, on the Third of June (1814).

Great Britain depends almost exclusively upon the progress and influence of Church Principles," noting that the American Revolution would never have occurred if the Church of England in the thirteen colonies had been properly supported by the home government.<sup>30</sup> Similar arguments were advanced in his 1825 sermon on the death of Bishop Mountain, his 1827 pamphlet on the subject of the clergy reserves, his 1827 Ecclesiastical Chart, and his 1830 Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis.

All these paeans to the loyalty of the Church of England were based on the underlying assumption that the imperial connection symbolized the sort of pious and stable society that Upper Canadians had been called upon to erect in North America. Strachan himself drew attention to the relationship between the Church of England and the imperial connection when in the 1824 address of the Clergy Reserves Corporation he noted that an established church was "an effectual part of our happy Constitution," and that the rejection of this truth would prevent "the Inhabitants of the Province from looking up to the British Empire for the preservation of their religious as well as civil liberty."<sup>31</sup>

Strachan's commitment to the policy of church establishment stemmed logically from his belief in the social and political usefulness of the Church of England. In the years before 1820 Strachan, believing that all dissenters would re-enter the Anglican fold if care was taken not to arouse their prejudices, had maintained a discreet silence on questions relating to the political status of the Church of England: on

<sup>30</sup> Strachan Papers, Strachan to Horton, 5 June 1824.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



only one occasion, in a Kingston Gazette article of 1812, did he set forth his views on the subject of the church establishment, and even then he had taken the tack not of defending the established position of the Church of England but of discussing in general terms the concept of establishment itself.<sup>32</sup> Such restraint seemed both pointless and dangerous in the 1820s, when non-Anglican denominations were displaying a new political self-consciousness and campaigning vigorously for religious equality. Strachan, convinced that the Church of England's interests were intertwined with the interests of Upper Canadian society as a whole, now abandoned his earlier policy of moderation and embarked on a crusade designed to defend the policy of church establishment. In essence, the case he presented for this policy was based partly on Richard Hooker's notion of the unity of church and state, and partly on the utilitarian view, articulated most forcefully by William Warburton in the eighteenth century, that a church establishment had a vital role to play in upholding the social and political order.<sup>33</sup>

Strachan's belief in the oneness of church and state was expressed on numerous occasions in the course of the 1820s and 1830s. In 1827 he asserted in his Observations on the Provision Made for the Mainten-

<sup>32</sup> Kingston Gazette, "The Reckoner," 21 April 1812.

<sup>33</sup> For Hooker's view of the relationship of church and state, see his Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1593), 2 vols. (London, 1907), esp. Vol. I, BK. VIII; and John S. Marshall, Hooker and the Anglican Tradition (London, 1953). On Warburton, see his The Alliance between Church and State: or the Necessity of an Established Religion and a Test Law Demonstrated (London, 1811).

ance of a Protestant Clergy that "by the law of England the church is an integral part of the state."<sup>34</sup> Three years later he announced his intention to remain unyielding in his defence of the "unity of church and state," which was "the brightest ornament of the British constitution."<sup>35</sup> In an 1835 series of Lenten lectures delivered in St. James's Church he denounced "the wickedness, infidelity and guilt of professing Christians, who try to separate Church and State; civil and religious institutions inseparably connected by the appointment of Heaven, and the constitution of human nature."<sup>36</sup> Finally, at a meeting of the Archdeacons of York and Kingston in 1836, he reflected that "Church and State, comprehending the whole Clerical and lay population, should be mixed and blended into one Constitution." He then added that this "is precisely the character which Christianity has assumed since it was freely recognized in the world, and which it is now sought to destroy;--but as well may you seek to separate soul and body, as to separate Church and State in a Christian nation."<sup>37</sup>

On other occasions Strachan revealed his belief in the value of an established church, as an agent of social and political control. He

<sup>34</sup> See p. 3 of this pamphlet.

<sup>35</sup> A Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Strachan Papers, Syllabus of lectures to be delivered at St. James' Church weekly during Lent, 1835.

<sup>37</sup> The Church of the Redeemed: A Sermon Preached on Wednesday, 5th October, 1836, at a Meeting of the Clergy of the Established Church of Upper Canada. Under their Archdeacons Assembled (Toronto, 1836), p. 52.

argued in an 1824 letter to the Colonial Office that the "Great William Pitt," being well aware that the establishment of the Church of England in the thirteen colonies would have prevented the American Revolution, made provision in the Constitutional Act for the endowment of the Church of England so that "the Canadas might be attached to the Parent State by religious as well as political feelings."<sup>38</sup> In 1824 he announced to Lieutenant Governor Maitland that the form of Christianity taught by the Church of England was "the most compatible with our form of government," and that Anglican clergymen, "if left in the free enjoyment of those rights and privileges embodied in the Constitutional Act," would unite "as a phalanx round the Colonial Administration."<sup>39</sup> The same insistence on the role of the established Church of England in instilling loyalty into the hearts of Upper Canadians can be found in Strachan's 1825 sermon on the death of Bishop Mountain; in his 1827 Ecclesiastical Chart, and in his 1830 Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, the policy of church establishment, besides providing the Church of England with the necessary influence, power, and financial resources to enable it to disseminate its conservative principles throughout Upper Canadian society, served as a public recognition of

<sup>38</sup> Strachan Papers, Strachan to Horton, 5 June 1824.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Address of Clergy Reserves Corporation to Maitland, 1824.

<sup>40</sup> Sermon Preached on the Death of the Bishop of Quebec, pp. 25-27; Strachan Papers, 16 May 1827 (Ecclesiastical Chart); Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis, p. 19.

the church's role in the maintenance of social and political stability. This perception of the importance and function of the established church of Upper Canada naturally made Strachan unsympathetic to those who demanded that the endowment of the Church of England be shared by other denominations. To allow the "sectaries" to partake of the bounty of the clergy reserves, he felt, would be to assist their endeavours to spread sedition and fanaticism, thus negating whatever stabilizing influence the Church of England could exert.

The same argument, of course, could not be used against the Church of Scotland, that pillar of conservatism which proposed not that all denominations be publicly supported but only that its claim to co-establishment be recognized. But even the Church of Scotland could be criticized for not seeing the implications of its demands. Strachan pointed out in 1824 that the creation of "two rival Establishments" would "infallibly produce" a "Spirit of disunion, competition, and irritation."<sup>41</sup> Three years later he drew attention to an even more disastrous consequence which would inevitably follow if the Presbyterian request for a portion of the reserves were granted. He quoted from a memorial drawn up by the Bishop of Quebec and the clergy of Upper Canada, which warned that acceptance of the Kirk's interpretation of the words "Protestant Clergy" in the Constitutional Act would make it morally and legally impossible to resist the demands of the more obscure sects for a share of the patrimony of the Church of England.

<sup>41</sup> Strachan Papers, Address of the Clergy Reserves Corporation, 1824.

The rejection of these claims, which were no less valid than those of the Kirk, would "scatter the seeds" of religious controversy and thereby undermine yet further the strength of the Church of England, one of the "safest bonds" connecting Upper Canada and the parent state.<sup>42</sup>

This response to the campaign for religious equality was complemented by a narrowly legalistic view of the established status of the Church of England. Since the Constitutional Act made provision for the endowment of the Church of England, Strachan was not compelled to defend the policy of church establishment on theoretical grounds; he merely had to point to the clauses of the Upper Canadian constitution which defined the status of the Church of England in law. Accordingly, Strachan often refuted voluntarists not by critically examining their various arguments but by simply declaring, with an air of authoritative finality, that the Constitutional Act recognized the unity of church and state and made provision for the endowment of the Church of England. Similarly, the Kirk's campaign for co-establishment status led Strachan to compose minor treatises, such as his 1839 Letter to Dr. Lee, designed to establish conclusively that the phrase "Protestant Clergy" referred only to the Church of England.<sup>43</sup> Not once did it occur to Strachan that the ecclesiastical clauses of the Constitutional Act, having been

<sup>42</sup> Strachan, Observations on the Maintenance of a Protestant Clergy, pp. 14-17.

<sup>43</sup> A Letter from the Hon. and Venerable Dr. Strachan, Archdeacon of York, U.C. to Dr. Lee, D.D. Convener of a Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (Kingston, 1829).

drawn up by mortal men, might have been misguided. Nor did he ever admit that the religiously pluralistic nature of Upper Canadian society might necessitate a reconsideration and perhaps even abandonment of the policy of church establishment set forth in the Constitutional Act. With his legalistic perspective, the fact that the Church of England was a church of the minority in no way affected its status as the establishment. As he wrote to John Bethune in 1829: "I contend that were we not half so numerous as we are the reserves are legally ours."<sup>44</sup>

Strachan's inflexibility in this respect can be easily explained. From his standpoint, men who professed a willingness to tamper with the ecclesiastical clauses of the Constitutional Act could be criticized on a number of grounds: they displayed their support of the revolutionary doctrine that constitutions, instead of being the products of a long process of historical development, could be altered or discarded whenever capricious and restless men began to clamour for change; they demonstrated a lack of respect for a constitution which, as an "image and transcript" of the British constitution, was the embodiment of the wisdom of the ages; and they ignored the fact that the established Church of England was an integral component of the British constitution, and that consequently Upper Canada's rejection of the policy of church establishment would lead to a drastic alteration of its social and political structure and perhaps even to a severance of the imperial tie. Acutely aware of these errors on the part of his opponents,

<sup>44</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-39, Strachan to Bethune, 26 Jan. 1829.

Strachan adopted an entirely different approach to the issue of church establishment. All of his major published defences of the established position of the Church of England shared the assumption that the Constitutional Act, with its provision for the endowment of the Church of England, enshrined principles which could not be repudiated without unravelling the legal fabric of society.

Strachan was equally inflexible when he responded to those who argued that the Church of England should follow the example of other denominations and derive its support from the voluntary contributions of its own members. The application of the voluntary principle to the Church of England, he believed, would destroy the unity of church and state, thereby depriving the Church of England of the financial resources it needed to perform its social and political duties. Furthermore, as will be shown in chapter seven, Strachan and his fellow Anglican clergymen were convinced that voluntarism would destroy the independence and status of their calling, transforming them into public wards who had to tailor their teachings to the popular tastes of a sinful world, and undermining the appeal of the Christian religion in those "respectable" circles of society where great stock was placed on the social position of the ministry. They were also unanimous in believing that a Church of England supported by its own flock would not be able to overcome the religious destitution afflicting the Anglican community of Upper Canada. Conveniently ignoring the fact that the lack of state support had not prevented other denominations from growing at a remarkable rate, Anglican clergymen frequently asserted that their church, because of the impoverished condition of Anglican

settlers, could not rely exclusively on voluntary contributions if its ministrations were to reach every corner of a colony as immense as Upper Canada.

Yet, if Strachan and the Anglican clergy as a whole were pessimistic about the ability of a voluntarily supported Church of England to meet the religious needs of its flock, their optimism was boundless when they reflected on the prospects of a Church of England that retained its public endowment. It is true that John Leeds, the Anglican clergyman at Brockville and Augusta, informed the SPG in 1828 that a "national church" would never be popular in Upper Canada and that the connection of the Church of England with the state was "a main obstacle to its advancement."<sup>45</sup> But Leeds was a maverick, an intellectually isolated figure whose opinions on the subject of church establishment were in striking contrast to those of his clerical colleagues. In the 1820s, a decade in which the most remarkable feature of the Anglican mind was its mood of optimism, the general consensus amongst Anglican clergymen was that the maintenance of the policy of church establishment would enable the Church of England to transform Upper Canada into a religiously homogeneous society. For example, an 1823 petition of the bishop of Quebec and the clergy of Upper Canada stated that "there manifestly appears the fairest prospect that the Church of England; from the favourable disposition that now exists towards it, will be able to collect within its bosom the bulk of the inhabitants of the Province, should no prospect of supporting their Clergy be held out to the

<sup>45</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/39, no. 451, 5 Feb. 1828.



various Protestant denominations."<sup>46</sup> Similarly, in his 1825 sermon on the death of Bishop Mountain, Strachan announced that additional British financial assistance to the Church of England establishment would unite the "whole population" in "one holy communion."<sup>47</sup> A couple of years later a letter accompanying his Ecclesiastical Chart included the assertion that "the tendency of the population is towards the Church of England, and nothing but the want of moderate support prevents her from spreading over the whole Province."<sup>48</sup> The same point was made in a letter to George Jehosaphat Mountain, in which Strachan stressed that "our argument is not what we are but what we shall soon be if left unmolested."<sup>49</sup>

II

Such confidence, needless to say, could not last forever. As the struggle for religious and political reform gained momentum in the 1830s, Anglican clergymen became increasingly angry and frustrated, and they expressed their feelings in embittered attacks on those responsible for blocking the progress of the Church of England. Strachan's

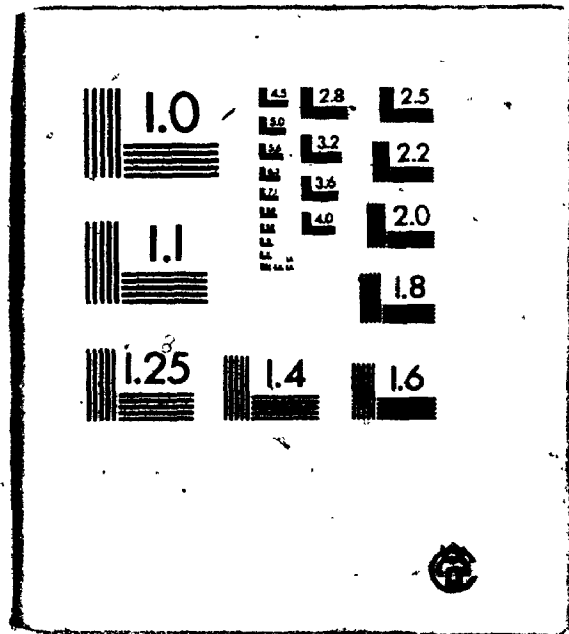
<sup>46</sup> Strachan, Observations on the Maintenance of a Protestant Clergy, pp. 39-40.

<sup>47</sup> Sermon on the Death of the Bishop of Quebec, p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> Strachan Papers, "Canada Church Establishment," Strachan to Horton, 16 May 1827.

<sup>49</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-39, Strachan to Archdeacon of Quebec, n.d.

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charge, for example, that Methodist preachers disseminated fanaticism and republicanism was both an attempt to strengthen the Church of England's exclusive claim to the clergy reserves, and a reflection of his hostility towards the denomination which was leading the crusade against the policy of church establishment. Similarly, his criticism of the Presbyterian demand for co-establishment revolved around the idea that the Kirk was guilty of unprovoked aggression against a church which was entirely innocent of any wrongdoing. In 1827 he complained that Anglican clergymen were "attacked and reviled on all sides" and that the Kirk was filling newspapers with "unmerited and vulgar abuse of the Church of England."<sup>50</sup>

Other Anglican clergymen were equally outraged when they contemplated the besieged position of their church. Adam Burwell, never one to conceal his strong opinions, wrote in 1831 that "every dissenter is in the train of rebellion" and that the opponents of the Church of England "must be attacked as if they were a drove of hogs in mischief."<sup>51</sup> William Bettridge informed the Colonial Secretary in 1387 that by responding favourably to the demands of the "enemies of the Church," the imperial government was endangering "not the prosperity or efficiency only, but the very existence of the established Church of England in U.C."<sup>52</sup> Another Anglican clergyman, who preferred to remain anonymous,

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Stewart, 5 Nov. 1827.

<sup>51</sup> Macaulay Papers, Burwell to Macaulay, 13 Aug. 1831.

<sup>52</sup> Strachan Papers, Bettridge to Glenelg, 25 Sept. 1837.

expressed his regret that the Kirk, which had previously been on friendly terms with the Church of England, had decided to "raise the sudden and angry cry of discontent and hatred, and strike at us with a concealed poignard steeped in the 'gall of Bitterness.'"<sup>53</sup> A correspondent to the Church in 1837 denounced those "who, though calling themselves christians, are seen, in these our days . . . leagu<sup>ing</sup> themselves with men whose sole object, under the specious pretext of securing religious liberty and freedom of worship, is to destroy all religion and worship." Warning of "the countless infidel hordes, ready to burst upon the Church," he urged "every true friend of religion . . . to brave himself for the glorious toil, the severe struggle, of attempting to achieve the deliverance of the Church from her present desolate and oppressed state."<sup>54</sup>

The anger and frustration of Anglican clergymen was also attributable to developments outside of Upper Canada. In the 1820s and 1830s liberalism seemed to be sweeping the western world. Its progress was marked by the triumph of Jacksonian democracy in the United States and the French Revolution of 1830. Even Britain, supposedly noted for the immutable principles of its constitution and the stability of its social and political life, appeared to have fallen victim to the forces

<sup>53</sup> An Apology for the Church of England in the Canadas, in Answer to a letter to the Earl of Liverpool, Relative to the Rights of the Church of Scotland, &c. by a Protestant of the Church of Scotland. By a Protestant of the Established Church of England (Kingston, 1826), p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> The Church, 3 Sept. 1837.

of subversion. In the late 1820s Roman Catholics achieved emancipation and the Test and Corporation Acts were repealed. Soon afterwards the Tory ascendancy came to an end, and one of the first steps of the new Whig government was to broaden the franchise under the Reform Bill of 1832. At the same time, "Little Englanders" began calling for a reduction in imperial commitments and the inauguration of free trade, and the Chartist movement arose to champion the interests of the working class. In these circumstances it was only natural that Anglican clergymen should display a sense of alienation from a world which seemed determined to ignore their warnings and rush headlong into infidelity and anarchy. It was equally natural that they should regard the turbulence of Upper Canadian society as a manifestation of the same revolutionary ideas which were wreaking such havoc in the United States, Britain, and Europe.

Alienation in the midst of the revolutionary age, and the tendency to equate the state of Upper Canada with the state of the world, were exemplified by John Strachan. In 1832 he told John Macaulay that "infidel and democratic principles are in unison and are spreading fast & wide," noting with respect to the "present deplorable situation" of Britain that "in all probability sad convulsions and many years of darkness are to come--in some of which we must participate." He also asserted that the Alien Bill, which made "rebels equal to Loyalists," and the crusade against the established Church of England were destroying those distinctive rights which Upper Canadians enjoyed as British subjects, and that "under such circumstances to talk of attachment to British institutions is quite ridiculous," though he cautioned against

despair and emphasized that "it is our duty to persevere to the last in resisting what we believe evil."<sup>55</sup> One year later he reflected solemnly that a revolution was already in progress in Britain and its colonies, remarking that "it may be quieter or slower in its movements as circumstances fall out but it will never rest till the Glorious Fabric of the Constitution is crumpled in the dust."<sup>56</sup> He informed another correspondent in Britain that "whatever commotions you may have we proceed in your wake. It appears to me that unless a great union of parties now take place & a determined stand be made against further innovation there is no hope and revolution becomes inevitable."<sup>57</sup>

Similar views on the state of the world were expressed by A. N. Bethune and Adam Burwell. In 1831 Bethune, reporting from London on the progress of the Reform Bill in Parliament, wrote to Strachan that "it is hard to say what the consequences will be--great confusion I fear. Even now master[s] of a revolutionary spirit show themselves."<sup>58</sup> He was equally apprehensive towards the end of the year, when he informed Strachan that "the spirit of revolution was spreading" throughout Europe.<sup>59</sup> Burwell argued in A Voice of Warning and Instruction

<sup>55</sup> Macaulay Papers, Strachan to John Macaulay, 16 Feb. 1832.

<sup>56</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-39, Strachan to Oliver Hargrave, 18 March 1833.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Strachan to George Baillie, 18 March 1833.

<sup>58</sup> Strachan Papers, Bethune to Strachan, 4 Oct. 1831.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Bethune to Strachan, 14 Dec. 1831.

Concerning the Signs of the Times that the French Revolution was the first manifestation of that spirit of "Infidel Lawlessness . . . which has carried all the revolutionary measures in England from the repeal of the corporation and test acts down to the present hour; which has caused all the difficulties in Lower Canada; which has so much agitated Upper Canada within ten or twelve years past; and . . . which bids fair to demolish everything worth preservation."<sup>60</sup> Hysteria and pessimism were also features of his Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, in which the world was attacked for its "infidel radicalism," its separation of church and state, its susceptibility to the "demon of demagoguism," and its attachment to the violence and moral barbarism that characterized "popular elections."<sup>61</sup> All these signs of sinfulness, Burwell asserted, were especially evident in Britain, a nation whose leaders had "apostatized from every principle of the Reformation and in addition to this wickedness, destroyed even the Christian character of the fundamental principles of the constitution."<sup>62</sup> From his perspective, moreover, the guilt of Britain was magnified by the fact that imperial statesmen were largely responsible for the troubles of the Canadas. The fatal mistake of Britain in dealing with Upper and Lower Canada, he stated, was in following "that constant course of concession to the clamour and insolence of designing revolutionists, and the sacrifice

<sup>60</sup> A Voice of Warning and Instruction Concerning the Signs of the Times, p. 35.

<sup>61</sup> Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, passim.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

of the firm supporters of the crown to their malice."<sup>63</sup> Thus, Britain's sinfulness was both the "presage" of its "downfall" and "the cause of the disorders that of late have broken forth throughout the empire."<sup>64</sup>

The events of the age had a profound impact on Strachan's perception of the place of the Church of England in Upper Canadian society. Religious and political warfare did not prompt him to renounce his belief that a Church of England which retained its landed endowment, would soon attract the allegiance of all Upper Canadians. But as the crusade for religious equality gained increasing support, it gradually became clear to him that in the very near future the Church of England might be deprived of its established status and forced to reconcile itself to the denominational pluralism of Upper Canadian life. This prospect, combined with the setbacks the Church of England was experiencing on other fronts, eroded Strachan's optimism. The notion that God had ordained the imminent triumph of the Anglican cause was slowly undermined by the conviction that the Church of England was being abandoned by its friends and ruthlessly persecuted by its enemies. His new and more pessimistic frame of mind, evident in his vehement attacks on the opponents of the Church of England both in Upper Canada and Britain, was perhaps best expressed in a sermon preached in 1836 before the assembled clergy of Upper Canada. Though at this time he stressed the necessity of more concerted action on behalf of the

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 95-96.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 97.



Anglican cause, he also spoke almost despairingly of a church that was "separated, in a great measure, from the Mother Church, and deprived, by the pressure of the times, of much of that protection which the Civil Government has hitherto willingly accorded--assailed on every side by enemies whose hostility is openly avowed."<sup>65</sup>

The developments of these years also led to a reconsideration of the responsibilities of the Church of England in Upper Canadian society. Throughout this period Strachan never doubted that the Church of England was peculiarly fitted to disseminate conservative ideology, to act as the cement of the social order, and to ensure the maintenance of the imperial connection. Still, the prospect of disestablishment left him no alternative but to adopt a more narrowly ecclesiastical view of the role of his church in the wider community. Recognizing that the clergy reserves might soon be divided among all denominations or even secularized entirely, he was compelled to make a virtue of necessity and to insist upon the distinctive spiritual mission which could not be affected by reverses in the world of politics. He was also compelled to admit, however grudgingly, that the Church of England might have to abandon its social and political responsibilities and become a "spiritual society" whose only concern was the salvation of souls. Accordingly, in a sermon preached in 1837 before the clergy of the Archdeaconry of York, a plea for a more aggressive defence of the policy of church establishment was coupled with the assurance that the Church

<sup>65</sup> The Church of the Redeemed, p. 28.

of England, as a primarily spiritual institution, did not depend for its vitality on the constantly shifting policies of governments. "The basis of the Church of Christ," Strachan announced, "is not secular but spiritual, it is not to be considered merely a civil institution--an erection or portion of the State;--nor does it depend upon the breath of Governments or upon the enactments of human law. On the contrary, it is an ordinance of God."<sup>66</sup> Then, in a striking illustration of the impact of the revolutionary age on his view of the role of religion in society, Strachan argued that the Church of England could best respond to disestablishment by concentrating on its religious task and ignoring those secular duties it had traditionally performed as an institution deeply rooted in the outside world. This new vision of the Church of England's role--a vision which was in sharp contrast to Strachan's earlier view that the church had an essential part to play in the secular domain of Upper Canadian life--was neatly summed up in the following statement:

if, therefore, the property of the Church be taken from us by legal oppression, we must receive it as a trial of our faith, and, submitting in all patience, seek consolation in turning with redoubled ardour to our sacred duties. From teaching the Gospel in the purest form to the inhabitants of Upper Canada we cannot be driven. We are a Missionary Church;--in this consists our true character; and as our organization is Missionary, let us cherish more and more a Missionary Spirit. This can be done amidst the wreck of our temporalities as well as amidst the slander and contumely of our enemies, without affording them a

<sup>66</sup> Address to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of York. By the Honorable and Venerable The Archdeacon of York. Delivered at Toronto on Wednesday the 13th September, 1837 (n.p., n.d.), p. 9.

single just cause of irritation. By thus proceeding we shall exhibit the character and principles of the Church in all their attractive beauty, and win far more friends in the day of our adversity than in that of our prosperity.<sup>67</sup>

The course of religious and political life in the post-war period also had a significant impact on the Anglican clergy's view of Upper Canadian society. While Anglican clergymen maintained that the revolutionary spirit evident in their society was a world-wide phenomenon, this did not mean that they saw Upper Canadians as the innocent victims of external forces. On the contrary, the popular support given a campaign designed to overthrow the social and political order, together with the growing number and increasing militancy of local demagogues, made it seem obvious to them that the sinfulness of their compatriots was the prime cause of the serious problems facing Upper Canadian society. Operating from this perspective, they naturally concluded that the failure of Upper Canadians to repent and amend their ways would have terrible consequences.

The response of Anglican clergymen to the cholera epidemics of the early 1830s revealed a deep concern about the increasing sinfulness of their society.<sup>68</sup> The "pestilence" was seen as a divine visitation, a

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>68</sup> John Bethune, an Anglican clergyman stationed in Lower Canada, delivered two of the more interesting sermons on the subject of the cholera epidemics. See A Sermon Preached in Christ's Church, Montreal, on Friday, the 9th of May, 1832, Being the Day Appointed for a Public Fast, Occasioned by the Apprehension of Being Visited by the Pestilence which is Scourging the Nations of Europe (Montreal, 1832); and A Sermon Preached on Wednesday, February 6, 1833, Being the Day Appointed by

scourge sent down from heaven in order to punish sinfulness and awaken all men, including Upper Canadians, to the necessity of immediate repentance. On 3 February 1833, "the day appointed by proclamation for a General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for Having removed the heavy Judgment of the pestilence," every Anglican congregation in the diocese, "under the prevailing apprehension" of a new outbreak of cholera, confessed "with shame and contrition, that, in the pride and hardness of our hearts, we . . . have followed our own imaginations instead of Thy holy laws." Having thus acknowledged their sinfulness, they then appealed to their "merciful Father" not to allow his "destroying angel to life up his hand against us."<sup>69</sup> In a sermon of 1832, preached during "a time of Cholera Asiatic Morbus," Strachan emphasized the importance of repentance, declaring that "if we are anxious for the salvation of our Souls . . . then ought we to take advantage of God's particular warnings and applications."<sup>70</sup> R. D. Cartwright, describing his exertions during the epidemic of 1832, asserted that "it is God's doing--and blind must they be who do not perceive that it is his work."<sup>71</sup>

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Proclamation for a General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for Having Removed the Heavy Judgment of the Pestilence (Montreal, 1833). Both these sermons espoused the view that the cholera epidemics were a divine punishment of human sinfulness.

<sup>69</sup> For the text of this prayer, see John Bethune's 1833 sermon, cited above.

<sup>70</sup> Strachan Sermons, "Wherefore the Holy Ghost saith today if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts" (8 July 1832).

<sup>71</sup> A0, Cartwright Papers, Cartwright to Rev. James Hitchings, 27 Oct. 1832.

A. H. Burwell reflected angrily in 1835 that Upper Canadians had not yet repented for "those crying political and national sins for which God sent us pestilence & death."<sup>72</sup> Finally, on 14 February 1833, the day of "General Thanksgiving," A. N. Bethune preached a sermon which was in the tradition of the classic jeremiad. Though he urged his flock to be thankful for the fact that Upper Canada had been spared the widespread desolation which Europe had experienced as a result of the cholera epidemic, and though he argued that Upper Canada owed its "deliverance" to divine providence, he also stated that Upper Canadians, like men elsewhere, were tainted with sinfulness and their failure to repent might provoke a "severer visitation from heaven."<sup>73</sup> Pointing to the crimes against God and man which were common in both Upper Canada and the world as a whole, Bethune warned:

we have sins to deplore and abandon--sins of dye so deep and character so heinous, that the cry of them has gone up into the presence of God and caused Him to "smite the earth with a curse." It is emphatically a sinful, a rebellious, an apostate world--treason and crime, infidelity and vice, are pervading characteristics of the times. . . . That perverse and unhallowed temper, that recklessness of the wholesome restraints, which the laws of God and the wisdom of man have imposed, hidden as it often is under the specious covering of a prostituted liberality--that impatience of rule which is fostered by a spirit of impiety and the instigations of Satan--that dislike of the salutary

<sup>72</sup> Burwell, Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, pp. 108-9.

<sup>73</sup> A Sermon, Preached in Saint Peter's Church, Cobourg; U.C. on Thursday, the 14th, February, 1833. Being the Day Appointed for a General Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for Having Removed the Heavy Judgments with which these Provinces Have Recently Been Afflicted (Cobourg, 1833), passim.

obligations which maintain the orders and courses of society within their appointed channels, are sins and evils which the kind and merciful Father of the Universe could never view with complacency.<sup>74</sup>

The outbreak of the rebellion underlined the sorry state of Upper Canadian society. The two most publicly outspoken Anglican clergymen, Strachan and Bethune, greeted the events of late 1837 with expressions of alarm and astonishment but also with a firm determination to suppress this latest manifestation of Upper Canadian sinfulness. On 9 December 1837 Bethune, as editor of the Church, denounced the rebels for "murdering peaceful inhabitants, burning the houses of the unoffending, and plundering the property of the defenceless," and reminded every loyal Upper Canadian of his duty to "rise at the summons of authority, buckle on his armour for the contest, and march, secure in the protection of the God of battles, to crush rebellion, and bring the traitors to justice."<sup>75</sup> In a sermon preached on 14 December, "a fast day by public proclamation on account of the rebellion & attacks from the U States," Strachan criticized those "Traitors & Robbers who thirst for our blood & our possessions--bad men, who without religion or principle are deterred from no crime," and urged Upper Canadians "to throw aside all causes of wrath & Strife hatred & ill will and to band together as Brothers for the defence of our country our wives & our children."<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>75</sup> The Church, 9 Dec. 1837.

<sup>76</sup> Strachan Sermons, "And thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth" (14 Dec. 1837).

Yet, if the rebellion strengthened the determination of Strachan and Bethune to crush the forces of disorder, it also confirmed their fear that Upper Canadians had become a sinful people. There was, it was true, one positive note about the rebellion: the victory of the loyalist cause could be attributed to the intervention of divine providence.<sup>77</sup> Even this, however, seemed of less importance than the fact that divine providence had allowed the rebellion to occur in the first place. For Strachan and Bethune, the rebellion was to be primarily regarded not as yet another instance of God's protection of his chosen people, but as a sign of divine anger intended to punish Upper Canadians for their sinfulness and awaken them to the need for repentance.

The interpretation of the rebellion as a divine visitation was first advanced by Strachan in his 1837 sermon. Whereas Strachan had earlier been extremely proud of the colony's record in defending "king and constitution" during the War of 1812, he now felt that the failure of Upper Canadians to support the "Church of our Redeemer," combined with the negligence of Britain in aiding the cause of religion in the

<sup>77</sup> For this point of view, see the Church, 16 Dec. 1837, 30 Dec. 1837, 20 Jan. 1838, 3 Feb. 1838, 10 Feb. 1838, 17 Feb. 1838. See also Osler papers--Diaries and Journals (Series II-I, "Sketch of my life," p. 69); Series II-1, vol. 2 (Osler to Proctor, 29 March 1838). Bethune went so far as to claim that the weather conditions during the rebellion had been the most striking illustration of God's support of the loyalist cause. On 16 Dec. 1837 he wrote in a Church editorial: "It cannot fail to be remarked--and we do so with unfeigned thankfulness--how singularly the devices of these atrocious individuals have been baffled by a gracious and merciful Providence . . . it mercifully happened that the weather, during the period of the temporary ferment, was such that, contrary to the experience of almost any former year, Steam Boats were enabled to traverse the lake in safety, and convey succours of men and the munitions of war with a speed that served at once to disconcert and ruin their iniquitous designs."

colonies, had led to widespread sinfulness. "Can we therefore wonder," he asked, "that heavy calamity is permitted to afflict us--we are not innocent sufferers but are active partakers in the guilt--nor can the judgments be removed nor the plague stayed but by deep repentance and devout prayer to God."<sup>78</sup> A. N. Bethune saw the rebellion in a similar light. On 20 January 1838 he wrote in a Church editorial that "in sending judgments upon his people, Christians know and confess that He is not chastening them without cause."<sup>79</sup> Soon afterwards, on a day of public fasting and humiliation, Bethune preached a sermon in which he urged his parishioners to give thanks to God for having ensured Upper Canada's deliverance during the late rebellion, an event staged by "depraved individuals" who had sought to destroy "our happy institutions" and "to place us under a polity and a domination to which both we and our fathers were strangers." Then, in almost the same breath, he announced that "all troubles & calamities of whatsoever nature . . . are evidences of our heavenly Fathers displeasure: they are proof that He has been offended by our sins, our carelessness, our negligence; and that correction from his hand is necessary to ensure the humbling of our hearts and the improvement of our lives." Only a determination on the part of each Upper Canadian to "avoid those transgressions which provoke his righteous anger" would guarantee "future exemption from the calamities from which we have so recently escaped."<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Strachan Sermons, "And thy judgments are, as the light that goeth forth" (14 Dec. 1837).

<sup>79</sup> The Church, 20 Jan. 1838.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 17 Feb. 1838.



Later in the same year Bethune wrote another Church editorial in which the cholera epidemics, the rebellion, and the patriot raids were discussed in the same context as the "spirit of disobedience and of resistance to constituted authority" that was "among the baneful characteristics of the times." The essence of his argument was that God could punish sinfulness either by "direct manifestations of his wrath" or by "the intermediate agency of fellow-mortals." An example of the first form of punishment was the cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1834. Unfortunately, these epidemics had not brought about "the change of our hearts or the reformation of our lives." Consequently God had adopted a different strategy, punishing Upper Canadian society through the actions of those "traitors within and plunderers without" who "have conspired to plunge us into civil strife, and convert our peace into confusion, our freedom into anarchy." In these circumstances it was necessary for Upper Canadians to appeal to God "in the posture of supplicants, with the voice of contrition, and with vows of future obedience."<sup>81</sup>

The most revealing statement on the causes of the rebellion was made in a sermon preached in early 1838 by a clergyman whose name cannot be determined. According to this clergyman, the cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1834 had been a divine punishment of Upper Canadian sinfulness. Even these "judgments," however, had not prompted Upper Canadians to repent and amend their ways. The result was that

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 24 Nov. 1838.

Upper Canada had recently been afflicted with rebellion and was now threatened with invasion. It now seemed clear that Upper Canadians could count on divine assistance in the "day of battle" only if they repented and remained loyal towards constituted authorities, thus distinguishing themselves from those individuals whose involvement in the rebellion had violated the Christian doctrine that it was the duty of all men to obey their "rightful Sovereign" and the "powers that be." If, on the other hand, Upper Canadians continued in their sinful ways, the future was uncertain.

So far God has mercifully averted the threatened blow, and signally appeared in our behalf. But yet a dark cloud seems to be gathering; our political horizon appears tinged with its ominous hue; and when, or how, or with what calamities charged, it may be permitted to burst over our heads, is known only to Him, who holds the destinies of the nations in his hands.

We are a sinful people, Brethren, and the Lord has a controversy with us. . . . He has visited us with awful judgments, but alas! they have left no impression. O, who that witnessed the devastation of that dire pestilence, which afflicted these provinces in 1832 and 1834, can readily forget them? . . . Ah! while death stared in the face, the heart appeared humbled; but no sooner was the cause of terror removed, than the good impressions vanished, and . . . left not a trace behind. Shall not God visit [us] for this forgetfulness--this sinful forgetfulness of Him? Surely he is not mocked with impunity. And if he is now about to commission another messenger of vengeance, and to say--"Sword, go through this land!" are we prepared?<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 3 Feb. 1838.

## III

In the 1820s and 1830s, then, Strachan responded to developments in the religious and political spheres by reaffirming his commitment to the basic principles of his conservative ideology and by defending the established position of the Upper Canadian church. In so doing he articulated ideas which were to be a crucial part of the Church of England's response to the events of the post-rebellion period. He also revealed, as did a number of his clerical colleagues, a changing perspective both on the role of the Church of England and on the nature of Upper Canadian society. In this respect his new perception of the Church of England as a primarily spiritual organization marked a sharp break with his view that the church had a vital role to play not only in spreading the principles of the true faith but in maintaining social and political stability. At the same time, his growing preoccupation with the sinfulness of Upper Canadians, a preoccupation which was shared by several other clergymen, was in startling contrast to his earlier statements about the colony's mission in ensuring the survival of British constitutional principles on the North American continent. For Strachan and Bethune in particular, the cholera epidemics of 1832 and 1834, the rebellion of 1837-38, and the patriot raids left no doubt that Upper Canadians were being punished by God for lending their support to the subversive designs of local revolutionaries. What is more, the same developments gave rise to a belief amongst Anglican clergymen that the Church of England and Upper Canada might have to experience additional suffering before an angry God was placated. This

frame of mind, which was to become even more evident in the years after the rebellion, was well expressed in a Church editorial and in a letter written by F. L. Osler, the Anglican clergyman in Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury. The Church argued in September 1838 that God could decide to punish the "sins of the times" by permitting "the unhallowed combinations now forming in this country to rob us of our patrimony."<sup>83</sup> Soon afterwards Osler, warning of the possibility of a patriot invasion, declared that "my trust is in the Lord God, He reigneth over all--yet He may see fit to punish us for our sins--and cause the enemy to triumph over us."<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 22 Sept. 1838.

<sup>84</sup> Osler Papers, Series I-1, vol. 2, Osler to Procter, 5 Nov. 1838.

## VI

### DEFEAT

Anglican concern about the state of Upper Canadian society became even more intense during the years from the late 1830s to the early 1850s. The rebellion and subsequent patriot raids, the union of the Canadas, and the achievement of responsible government convinced Anglican clergymen that a once loyal and conservative Upper Canada had been destroyed beyond repair by the selfish and shortsighted policies of the imperial government and by the unrepentant sinfulness of Upper Canadians themselves. At the same time, with the creation of a non-denominational school system, the transformation of King's College into the completely secular University of Toronto, and the secularization of the clergy reserves, Anglican clergymen were forced to admit defeat in the long, tempestuous struggle to maintain the policy of church establishment. In responding to these developments in the religious and political spheres, clergyman after clergyman showed his contempt for the spirit of the age by defending the Church of England's privileged position and by expounding the same conservative ideology that Strachan had articulated before the rebellion. But, predictably enough, the clergy's failure to have a significant impact on the course of events accentuated their bitterness and heightened their anxieties about the future of Upper Canadian society. It also brought them face to face with the reality of disestablishment and raised searching

questions concerning the relationship of church and state. In more ways than one, therefore, the post-rebellion period was of decisive importance in the evolution of Upper Canadian Anglicanism.

## I

After the rebellion Anglican clergymen responded to the emergence of a new social, political, and religious order not by critically examining their own values and beliefs, but by emphasizing again those conservative doctrines which in their view were nothing short of timeless truths. One of those doctrines was the old notion that human beings were unregenerately sinful. In earlier years the Christian belief in the innate depravity of man had enabled Strachan to maintain that the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, the War of 1812, and the Upper Canadian campaign for political reform and religious equality were all caused by the sinfulness of human nature. It had also strengthened his conviction that demands for change, whether in the France and United States of the eighteenth century or the Upper Canada of the 1820s and 1830s, could only be resisted successfully by an inflexible defence of the status quo, since any attempt to reach a compromise with movements that were manifestations of man's evil nature would have disastrous results.<sup>1</sup> Little changed in this respect in the post-rebellion period. The Anglican belief in the sinfulness of the

<sup>1</sup> See chapter five, pp. 159-61, for a discussion of Strachan's view of human nature.

race continued to provide an insight into the basic cause of current political developments, while at the same time strengthening the resolve of clergymen to reject all demands for reform. A sermon preached in 1846 by R. J. MacGeorge, Anglican clergyman in Streetsville, will serve to illustrate.

The underlying theme of the MacGeorge sermon was that the campaign for disestablishment was a product of human sinfulness, for the separation of church and state would allow the baser passions of man's nature to assert their dominance and would eventually lead to the disintegration of society. MacGeorge argued that all men, because of Adam's rebellion in the Garden of Eden, "come into this world with the chains of bondage rivetted to our limbs . . . the enslaved subjects of the Prince of Darkness, without strength to break his yoke, and, what is worse, without inclination to disobey his commands."<sup>2</sup> Such a sinful race could never expect to enjoy true liberty in the present life, let alone eternal bliss in the next, were it not for the Christian religion, which reconciled individual freedom and the interests of the community. Asserting that "liberty at no time has permanently flourished when divorced from religion," and that "every political or social system which is not based upon the rock of God's most holy word" should be regarded with "suspicion and distrust,"<sup>3</sup> he pointed to Britain as an

<sup>2</sup> The Perfect Law of Liberty: A Sermon, Preached at Trinity Church, Streetsville on Sunday, XIIth July, M.DCCC.XLVI (Toronto, 1846), pp. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

example of a country whose recognition of the inseparable nature of religion and liberty had made it "great in power, great in commerce, great in solid and substantial freedom, equally removed from monarchical despotism, and from the more degraded tyranny of a licentious democracy."<sup>4</sup> But he also admitted sadly that in recent years Britain's "matchless constitution" had been "marred . . . by reckless hands," and that "wily demagogues," a phrase clearly intended to apply also to Upper Canada, had attempted to sever completely the ties between church and state, ignoring the fact that kings and queens had been commanded by God to be the "nursing fathers" and "nursing mothers" of the church.<sup>5</sup> If these assaults upon the constitution continued, religion would be banished from the state and the sinful instincts of human nature would have free rein. Britain, and by inference its colonies as well, would then share the fate of revolutionary France, where "an experiment in government without religion" changed "all the histories of the preceding sufferings of mankind into idle tales."<sup>6</sup>

Another tenet of conservative ideology expounded in the post-rebellion period was the idea of "due subordination." The rebellion, the patriot raids, and the clamour for political change in the 1840s heightened fears that republicanism, with its commitment to an egalitarian social structure and the untrammelled freedom of the individual, had become the reigning ideology of Upper Canadian society. In coming to grips with this state of affairs, Anglican clergymen once again

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.



found comfort in the certainties of the past. Repeatedly they emphasized that a hierarchically graded social structure was the handiwork of God, and that every individual had an obligation to respect his superiors, obey those in authority, and accept the sufferings of the present life as a trial of faith, shortly to be followed for all true Christians by the eternal bliss of the world to come. This point of view was evident in a number of Strachan sermons, in Church editorials, and in sermons preached by W. H. Norris, Henry Scadding, and Jonathan Shortt.<sup>7</sup>

The Anglican clergy's tendency to respond to political change by rallying behind the notion of "due subordination" was perhaps best revealed in A. N. Bethune's 1849 sermon, The Duty of Loyalty. The central argument in this sermon was that the "obligation of loyalty"

<sup>7</sup> See Strachan Sermons, "And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up" (27 Oct. 1847); "O that they were wise that they understand this that they would consider their latter end" (9 April 1839); "I am he that liveth and was dead" (8 May 1840); "And as Jesus passed forth from thence he saw a man named Matthew" (22 Oct. 1848); "And he made his grace with the wicked" (1 Aug. 1849); "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things" (5 March 1851). Also: the Church, 29 Aug. 1840; Scadding Sermons, vol. All, "That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (10 March 1844); Peace in Believing: Exemplified in the Case of the Late Mary Anne Sophia Whitehead, Who Fell Asleep in Jesus on Sunday, the 7th March, 1847, in the 20th year of her age. The Substance of Sermons Preached in St. John's Church, Port Hope, by the Rector of that Parish (Toronto, 1847). Norris's sermon can be found in the Church, 22 Aug. 1840. At this point it should be noted that the Church was edited by A. N. Bethune from 1837 to 1841 and from 1843 to 1847, by the layman John Kent from 1841 to 1843, and by a series of anonymous clergymen from 1847 to 1854. It is also important to note that the Church operated as the Canadian Churchman from 5 Aug. 1852 to 23 June 1853. For the sake of clarity and simplification, the name Church has been used throughout this thesis.

could not be regulated by "what personal and most common-place interests may dictate."<sup>8</sup> Supporters of annexation to the United States might argue that "the sacred bond of allegiance, and the awful solemnity of an oath" were "only binding so long as it is agreeable to, or subserves, worldly interest, convenience, or caprice."<sup>9</sup> But such an argument was denounced by Bethune on two counts: it was a blasphemous repudiation of the divine injunction, found in numerous passages of scripture, to obey "constituted authority"; and it ignored the fact, which also rested on scriptural foundations, that the monarchical form of government had been ordained by God. Bethune, appalled by the "proneness to change" that drove men "to the sin of severing the dearest ties, breaking the most solemn bonds, and overturning the most sacred religious obligations,"<sup>10</sup> declared that "the question of reverence for those that are in authority, respect for the laws, and submission to the government, is not a mere question of expediency or self, but a duty which ranks high amongst Christian ordinances . . . it is something for the neglect or slight of which we shall one day give an account at the general judgment of the world."<sup>11</sup> He also declared that God "has been pleased to ordain it as our lot to live under that form of government which is nearest allied to the examples and ordinances furnished in his own Scriptures." Upper Canadians, he announced in his stirring peroration, should remember these truths,

<sup>8</sup> The Duty of Loyalty. A Sermon, Preached in Saint Peter's Church, Cobourg, on Sunday, XXI, October, M.DCCC.XLIX (Cobourg, 1849), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

shunning those "who would rate their loyalty by a standard of gain, and shift their allegiance with the alterations of commerce," and confronting the "reckless and godless cry" of treason "with the blunt and honest opposition which so audacious a wickedness deserves."<sup>12</sup>

Of course, when Anglican clergymen clung tenaciously to the principles of the past in the midst of a changing world, they only accentuated their own isolation. This fact became abundantly apparent when the clergy directed their fire against the Lockean theory of the right of rebellion. During the French Revolution Burke had advanced the view, which was shortly to become the new orthodoxy, that government derived its authority not from the consent of the people at some remote point in the past but from its own character as the product of a long process of historical evolution, thus refuting the idea that rebellion was justifiable when the terms of the social compact were violated. The Anglican clergy of Upper Canada in the first half of the nineteenth century shared this view, but in their case a rejection of Lockeanism often went hand in hand with a doctrine of passive obedience and a revised version of the theory of the divine right of kings--ideas which were sharply at variance with the mainstream of British political theory in this period. Before the rebellion, as was shown in the previous chapter, John Hudson and A. H. Burwell had taken the position that the duty of subjects to obey their rulers was totally unconditional, and indeed their statements on this issue were so thoroughly reactionary that they could be readily construed as a defence of tyranny.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

Similar views were put forward in the post-rebellion period. The events of 1837-38 had the effect of crystallizing opposition to Lockean political theory, and of reinforcing, in a particularly alarming way, the Anglican position on the relationship between rulers and subjects. Also, by leading Anglican clergymen to advance political doctrines which bordered on the absurd, the rebellion underlined the fact that the Church of England was becoming increasingly out of touch with the world in which it operated.

The Church first addressed itself to the subject of political obedience in a November 1838 editorial, in which a threatened patriot invasion prompted the assertion that the obligation of men to remain loyal to their monarch was unconditional. "By the Divine will 'kings reign and princes decree justice,'" the Church declared defiantly, "and to their rule we are obedient as to the ordinances of God, for 'they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.'"<sup>13</sup> A similar point of view was advanced one month later, when it was announced in the "Saturday Preacher" column that monarchical government was divinely ordained to restrain man's evil instincts, that even a tyrant had the right to demand the unconditional allegiance of his subjects, and that those who rebelled against constituted authority would be punished by God.<sup>14</sup> The most categorical rejection of the Lockean defence of rebellion appeared in 1840. In an editorial of that year the Church stated that sovereigns, including those who treated "the advocates of

<sup>13</sup> The Church, 17 Nov. 1838.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 22 Dec. 1838.

a pure and hearty loyalty" with "coldness or discouragement," could never be disobeyed, for men had an obligation as Christians and as members of society to remain loyal to a form of government that was divinely sanctioned. Criticizing "the opinion that the sovereign power is legitimately lodged in the people, and that, with this persuasion, they are at liberty to adopt what seems to comport with their present interests, or to accord with their present states," the Church went on to argue that the subjects of a monarchical form of government could not, "without impiety,--not to speak of the criminal violation of human law,--undertake to destroy the authority of the sovereign, or do ought that would wrest it from his hands." Loyalty was not a duty that could be "yielded or withheld, as our interests serve or our inclinations may direct." On the contrary, "the sovereign, by a divine as well as human law, claims our obedience; and on the immutable principle of a moral and Christian duty, we are bound to yield it." Furthermore, it could not be said that "the fact of encouragement,--of good or ill requital for the faithful performance of this obligation, diminish in the slightest degree its force." The Church emphasized that

what we unequivocally condemn is, that, if a man happens to receive no such return for his valuable and faithful services, he is at liberty to express his complaints in condemnation of his sovereign, or is justified in the threat . . . that he will transfer his allegiance to a quarter where it will be more highly rewarded! . . . Our attainment of every wish is, in this world, impossible, and the disappointment of reasonable expectations is no excuse for seeking to overturn what the Divine wisdom itself has established, and human experience, during a

long series of ages, has pronounced best adapted to social and individual interests and to the welfare of the world.<sup>15</sup>

This rejection of one of the major tenets of Lockean political theory was elaborated upon in letters to the Church. One correspondent, using the pseudonym "An Anglo-Catholic," wrote in 1850 that a sovereign, exercising his powers by divine right, could not be overthrown without defying the will of God. He claimed that sovereigns ruled "by virtue of the authority granted them by God Himself, and which right man can neither give nor take away," adding significantly that "when he commands his subject to any thing contrary to God's word, he must be disobeyed, but not deposed," since "they who are deposers of such monarchs are guilty of sin."<sup>16</sup> Another correspondent, one "Erieus," wrote two letters to the Church in 1844 entitled "On the Origin of Human Society and Government." According to his analysis, Locke's theory of a state of nature and a social compact ignored the fact that the abilities necessary to form a society had to be developed within society itself, that the human race in its "natural state" would probably have lacked any desire to raise itself to a more civilized existence, and that man was incapable of restraining his animal passions and preventing his own destruction without "an external power watching over, controlling, and enforcing him at every moment of his life." It therefore followed that the government under which society exists was "not the effect and result of an instinct or any such thing,

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 19 Sept. 1840.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 5 Dec. 1850.

nor of a mere mutual agreement between two parties," but the ordinance and institution of God. Thus, any political philosophy based on the doctrine of popular sovereignty was "the most fearful blasphemy that man can utter," for "all government ought to be considered as parental . . . (because from GOD THE FATHER it comes forth), while subjects stand in the relation of children, whom God hath commanded to honour and reverence and obey their fathers, who are His representatives."<sup>17</sup>

One final aspect of conservative ideology, imperial patriotism, remains to be analyzed. Before 1837 it had been Strachan's belief that the imperial connection provided Upper Canada with a distinct sense of identity, committing it to a set of values which had been inherited from Britain and which now had to be defended on the North American continent. The same point of view was held by Anglican clergymen, including Strachan, after 1837. It was still their conviction that Upper Canada had a duty to remain closely tied to the parent state and to maintain its character as a "Little England," a society where the Church of England was dominant in religious life, where an "image and transcript" of the British constitution avoided the extremes of democracy and despotism, and where all men fulfilled their obligation

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 26 April 1844 and 17 May 1844. John Kent, the English immigrant who edited the Church from 1841 to 1843, wrote an article in 1838 in which he revealed his belief in the theory of the social compact and in the legitimacy of rebellion. Still, he made a point of emphasizing that rebellion was justifiable only when misgovernment had become notorious and after constitutional means of redress had first been exhausted. Furthermore, in the case of Upper Canada, a stable and prosperous society, Kent was convinced that rebellion would never be justifiable. See the Church, 22 Sept. 1838, "The English Layman," no. XVII.

to respect their superiors and obey constituted authorities. Indeed it was this very tendency to see Upper Canada as a replica of Britain and to equate the imperial connection with certain social, political, and religious principles that underlay the response of the Church to the patriot raids of the late 1830s.

Repeatedly in the late 1830s the Church contrasted the anarchy of life in the American republic with the blessings Upper Canada enjoyed as a result of its status as a British colony, blessings that were now imperilled by the incursions of "patriots." This reaction to the dangers then facing Upper Canada was based on a series of inter-related ideas: the greatness of Britain was founded upon a "balanced" constitution that was the envy of the world and upon an equally renowned social structure that recognized the principle of "due subordination"; Britain's social and political structure, along with its underlying values, was Upper Canada's inheritance as part of the empire, an inheritance that was symbolized in the imperial connection; a patriot victory would lead to a severance of the imperial tie, thus robbing Upper Canada of the stability, prosperity, and happiness that were its lot under British rule, and transforming it into a northern extension of the United States, a country characterized by social anarchy and political corruption.

Such a complex view of the imperial connection was seldom made as explicit as the above analysis might suggest, always remaining more an instinctive attitude than a well thought-out philosophy. Still, its central assumptions were certainly evident in many of the Church's patriotic manifestos. In November 1838, for example, the Church, arguing



that those "born and bred" under a monarchy would never consent to live under a form of government which had "no other sanction than the will of the people," stated that "we shall cling to, and contend for the integrity of our glorious Constitution, because with religion as its basis and perfect freedom as its superstructure, we consider that it yields to us that enlightened, stable, and good government; which it is impossible that a republic from its clumsy, complicated, and unscriptural machinery can ever afford."<sup>18</sup> In the following month an article reminding Upper Canadians of their duty to remain loyal to their monarch also lavished praise on the British constitution, "which throws the shield of protection over more than 125 millions; which has stood the united shock of the whole civilized world in arms; which is the workmanship of time, from materials gathered from the evidence of all ages." It then compared Britain's constitution to the constitution of a society where "government was incompetent to protect virtue, or restrain vice," and where a "loud and annually repeated 'Declaration' of 'the inalienable rights' of man" was heard "at the same moment with the lash of a Slave-driving President, or the groans of the down-trodden aborigines."<sup>19</sup>

The equation of the imperial connection with the basic values of conservative ideology determined the response of Anglican clergymen to

<sup>18</sup> The Church, 17 Nov. 1838.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 22 Dec. 1838. On the relationship between imperial patriotism and conservative ideology, see also an 1838 sermon by Arthur Palmer which was published in the Church on 24 Nov. 1838; Bethune, The Duty of Loyalty, p. 14; and F. J. Lundy's letter to the Church on 10 Jan. 1850.

Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America. Throughout his six-month stay in the Canadas, Durham enjoyed the support of Strachan and A. N. Bethune, the former arguing privately in his correspondence and the latter publicly in the pages of the Church that the new Governor General should have been given an opportunity to fulfil the purpose of his mission before being forced to return to England because of the machinations of his critics.<sup>20</sup> With the publication of the Report, however, it became impossible to regard Durham as an ally of the conservative cause. He was now denounced by the Church as a dangerous revolutionary and an enemy of the Church of England, who "adopted as his text-book the volumes of grievances with which, for the last ten years, our pseudo-reformers have been encumbering the world."<sup>21</sup> He was also accused of being a traitor, an accusation based on his recommendation of responsible government. The Church contended that responsible government was incompatible with the maintenance of the imperial tie and would inevitably lead to independence and the repudiation of those values which Upper Canada had inherited from Britain. The sequel to this development, it claimed, would be absorption into the United States, for an independent Upper Canada, militarily weak

<sup>20</sup> For Strachan's early attitude towards Durham, see the following letters in the Strachan Letter Book, 1827-31: Strachan to Buller, 20 Sept. 1838; Strachan to ?, 8 Oct. 1838; Strachan to Bond Head, 13 Oct. 1838. The Church expressed some apprehensions when it first heard of Durham's mission (see 24 March 1838), but changed its mind in the course of the year. See the Church, 11 Aug. 1838 and 8 Dec. 1838.

<sup>21</sup> The Church, 13 April 1839. Also: 22 June, 10 Aug., and 24 Aug. 1839.

and lacking a sense of identity as a conservative society, would be unable to defend itself against either an American armed invasion or the infiltration of republican ideology.<sup>22</sup>

The Church was equally enraged with the reaction of the imperial government to the Durham Report. True, colonial responsible government had been rejected as impractical and inexpedient, a political innovation that could only result in a dissolution of the imperial tie. But Durham's recommendation that a union of the Canadas would restore political stability and bring about the assimilation of the French Canadians was accepted by the imperial government, and an act creating the United Province of Canada became law in early 1841. The Church predicted that the union would weaken the conservative cause by allowing a small group of Upper Canadian radicals to join forces with their more numerous Lower Canadian counterparts,<sup>23</sup> and its prediction was proven accurate by the political developments of the 1840s. Sydenham's implementation of his concept of coalition government in 1841, Bagot's appointment of Baldwin and Lafontaine to the executive council in 1842, the failure of Metcalfe to fashion a stable conservative ministry in the period 1843-45, and Elgin's inauguration of responsible government in 1849, all of these developments confirmed the fear of the Church

<sup>22</sup> For the Church's views on Durham's recommendation of responsible government, see the same editorials cited in n. 21, and the full-page, five-column editorial on 31 Aug. 1839.

<sup>23</sup> See the Church, 7 Dec. and 21 Dec. 1839, 21 March 1840, 30 Jan. 1841.

that the union of 1841 could only lead to the political dominance of the "rebellion faction" and to the separation of the Canadas from the parent state.

In 1843, shortly after the death of Bagot, the Church declared angrily that "the cause of truth and loyalty" had recently been "paralyzed by the elevation of the agitator and the traitor to offices of honour and emolument, and by suffering the pardoned, but impenitent rebel to mingle, upon equal terms, and with equal privileges, amongst those who fought and bled for the supremacy of the Crown."<sup>24</sup> Its hostility to the new political order was even greater in 1849, when it asserted that the annexation movement was the result of the oppressive policies of the Baldwin-Lafontaine government, policies which had driven the "best men" to propose, "in an emotion of despair," an extreme solution "as a remedy to our troubles." "The arbitrary proceedings of the radical faction," it editorialized, "are sweeping away one after another all the safeguards of the British Constitution in this Province . . . the powers of Government are now possessed by a democracy of the worst description--a democracy as thoroughly selfish and remorseless as any that the world has ever seen."<sup>25</sup>

The bitterness evident in the Church's response to the political developments of the 1840s was also apparent in the fulminations of Anglican clergymen against the colonial policy of the imperial government. A. T. Townley, a former Wesleyan Methodist who had become an

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 6 Oct. 1843.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 29 March 1849.

Anglican minister in 1841, wrote a letter to the Church in August 1849 entitled "Why We Cannot Annex?" In this letter Townley criticized the unscriptural nature of republicanism and insisted upon the duty of Christians to remain loyal to their sovereign, but he also asserted that Upper Canada would be justified in requesting a dissolution of the imperial tie, for Britain was anxious to rid itself of its colonial responsibilities and the British constitution had been overturned by the doctrine of popular sovereignty.<sup>26</sup> Another Anglican clergyman, W. S. Darling, attacked the "obstinate incredulity and suicidal policy of the Colonial Office" in his 1849 novel, Sketches of Canadian Life. Lamenting that "radicalism, which was but a puny infant even in '37 has been so skillfully papped and nursed by the Colonial Office, that it has attained its present alarming growth," he wrote that rebels "have returned or been recalled and appointed to offices of honour and emolument, while those who shed their blood for the cause of British institutions have been unrewarded and forgotten." Was it any wonder, he then asked, "that cold indifference should have taken the place of ardent loyalty?"<sup>27</sup>

Anglican bitterness was based on a unique perception of the political developments of the 1840s. From the turn of the century onwards the imperial connection had held a place of central importance

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 9 Aug. 1849.

<sup>27</sup> W. S. Darling, Sketches of Canadian Life, Lay and Ecclesiastical. Illustrative of Canada and the Canadian Church (London, 1849), p. 195.

in the Anglican view of Upper Canadian society. It had fostered a spirit of local pride by linking Upper Canadians to a nation whose wealth, military might, and cultural accomplishments were respected throughout the world. It had also provided Upper Canada with a sense of identity, acting as the symbol of social and political values which had been inherited from Britain and which served to differentiate Upper Canada from the republican United States. The apparent dissolution of this imperial connection in the late 1840s as a result of the repeal of preferential duties on colonial grain and timber and the achievement of responsible government made it difficult for Anglican clergymen to be optimistic about the future of Upper Canada. It now seemed clear that the values symbolized by the imperial tie had been repudiated, that Upper Canada was destined to be absorbed by the United States, and that a distinctive vision of the good society had been abandoned in favour of the radical ideology of the revolutionary age.

This view of the deeper meaning of the events of the 1840s explains the lukewarm loyalty displayed by the Church when it heard of the violent reaction of Montreal Tories to the Rebellion Losses Bill. Though the Church deplored the burning of the parliament buildings and the ensuing riot in the streets of Montreal, it refused to come to the defence of a governor general who had championed the cause of the "rebellion faction" and had presided over the destruction of Upper Canada's character as a loyal and conservative society. Its anger and bitterness were well reflected in its curt statement that "men with true British hearts" could not "testify that sympathy in the deep humiliation of Her Majesty's Representative . . . because that

representative . . . has used his freedom to sanction oppression. He has placed his untrammelled responsibility at the beck and service of legislative tyranny."<sup>28</sup> The Church, it is true, firmly opposed the annexation movement in the months ahead, declaring in numerous editorials that it was the duty of Upper Canadians to remain loyal to the "powers that be."<sup>29</sup> But its imperial patriotism was henceforth tempered by a feeling of betrayal. The lesson it drew from the constitutional and economic changes of the 1840s was that British statesmen and colonial governors were guilty of propelling Upper Canada along a road which led directly into the outstretched arms of the American republic.

## II

Compounding the concern of Anglican clergymen as they followed the constitutional developments of the 1840s was a series of reverses in the realm of church-state relations. On the educational front, the denominational school system established by Strachan after the War of 1812 suffered a fatal blow with the passage of the Day Common School Act of 1841, a measure which laid the foundations of a non-sectarian system that was supported partially by local assessment rates and supervised at the local level by elected boards of trustees. After

<sup>28</sup> The Church, 3 May 1849.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 29 March, 12 July, 27 Sept., 18 Oct., 25 Oct., and 1 Nov. 1849.

the appointment of Egerton Ryerson as General Superintendent of Education in 1844, this non-sectarian common school system entered a period of uninterrupted growth and consolidation, though provision was made in the 1850s for the creation of Roman Catholic separate schools. The Church of England, appalled by the "irreligious" and democratic nature of the new educational order, waged a prolonged campaign for the right to establish Anglican separate schools, but its efforts met with the unyielding opposition of successive governments.<sup>30</sup>

Equally disastrous for the Church of England was the loss of its favoured position in the field of university education. In 1843 Governor Bagot successfully arranged the long-delayed opening of King's College. Strachan fully expected that his beloved college, having been stripped of its exclusively Anglican council by the 1837 amendments to its charter, would no longer be an object of voluntarist wrath, but he proved mistaken. The college's principal and the majority of its professors, including its professor of divinity, were Anglicans, and the possession by such a "sectarian" institution of a lavish public endowment aroused widespread resentment both among denominations desiring support for their own colleges and among those voluntarists calling for a publicly supported but non-denominational system of university education. Pressure exerted by the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Conference led to the introduction of university bills in

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of the Anglican response to the emergence of a non-sectarian common school system, see Moir, Church and State in Canada West, pp. 139-80.



1843, 1845, and 1847. The Baldwin bill of 1843 and the Draper bill of 1845 proposed to transform King's College into a non-sectarian arts college and to divide its endowment among the denominational colleges that decided to affiliate. The Macdonald bill of 1847, much to the disgust of the voluntarists, proposed to allow the Church of England to remain in exclusive control of King's College and suggested that its endowment be divided among totally independent denominational colleges. The failure of these three bills to attract sufficient support either in the assembly or in Upper Canada as a whole forced Robert Baldwin to introduce another bill in 1849. Under the terms of his second university bill, King's College was transformed into the secular and non-denominational University of Toronto; religious tests and theological teaching were abolished; clergymen were ineligible for the offices of chancellor and president; and divinity halls wishing to affiliate to the new university were warned that they could expect nothing from its endowment. This bill, providing for a more thorough secularization of university education than had ever been suggested before, received the enthusiastic support of the voluntarists and was passed by the legislature. The rout of the Church of England in the field of higher education was complete.<sup>31</sup>

The most serious reverse suffered by the Church of England in this period was the loss of its landed endowment. In 1840 Governor Sydenham, determined to settle a controversy that Durham had seen as one of the

<sup>31</sup> The university question is dealt with exhaustively in *ibid.*, pp. 82-128.

major causes of the rebellion, ignored the outraged protests of Anglican clergymen and persuaded the assembly to agree to a bill which stated that one-half of the proceeds of the clergy reserves were to be divided in equal proportions between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, leaving the remainder to be shared amongst all denominations. Although this settlement represented a recognition of the religiously pluralistic nature of Upper Canadian society, the creation of such a multi-headed establishment failed to satisfy those denominations pledged to the separation of church and state. By the early 1850s the secularization of the reserves was being demanded by politicians in the liberal-conservative, Brownite, and Clear Grit camps, and by a broad, informal alliance of religious groups which included the Free Church, the United Secession Church, the Methodist Conference, Episcopal Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, maverick adherents of the Church of Scotland, and a multitude of obscure sects. The Hincks-Morin ministry, officially pledged to secularization by the Price Resolutions of 1850, was reluctant to grapple with such a contentious issue as the clergy reserves, and its policy of procrastination in the face of the broadly based and immensely influential voluntarist movement seriously undermined its position in Upper Canada.

The secularization of the clergy reserves was finally achieved in 1854. In an election held in the summer of that year the Hincks-Morin ministry, still reluctant to deal with the reserves issue even though the necessary enabling legislation had been recently passed by the imperial government, found itself beset on all sides by forces committed to the cause of secularization. When the legislature reopened in the

fall, the government was defeated on a question of privilege and replaced by a coalition of Upper Canadian conservatives and Lower Canadian reformers. The new ministry, led by Allan McNab and A. N. Morin, introduced a clergy reserves measure immediately after assuming office. Under the terms of this bill, the proceeds from the sales of clergy reserve lands were to be transferred to the Municipalities Funds of Upper and Lower Canada; provision was made for the payment of existing stipends during the lifetimes of the present incumbents; and, as a concession to the supporters of the 1840 settlement, the recipients of stipends were to be allowed to cede their life claims to their respective churches, which in turn could commute the total sum of these claims with an annual interest rate of six per cent. The voluntarists, predictably, attacked the commutation scheme as a shameful surrender to the principle of denominational favouritism, but their opposition proved futile in the face of a widespread desire to settle a controversy that had bedevilled religious and political life for the past three decades. In mid-December the clergy reserves bill, after winning overwhelming support in the Assembly, received the assent of the Governor General and became law.<sup>32</sup>

In responding to all these developments, Anglican clergymen showed no awareness of the need to come to some sort of compromise with their church's opponents. On the contrary, as the voluntarist crusade went from victory to victory, Anglican clergymen became more committed than

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the clergy reserves question after the union of 1841, see Moir, Church and State in Canada West, pp. 27-81; and Wilson, The Clergy Reserves, chapters ten to fourteen.

ever to the policy of church establishment, a policy which in their eyes was the foundation stone of Upper Canada's social and political order. At the same time, however, they left little doubt that the crusading spirit that had once characterized the Anglican mind had been totally shattered by the loss of the Church of England's privileged position in Upper Canadian society. Their increasingly pessimistic outlook was evident not only in their virulent denunciations of those groups working for the separation of church and state, but also in their introverted, isolationist view of their church's role in the wider community.

The Anglican defence of the policy of church establishment was no longer linked to a vision of a Respublica Christiana, that ideal polity founded upon a unity of church, state, and society. In the 1820s and 1830s Strachan had maintained that the policy of church establishment, besides being a reflection of the oneness of church and state, was an essential element of the Church of England's plan to transform Upper Canada into a religiously homogeneous society. After the rebellion, however, the persistent pluralism of religious life made it clear to Anglican clergymen that the goal of a religiously homogeneous Upper Canada was no longer within reach, that the Church of England was destined to remain a church of the minority. This realization led to a significant change in emphasis in Anglican ideology. The idea that an established Church of England would play an important role in transforming Upper Canada into an Anglican society was now abandoned. Instead Anglican clergymen concentrated exclusively on those legal, historical, and utilitarian arguments which enabled them to defend the

policy of church establishment even though the Church of England was only one denomination amongst many. Ignoring the question of whether or not the Church of England possessed sufficient popular support to justify its established status, they were content to reiterate that the establishment of the Church of England in the British Isles was a valid reason for the establishment of the same church in Upper Canada, that the principle of establishment was enshrined in constitutional enactments which could not be altered, and that the establishment of the Church of England was vital if Upper Canada was to remain socially stable and firmly attached to the parent state.

Arguments in favour of church establishment still revolved around a conservative view of the role of religion in society. The Christian religion, with its emphasis on the rewards and punishments of the after-life, was seen as the bulwark of social order, controlling the baser passions of human nature and providing men with a powerful incentive to cultivate those virtues, such as charity towards the less fortunate, on which the existence of a stable and civilized society depended. It was also seen as a philosophy of life which taught men to obey constituted authority and to remain contented in their assigned position in the social scale.

The Anglican perception of Christianity as an agency of social control was at the heart of the belief that religious instruction had to have a central place in the educational system.<sup>33</sup> It provided as

<sup>33</sup> See Strachan Letter Book, 1827-41, Strachan to Sinclair, 23 May 1840; Strachan Sermons, "I will be glad & rejoice in thy mercy" (3 Jan. 1850); Seven Letters on the Non-Religious Common School System of

well the intellectual rationale for the policy of church establishment, a fact already made clear by Strachan in the pre-rebellion period. Though it was still argued that a church establishment was necessary if the Christian religion was to be publicly recognized and professed, if the purity of religious doctrine was to be maintained, and if the message of the Gospel was to be preached throughout society, these arguments were generally overshadowed by others more social and political in nature. Anglican clergymen frequently stated that the happiness, prosperity, and stability of society depended upon the existence of a church establishment, the implication being that the moral influence and financial resources of such an establishment enabled it to propagate the conservative teachings of Christianity with an efficiency which other denominations could never rival. Conversely, they were equally insistent that a society deprived of a church establishment would soon disintegrate, for the Christian religion could exert its influence as a bastion of the social order only when it was supported and "cherished" by the state. The Church editorialized in 1838 that "for the moral and spiritual, yes and the political advancement of any Christian country, an Established Church is an essential and ought to be an integral appendage." It asserted that "for internal quiet, for social peace, and national unity, the best, and it will be found the only guarantee is that universal prevalence of the Christian Religion

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Canada and the United States. By Adam Townley, Presbyter of the Diocese of Toronto (Toronto, 1853); and the Church, 14 April 1838, 8 March 1844, and 9 Nov. 1848.

and of Christian influences which an Established Church can alone ensure."<sup>34</sup>

Having explained the conservative function of a church establishment per se, Anglican clergymen had little difficulty in deciding which denomination deserved to be established in Upper Canada. The Church of England was regarded by them as a branch of the catholic and apostolic church, a church whose purity of doctrine and beautiful liturgy were admired throughout the world. It was also regarded as a pillar of the British constitution, the foundation of a social structure which recognized the need of "due subordination," and the guardian of the imperial connection and of all those conservative values which that connection symbolized. Holding such views, they naturally concluded that the Church of England's claims to established status were legitimate, since its ability to diffuse "true religion," promote social and political stability, and defend the imperial tie could not be matched by other denominations. In sum, it was clear to them that the Church of England was ideally suited to perform those conservative tasks which were the very raison d'être of a church establishment.

This conviction was expressed in Strachan's 1840 petition to the House of Commons on the subject of the Sydenham reserves settlement,

<sup>34</sup> The Church, 17 Feb. 1838. Also: Adam Townley, Ten Letters on the Church and Church Establishments in Answer to Certain Letters of the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, by an Anglo-Canadian (Toronto, 1839), pp. 65-66; "Religious Instruction," an excerpt from what is clearly Strachan's "Letters on a General Union of the British North American Provinces" (the Church, 25 May 1839); TDA, Manuscript Lecture Notes of A. N. Bethune (Lectures XXII-III, "On the Lawfulness and Benefits of Church Establishments").

in William Bettridge's Brief History of the Church in Upper Canada, and in an 1845 letter from William Herchmer, a clergyman stationed in Kingston, to the SPG.<sup>35</sup> It was also expressed in several Church editorials. Throughout the post-rebellion years the Church was constantly declaring that the established Church of England in Upper Canada was the safeguard of "rational" religion, social and political stability, monarchical institutions, and the imperial connection.<sup>36</sup> Typical was an editorial of August 1838, in which it was stated that a flourishing Church of England establishment was essential "for the propagation of sound Christianity in the land, for the best welfare of the country, for the maintenance of order, good government and peace, for the preservation of our connexion with the crown of Great Britain."<sup>37</sup> The Church also argued that the effective establishment of the Church of England would have prevented the rebellion of 1837, substantiating this argument by referring to the conspicuous absence of Anglicans from the rebel force.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Strachan Papers, n.d.; form of petition to House of Commons; Bettridge, Brief History of the Church in Upper Canada; SPG Letters, Series C, Box VI/46, no. 544, 3 March 1845.

<sup>36</sup> The Church, 24 Feb., 17 March, 31 March, 14 April, and 4 Aug. 1838; 4 May 1839; 25 Jan., 1 Feb., 8 Feb., 29 Feb., and 4 April 1840; 22 Jan. 1842; 29 Jan. 1847; 8 Sept. 1853.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 4 Aug. 1838.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 10 March 1838, 2 Nov. 1839, 4 April 1840. On this theme, see also a speech by S. B. Ardagh that was published in the Church on 8 March 1849; and The Claims of the Church Society, A Sermon Preached Before the Parochial Association of Belleville, in connexion with the Incorporated Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, in the Parish Church of St. Thomas, on Thursday, 1st day of May, 1845. By the Rev. Job Deacon, Rector of Adolphustown (printed in the Church, 25 July and



A strong belief in the social and political importance of church establishment was also evident in the annual reports of the Upper Canadian Travelling Missionary Fund. According to the line of reasoning that runs like a unifying thread throughout these reports, the Church of England taught Upper Canadians to obey constituted authorities and to cherish the imperial connection. Unfortunately, the church was crippled financially, neglected by a British government which had withdrawn its annual grant to the SPG, and persecuted by demagogues desiring to rob it of its landed endowment. This combination of neglect and persecution was having terrible results, for hordes of recently arrived Anglican immigrants, deprived of the services of their own church, were turning in desperation to the sects, religious groups characterized by their love of emotional hysteria in religious worship and by their determination to subvert the social and political structure. The end result was the rampant disloyalty and insubordination that had recently led to the rebellion of 1837. In brief, it was now clear that Upper Canada's future hinged upon the willingness of political authorities, both locally and in Britain, to fulfil their responsibilities to the Church of England, an institution that would always strive to promote social stability and defend the imperial tie.<sup>39</sup>

An understanding of this utilitarian conception of the function of the Church of England establishment helps to explain the almost hyster-

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1 Aug. 1845.

<sup>39</sup> Upper Canada Travelling Missionary Fund reports.

ical reaction of Anglican clergymen to the reserves settlement of 1840. Since the established Church of England was regarded as the guardian of religious truth, social stability, and the imperial connection, Anglican clergymen inevitably concluded that the campaign against the clergy reserves was designed to destroy the very fabric of Upper Canadian society. Strachan charged in an 1840 speech in the Legislative Council that the Sydenham reserves bill, "such a tissue of injustice, cruelty, and absurdity, as was never before concocted by any Legislature," would sever the union of church and state, overthrow the British constitution, and foster sectarianism.<sup>40</sup> The Church argued in a series of editorials in early 1840 that the bill "held out a premium . . . not only to the propagators of religious errors but in many cases to the disseminators of sedition and republicanism," was destructive to the fundamental principles of the constitution, and would lead to independence and the transformation of Upper Canada into a democracy.<sup>41</sup>

Even more virulent was the Anglican response to the secularization of the reserves in 1854, an event which sounded the deathknell of the policy of church establishment. In a letter to A. N. Morin that was printed in the Church in late October, Strachan denounced the clergy reserves agitation as the product of "unprincipled office hunting, and a desire for reckless innovation," described the reserves measure

<sup>40</sup> The speech was printed in the Church, 9 Feb. 1840.

<sup>41</sup> The Church, 11 Jan., 1 Feb., 8 Feb., and 24 Feb. 1840. Also: Strachan Papers, C. C. Brough to Strachan, 24 March 1840.

itself as "the most atrocious specimen of oppressive legislation that has appeared since the days of the French Convention," and warned that the bill would lead to the destruction of the Roman Catholic Church's "magnificent" endowments in Lower Canada.<sup>42</sup> A similar attitude was displayed in the Church. In October 1854 a Church editorial stated that "we cannot conceive how any one maintaining a respectable position in the world, would propose to rob a church, a corporation or an individual of property of which they are in actual possession, and their undoubted right to which cannot be denied."<sup>43</sup> Equally uncompromising was a letter to the Church in late December from a certain "J.M." This correspondent wrote that

demoralizing as the present unholy agitation evidently proves our religious world to be, the awful impiety of the public robbery of God must yet, when witnessed in all its ramifying evil consequences, open the eyes of the blindest and the wickedest to the fearfulness of its character. It will then be but a poor consolation to the spoliators to look on the other side of the account and to behold the "field of blood" which they have gained as the equivalent for which they have sold and pulled down the altars of God and devastated his holy temples.<sup>44</sup>

An intense commitment to the importance of the Church of England establishment in Upper Canadian society was also the motivating factor behind the violent Anglican reaction to the Baldwin and Draper University bills of 1843 and 1845 respectively. The Church denounced the Baldwin

<sup>42</sup> The Church, 26 Oct. 1854.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 19 Oct. 1854.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 21 Dec. 1854.

bill as evidence of the "anti-monarchical and anti-British" intentions of the reform ministry, which was determined to transform Upper Canada into an "independent democracy";<sup>45</sup> and it asserted that the Draper bill would force the Church of England to "strip herself of her distinctive character as a Church of Christ, and reduce herself to the level,--nay place herself under the control in her own educational seminaries,--of every wild and conflicting sect and denomination which has started into existence within the last three hundred years."<sup>46</sup> An angry Strachan described the Baldwin bill as revolutionary in scope and tyrannical in nature, a shocking violation of property rights, a repudiation of the principles of the British constitution, a threat to "the safety of the Colony and its dependence on the Crown," and an atheistic attempt to set the catholic and apostolic teachings of the Church of England on an equal footing with the errors of countless sects--an attempt which, if successful, would "utterly destroy all that is pure and holy in morals and religion and would lead to greater corruption than any thing adopted during the madness of the French Revolution."<sup>47</sup> Similarly, he insisted that the Draper bill, a measure "even worse than Mr. Baldwin's," was "subversive of all those principles upon which the security of property rest and the order of Society is maintained," and would "compromise and surrender the dignity of our Church,"

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 17 Nov. 1843.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 7 March 1845.

<sup>47</sup> See Strachan's petition to the legislative council, printed in the Church, 10 Nov. 1843; Strachan Letter Book, 1839-43, Strachan to John Cartwright, 10 Oct. 1843; Strachan Papers, Strachan to Metcalf, 2 Nov. 1843.

bringing "her authority indirectly at least under the cognizance and control of her avowed enemies," and submitting "her teaching to the interference & even dictation of those who are oppugners of her doctrines & hostile to her communion."<sup>48</sup>

Anglican clergymen were not hostile to the Macdonald University bill of 1847, probably sharing the Church's view that this measure, which allowed King's College to remain under the control of the Church of England and divided its endowment amongst denominational colleges, should be supported for the sake of peace.<sup>49</sup> The Baldwin bill of 1849, however, was another matter. Transforming King's College into the completely secular University of Toronto, Baldwin's second university bill destroyed one of the major institutional props of the established Church of England. It also signalled the total exclusion of religion from an institution of higher learning, thus ignoring the claim, so central to the conservative ideology and philosophy of church establishment expounded by Anglican clergymen, that education must always have a religious basis. Consequently, it was only to be expected that Anglican clergymen would have difficulty in controlling their rage when such a "godless" and "subversive" piece of legislation passed the assembly and became law.

<sup>48</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to William Boulton, 17 Feb. 1845; Strachan to William Robinson, 23 Feb. 1845; Strachan to A. G. Sherwood, Edward Murney, and A. H. Meyers, 5 March 1845. Also of interest in this regard is John McCaul, The University Question Considered: By a Graduate (Toronto, 1845).

<sup>49</sup> The Church, 23 July 1847.

The Anglican reaction to the Baldwin bill of 1849 was swift and predictable. Strachan declared that the bill was designed to "crush the National Church, and peril her existence,"<sup>50</sup> and he criticized the government for repudiating the "undeniable truth that there was an Established religion in the country and giving countenance to the new and unreasonable assumption that all forms of religion and all varieties of doctrine, whether true or false, rational or absurd, were equally entitled not only to their protection but to their actual encouragement and support."<sup>51</sup> Convinced that "to separate religion from education is the suggestion of the Evil One," he emphasized that the Church of England would have nothing to do with the "anti-Christian" University of Toronto, and announced plans to establish a seminary where secular and religious instruction would be provided "according to the principles" of the Anglican faith, plans which were crowned with success when Trinity College was founded in 1851.<sup>52</sup> The Church was equally hostile to the University of Toronto, describing it as "godless"<sup>53</sup> and as the product of "the jealousy felt by those who envy the Church her prosperity,"<sup>54</sup> and insisting that Anglican involve-

<sup>50</sup> A Letter from the Lord Bishop of Toronto, to the Rev. T. B. Murray M.A., Secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, on the Subject of Establishing a Church University in Upper Canada (London, 1850), p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Strachan Papers, Memorandum, 1851.

<sup>52</sup> See Strachan's speech at the meeting of the SPG in Liverpool in 1850 (printed in the Church, 10 Oct. 1850); and Strachan Papers, Strachan to Elgin, 9 Nov. 1849.

<sup>53</sup> The Church, 19 April 1849.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 9 May 1850.

ment in such an institution would inflict irreparable damage on the catholic and apostolic character of the Church of England.<sup>55</sup>

That these views on the subject of the Baldwin bill, as well as the philosophical assumptions underlying the idea of religious education and the policy of church establishment, were quite prevalent in Anglican circles is shown by the number of clergymen who enthusiastically supported the cause of a new "church university." Both F. J. Lundy and J. Flood, clergymen in Niagara and Richmond respectively, were critics of the "infidel" University of Toronto and champions of Trinity College.<sup>56</sup> Henry Scadding, Walter Stennett, J. G. D. Mackenzie, and Stephen Lett, four clergymen stationed in Toronto, joined their congregations in early 1850 in presenting addresses to Strachan on the eve of his departure for England, where at the age of seventy-two he was to spend an exhausting six months soliciting funds for Trinity College; in these addresses the Baldwin bill was attacked as unchristian and the hope was expressed that Strachan's efforts in England would prove successful.<sup>57</sup> Thirteen clergymen signed a petition in 1851 protesting against the Baldwin Bill,<sup>58</sup> while Strachan's pastoral letter of the same year revealed that fifty-two Anglican clergymen had made financial

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 18 July 1850.

<sup>56</sup> AO, F. J. Lundy Diaries, 1849-67, 5 Feb. and 26 Feb. 1850; the Church, 13 Feb. 1851.

<sup>57</sup> Strachan Papers, 1850, addresses of the Church of the Holy Trinity, St. George's Church, and St. Paul's Church.

<sup>58</sup> Strachan Papers, 5 June 1851.

contributions to the endowment fund of Trinity College.<sup>59</sup> In 1852 A. N. Bethune, enraged that the Church of England had been "so unfeelingly robbed . . . and so ruthlessly cast overboard,"<sup>60</sup> went to England to continue Strachan's work in drumming up support for Trinity College.<sup>61</sup> The same task was undertaken in Upper Canada by T. B. Fuller and Saltern Givins, and in the United States by William McMurray.<sup>62</sup>

Anglican wrath was also directed against the common school system established in the 1840s, for this school system, together with the failure of the campaign for Church of England separate schools, seemed to be another sign of the eclipse of religious education and of the policy of church establishment. The Church attacked the common schools as "hotbeds of sedition and nurseries of rebellion," and emphasized that the creation of "free schools" would subvert the graded social structure, the best guarantee of "social happiness."<sup>63</sup> It also made it clear that Anglican hostility to the new educational order was partly motivated by

<sup>59</sup> Church University of Upper Canada. Pastoral Letter from the Lord Bishop of Toronto. Proceedings of the Church University Board. List of Subscribers, &c. (Toronto, 1851), pp. 52-64.

<sup>60</sup> Strachan Papers, Bethune to Strachan, 10 April 1850.

<sup>61</sup> The Church, 20 May 1852.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 15 April and 10 June 1850; William McMurray, An Appeal to the Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, in Behalf of Trinity College, Toronto, Canada West (New York, 1852). The above analysis does not mean to suggest that all clergymen were supporters of Trinity College. For the attitude of evangelicals towards Trinity College, see chapter eight.

<sup>63</sup> The Church, 30 Oct. 1851 and 12 Feb. 1852.



a concern for the future of the policy of church establishment, noting that the common school system ignored "the duty of the state, in the maintenance of the Established Religion of the realm, to educate the youth of the country in the same manner so as to retrieve them from error."<sup>64</sup> H. C. C. Cooper, stationed at Etobicoke, criticized the irreligious nature of the Common School Act of 1844, and demanded that the Church of England be allowed to establish separate schools, a right that had already been recognized in the case of Roman Catholics.<sup>65</sup> Adam Townley denounced the government for its refusal to authorize the creation of Anglican separate schools,<sup>66</sup> and railed against the "insidiously irreligious"<sup>67</sup> nature of the Common School Acts of the 1840s, acts which would "eventually raise up a large body of ill-informed sceptics, puffed up with the miserable cant of a maudlin rationalism."<sup>68</sup>

The notion that the Church of England was suffering unjust persecution, a notion first glimpsed in its embryonic stages in the 1820s and 1830s, was reinforced by the campaign against the clergy reserves, the destruction of King's College, and the rejection of all demands for Anglican separate schools. At a meeting of the Eastern Clerical

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 17 June 1852.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 2 Oct. and 16 Oct. 1846; 29 Jan., 2 July, and 30 July 1847.

<sup>66</sup> Townley, Seven Letters on the Non-Religious Common School System.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

Association in Bytown in 1839, a meeting attended by George Archbold, E. J. Boswell, S. W. Harper, Joseph Harris, J. G. B. Lindsay, James Padfield, Henry Patton, R. V. Rogers, S. S. Strong, and W. W. Wait, one of the subjects discussed was "the cruel and unjust system of persecution to which the Church in this Province is at present exposed."<sup>69</sup>

This preoccupation with the trials and tribulations of the Church of England was also evident in the case of Strachan. In 1850, at a meeting of the SPG in Liverpool, Strachan buttressed his appeal for contributions to the endowment fund of Trinity College by noting that "notwithstanding her wonderful progress, the Church in Canada has been since 1840 a persecuted and suffering church."<sup>70</sup>

The Church of England had one consolation in the midst of its sufferings, the conviction that nothing transpired in the present world without being known to, or directly sanctioned by, God. This belief in an omniscient God and a structured universe performed a dual function for Anglican clergymen. It enabled them to think that the church's earthly sufferings had been ordained by God either as a trial of faith or as a punishment for transgressions on the part of its own members--thus Bethune could declare, in a sermon preached in 1841 at Strachan's first visitation as Bishop of Toronto, that the recent reserves bill was "one of the chastisements which Almighty God, from time to time, is pleased to send upon his church, whether . . . to try our patience for the example of others, and that our faith may be found

<sup>69</sup> The Church, 26 Jan. 1839.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 10 Oct. 1850.

in the day of the Lord laudable, glorious, and honourable or else to correct and amend in us whatsoever doth offend the eyes of our heavenly Father."<sup>71</sup> It also provided them with the assurance that God watched over the church even as he chastised it, allowing it to experience a certain degree of suffering for its own spiritual good, but always protecting it from fatal blows at the hands of its enemies and promising it the glory of ultimate triumph if it remained faithful. Strachan explained in 1840 that "the evils which at present threaten this portion of our Lords Vineyard will only be permitted to proceed so far as is good for us and that out of darkness our Saviour can bring marvellous light."<sup>72</sup> This point of view was also expressed in a sermon preached by Strachan in July 1853, in a Church editorial of 1843, in an address drawn up in 1851 by seventeen members of the Midland Clerical Association, and in sermons preached by William Macaulay and Arthur Palmer.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> The Church of God. A Sermon preached in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, on Thursday, Sept. 9, 1841, at the Primary Visitation of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese (printed in the Church, 18 Sept. 1841).

<sup>72</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1839-66, Strachan to A. M. Campbell, 28 April 1840. Also: Strachan Sermons, "And he spoke a parable unto them to this end" (24 July 1853).

<sup>73</sup> Strachan Sermons, "And he spoke a parable unto them to this end" (24 July 1853); the Church, 30 June 1843 and 16 Oct. 1851; A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, on Thursday, June 6th, 1844, on Occasion of the Visitation of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, by the Rev. William Macaulay (printed in the Church, 28 June 1844); On the Difficulties and Encouragements of the Christian Ministry, with Some References to the Past and Present Condition of the Church in Western Canada. A Sermon, Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, June 3rd, 1847. On the Occasion of the Triennial Visitation of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, by the Rev. Arthur Palmer, A.B. Rector of Guelph (printed in the Church, 16 July 1847).

Associated with this reliance on divine protection was the conviction that those responsible for the persecution of the Church of England would be sternly dealt with by God. The Church announced in 1846 that the secularization of the clergy reserves would provoke "God's judgments,"<sup>74</sup> and a few years later in 1849, James Beaven warned the House of Assembly that Upper Canada would suffer the consequences of divine wrath if the Baldwin bill became law.<sup>75</sup> Similar warnings were issued in 1850 by J. G. D. Mackenzie and A. N. Bethune, in 1851 by R. G. Cox and the Church Union, a lay organization established for the purpose of defending the Anglican share of the reserves, and in 1853 by Adam Townley.<sup>76</sup> R. G. Cox was especially forceful in the expression of his views, declaring that "if the Clergy Reserves be seized . . . the country will have committed a blunder and a crime which shall entail upon it the withering curse of an avenging God, through successive generations . . . a blighted commerce, unfruitful seasons, and unyielding fields, trouble, perplexity, distress and death, will evidence that no nation can insult heaven by flagrant wrong, and pass unscathed."<sup>77</sup>

The secularization of the reserves in 1854 provoked more statements

<sup>74</sup> The Church, 27 March 1846.

<sup>75</sup> See Beaven's petition to the House of Assembly in the Church, 17 May and 7 June 1849.

<sup>76</sup> See ibid., 31 Jan. and 23 May 1850, 3 April and 8 May 1851, and 8 Sept. 1853.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 3 April 1851.

on the subject of divine retribution. One correspondent to the Church expressed the hope that the "spoliators" of the clergy reserves would, "before the night of eternal sleep falls upon them, receive grace sufficient to open their eyes to the heinousness of their crime--that their consciences may be smitten with the pangs of saving remorse, so that finally they may receive pardon at the hands of Him against whom while it was in their power they fought on the earth; and that mercy which they unfeelingly denied to his people."<sup>78</sup> Other Anglicans were seriously concerned that the secularization of the reserves would prompt God to punish not merely the opponents of the Church of England but Upper Canada as a whole. At the visitation of clergy and lay delegates held in October 1854, a committee composed of Stephen Lett, Arthur Palmer, G. J. Boulton, and G. W. Allan declared that the reserves bill, which could only be considered by "every right-minded person as a sin in the sight of Almighty God, both on the part of the individuals by whose influence it is effected, and on the part of the country at large, by whom it was permitted," was "calculated to call down upon this people and land the judgments which the principles of the Divine Government have ever attributed to the perpetuation of iniquity, whether by individuals or nations."<sup>79</sup>

Yet, if Anglican clergymen were confident that God would protect the Church of England and punish its enemies, they also began to

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 21 Dec. 1854.

<sup>79</sup> Proceedings of the Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in the Diocese of Toronto, Held October 25, 26, & 27 (Toronto, 1854), p. 27.

each congregation. Admittedly, the power of these lay delegates was to be curtailed by the stipulation that they were to vote not individually but by congregation, thereby ensuring that the voting strength of clergymen and laymen would be evenly balanced.<sup>5</sup> Yet this having been said, the mere fact that Strachan was willing to include lay representation in a body historically restricted to clergymen was an indication both of the bold nature of his thoughts on the subject of church government, and of the lengths he was prepared to go in order to establish a firm basis of popular support for an Anglican convocation in Upper Canada. It was also a reflection of his belief that the church would have to rely more and more on the laity if it was to improve its financial position and retain its established status.

Strachan forwarded a copy of his constitution to Bishop Stewart in March 1832,<sup>6</sup> even though he was still convinced that the apathy of his diocesan superior, a man he described as "paralyzed & weak as water,"<sup>7</sup> had made him totally oblivious to the need for fundamental reforms in the government of the church. His pessimism regarding the probable fate of his constitutional proposals was well expressed in a letter to John Macaulay: "I am not sanguine that the Bishop will consent," he wrote. "I have however considered it my duty to tell his

<sup>5</sup> Strachan commented upon this constitution and mentioned the individuals he had drawn upon for advice in two letters to Macaulay in 1832 (Macaulay Papers, 12 and 23 March 1832).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Macaulay, 23 March 1832.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Macaulay, 16 Feb. 1832.

and an instrument of salvation. The Church claimed in 1850 that "whether the law recognizes or does not recognize an established Church in these Provinces is a matter of secondary moment . . . the United Church of England and Ireland is 'established' and on a much firmer basis than any human law. It is established on the Word of God."<sup>82</sup> H. C. Cooper declared in a series of speeches in the 1840s that the influence of the Church of England depended upon the esteem in which it was held by its own members, rather than upon "her connexion with the State, and upon her position as 'the established church.'" He also argued that disestablishment would awaken the "energy and zeal" of Anglicans and in so doing actually strengthen the Church of England.<sup>83</sup>

Similar statements were made by Strachan. In his 1847 charge to the clergy of the diocese he emphasized that the principle of church establishment was divinely sanctioned,<sup>84</sup> but he also denied that the abandonment of this principle would lead to the destruction of the Church of England. Insisting that the Church of England was not "an institution of earth, an instrument or creature of the state,"<sup>85</sup> he

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 26 Sept. 1850.

<sup>83</sup> Characteristic Principles of the Church of England: Three Speeches of the Rev. H. C. Cooper, B.A., at the Annual Meetings of the London and Huron Branch Association of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, in 1845, 1846, and 1847 (Toronto, 1847), pp. 16-18.

<sup>84</sup> A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Toronto at the Visitation in June MDCCCLVII by John Lord Bishop of Toronto (Toronto, 1847), pp. 20-21.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

made it clear that a church commissioned by God to preach the Gospel would not be seriously affected by a change in worldly fortunes. "For some time past," he stated, "our Church hath been taught, by dear bought experience, to depend less upon the state and more upon herself, and to perceive . . . the necessity of coming out in all the holiness of her teaching, as a true branch of the Church of God."<sup>86</sup> Four years later he reiterated in another charge that attempts to secularize the reserves are "indeed the less to be dreaded, because they are chiefly of a temporal, and therefore of a transient character; but even should they multiply and become more gloomy, what are they but trials for our good, so long as we possess God's holy Word, his blessed sacraments in all their pureness and integrity, the Book of Common Prayer, and full liberty to meet for divine worship."<sup>87</sup>

Clearly, the idea that the Church of England would react to disestablishment by becoming a primarily spiritual organization was at odds with the claim that God would protect the interests of the established church and punish the advocates of religious equality. Though the contradiction was never entirely resolved, the setbacks experienced by the Anglican cause slowly gave rise to the view, never fully formed during the period under study, that the Church of England would triumph only in the sense of meeting its religious responsibilities, that its ultimate vindication would take place not in this world

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>87</sup> A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Toronto, in May, MDCCCLI. By John, Lord Bishop of Toronto (Toronto, 1851), p. 4.



but in the next, and that in the meantime it should console itself with the reflection that its earthly sufferings would soon be followed by the glory of the life to come. As early as 1840, the year of the Sydenham reserves settlement, the Church urged Anglicans to "resist the contemplated overthrow of all that they hold dear in our civil institutions, and prize in our religious heritage; that when all are swept away . . . this with our eyes directed to a land which clouds never darken nor troubles distract, may be our hearty language, 'Arise let us be going--this is not our rest.'"<sup>88</sup>

This belief in the essentially other-worldly nature of the Church of England's mission was also revealed in an 1845 letter from Strachan to Ernest Hawkins, Secretary of the SPG, and in an 1851 letter from W. S. Darling to the Church. Strachan wrote that "the Church has been a suffering Church from the beginning it has ever been her lot to struggle with the powers of evil and ever will be . . . but we ought neither to complain or be cast down for she may suffer in our time and appear sorely pressed she will yet triumph for Christ is with her & she is his Kingdom tho' not of this world."<sup>89</sup> Darling was more oblique, declaring that the Church of England would triumph only after it was "made perfect" through a long period of suffering, a period in which it would remain "a faithful witness for God . . . in the very bed of the torrent of ungodliness . . . learning from her Master to dwell more

<sup>88</sup> The Church, 4 Jan. 1840.

<sup>89</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1839-66, Strachan to Hawkins, 17 March 1845. My emphasis.

alone upon the mountain top, in prayer, and fasting, and the discipline of a lowly heart."<sup>90</sup>

## III

The years after the rebellion were critical ones in the history of the Church of England in Upper Canada. By the early 1850s Upper Canada's ties with the mother country were seemingly severed, a non-denominational common school system was in operation, and King's College was a non-sectarian and "godless" institution. Further, in 1854 the local government finally capitulated to voluntarist demands<sup>o</sup> and secularized the clergy reserves, a landed endowment set apart for the Church of England under the Constitutional Act of 1791.

Anglican clergymen responded to the changes overtaking their world by rallying around the ideals of the past. But in so doing they revealed a frame of mind which had little in common with the aggressive attitude displayed by Strachan in earlier years. When Strachan in the 1820s and 1830s had defended the policy of church establishment and set forth his vision of the good society, he made it clear that his main objective was to halt the spread of radicalism in Upper Canadian society. In the post-rebellion period, however, this crusading spirit quickly gave way to a far more chastened and pessimistic mood. For most Anglican clergymen, including Strachan, there now seemed every reason to believe that Upper Canada had fallen victim to the 'spirit of

<sup>90</sup> The Church, 24 April 1851.

the revolutionary age and would never again be characterized by its devotion to the ways of righteousness. Accordingly, when they defended the Church of England's privileged position and expounded their highly conservative views on a wide range of topics, they only succeeded in betraying their own sense of isolation and helplessness. Their major concern, it seemed, was not to crush the forces of radicalism, but rather to let it be known that in a world gone mad they themselves, if no one else, remained faithful to principles that Upper Canada had long since renounced.

Two other points must be emphasized. The forcefulness of Anglican ideology after 1837 could never conceal the anger and bitterness of many clergymen as they observed the political evolution of Upper Canada and the "sufferings" of the Church of England. Nor could it mask the fact that Anglican clergymen were slowly coming to accept the inevitability of disestablishment, thus resigning themselves to the dissolution of a union between church and state which for the last fifty years had provided them with a social and political raison d'être that the clergy of other denominations lacked. Even as they were defending the policy of church establishment, reverses on a number of fronts were forcing them to see their church as an essentially spiritual organization that was independent of the state, concerned primarily with the religious welfare of its own flock, and destined to triumph not in this world but in the kingdom of heaven. This intellectual revolution, the single most important development in the history of the Church of England in the post-rebellion period, was also evident in the church's attempts to make itself more financially self-supporting and to fashion

an organizational structure that was more appropriate to the era of disestablishment.

## VII

### THE SEEDS OF INDEPENDENCE

The Anglican experience after 1837 had its share of paradox. In the same period in which Anglican clergymen were reacting to the growing separation between church and state by reaffirming their belief in the tenets of conservative ideology and in the policy of church establishment, important strides were being made in the transformation of the Church of England into a self-supporting, self-governing, and democratic institution. In 1842 the Church Society, an organization of clergy and laity, was established to make the Anglican cause more independent financially. Several years later, in 1851, arrangements were made for the election of lay representatives to Strachan's diocesan visitation, a visitation which would lead to the creation of a church synod, also composed of clergy and laity, in 1857.

These two developments were of the utmost significance. The Church Society and the movement for synodical government, both of which were initially launched as part of the church's strategy to defend its privileges in a religiously pluralistic society, ultimately served to underline the fact that Anglican clergymen were gradually reconciling themselves to the inevitability of disestablishment. In the case of demands for a diocesan synod, the central message was often that the Church of England should respond to the attacks of its persecutors by resigning itself to the separation of church and state, by throwing off

the vestiges of an oppressive state connection, and by becoming a self-governing institution that was responsible for the management of its own affairs. Similarly, in the reports of the Church Society and in speeches delivered at meetings of the parochial branches of the same body, defences of the policy of church establishment went hand in hand with the conviction that the Church of England should begin concentrating on its duties as a spiritual organization.

## I

The idea of synodical government was first advanced by Strachan in the early 1830s, the very period in which the church's desperate position in Upper Canadian society had been further weakened by the decision of imperial authorities to withdraw the annual parliamentary grant to the SPG. In two letters to Bishop Stewart in the spring of 1831, Strachan expressed his opinion that the creation of a church convocation was made necessary by the nature of the times, noting that "had the Church of England annual meetings it would have retained much stronger hold of the population than it has at present . . . many of the evils now complained of would have been prevented, lessened or removed."<sup>1</sup> Although Stewart failed to take action on this rather novel proposal, Strachan's belief in the importance of establishing a new form of church government remained as firm as ever. In June of the same year he wrote a letter to R. D. Cartwright, another believer in

<sup>1</sup> Strachan Papers, Strachan to Stewart, 16 March and 21 May 1831.

the value of synodical government,<sup>2</sup> in which he declared that "regular annual convocations" were imperative if clergymen themselves were to become more steadfast in their support of the Anglican cause and the policy of church establishment, if the church was to possess the judicial machinery it needed to regulate its own internal affairs, and if a degree of control was to be exerted over the actions of a bishop who had been neither zealous nor vigilant in his defence of the church's interests.<sup>3</sup> A few months later, in a letter to John Macaulay, he again denounced Stewart's apathy and laziness, and asserted that the creation of a church convocation, a goal he was still determined to achieve, would have a vital bearing on the church's attempts to defend itself against its opponents.<sup>4</sup>

The year 1832 marked a significant turning point in Strachan's efforts to provide the church with a new institutional structure. Until that point Strachan had called only for the convening of an annual convocation of clergy, never once suggesting that such a convocation should include lay representation. In early 1832, however, with the benefit of advice from William and John Macaulay, A. N. Bethune, R. D. Cartwright, and G. O. Stuart, he drew up a constitution for a church convocation which made provision for the election of two lay delegates from

<sup>2</sup> Cartwright expressed his support for the idea of a church synod in a letter to Strachan in April 1831. See Cartwright Papers, Cartwright to Strachan, 16 April 1831.

<sup>3</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-39, Strachan to Cartwright, 27 June 1831.

<sup>4</sup> Macaulay Papers, Strachan to Macaulay, 24 Oct. 1831.

each congregation. Admittedly, the power of these lay delegates was to be curtailed by the stipulation that they were to vote not individually but by congregation, thereby ensuring that the voting strength of clergymen and laymen would be evenly balanced.<sup>5</sup> Yet this having been said, the mere fact that Strachan was willing to include lay representation in a body historically restricted to clergymen was an indication both of the bold nature of his thoughts on the subject of church government, and of the lengths he was prepared to go in order to establish a firm basis of popular support for an Anglican convocation in Upper Canada. It was also a reflection of his belief that the church would have to rely more and more on the laity if it was to improve its financial position and retain its established status.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Macaulay, 23 March 1832.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Macaulay, 16 Feb. 1832.



Lordship that it cannot be long delayed & that it will be forced upon us if we do not anticipate the wish of our people." He then told Macaulay that Stewart might be prodded into action if each congregation petitioned for the transformation of Upper Canada into a separate diocese, a tactic, incidentally, that coincided nicely with his own ambition to be elevated to the episcopacy. No other course of action, he concluded, was likely to produce results, for Stewart had become a tool of Archdeacon G. J. Mountain, "a compound of timidity selfishness & cant with some eloquence & talent" who had "governed the Church absolutely since the death of his Father and made everything in this Province subservient to the Lower." Further, Stewart himself was showing alarming signs of "imbecility," a trait that had been painfully evident on his recent visit to England, when "instead of vindicating the rights of the Church he went [?] about societies & private Loteries getting praise for his piety & Lord Goderich laughed at him and listened to Ryerson."<sup>8</sup>

Strachan's comments about Stewart may have been unfair, but his pessimism regarding the reception his constitutional proposals would receive in Quebec City was well founded. Seriously ill and harassed by financial worries, Stewart remained deaf to all appeals for a church convocation, and Strachan's constitution, with its revolutionary provision for lay representation, did not induce him to change his mind.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Macaulay, 24 March 1832.

<sup>9</sup> It is T. R. Millman who has suggested that Stewart's failure to lend his support to demands for a church synod was caused by his ill health and his preoccupation with financial problems. See Millman, Life of Stewart, p. 123.

Strachan, not easily discouraged, made one last effort to overcome episcopal indifference to the idea of synodical government, explaining in a sermon at Stewart's 1832 visitation in York that the withdrawal of the parliamentary grant to the SPG would make it necessary "for us in the future to depend more upon our resources and exertions than has been hitherto required" and that only a self-governing Church of England could be expected to survive the financial difficulties that lay ahead.<sup>10</sup> When even this argument left Stewart unmoved, it was quite apparent that the cause of institutional reform had run into an almost insuperable obstacle. Strachan, finally ready to admit defeat, abandoned his idea of forcing the issue of synodical government through the organization of a campaign for a separate diocese; and as further proof of the effects of Stewart's apathetic response to the demand for a self-governing church, synodical government was not proposed again, by Strachan or anyone else, until the mid-1830s, when the realization that the episcopacy of a mortally ill Stewart was coming to an end sparked a renewed interest in the institutional structure of Upper Canadian Anglicanism.

One sign of this renewed interest in the subject of church government was the publication in 1836 of Thomas Fuller's pamphlet, Thoughts on the Present State and Future Prospects of the Church of England in Canada. Fuller, a clergyman stationed in Chatham, argued that the severance of the church's ties with the SPG would accentuate its already

<sup>10</sup> Strachan, Church Fellowship, pp. 21-22.

serious problems in Upper Canadian society, depriving it of the resources it needed to build up a larger body of clergy and to minister more effectively to the needs of a religiously destitute immigrant population. In response to this situation, Fuller called for the creation of a church synod, asserting that such a body, in addition to acting as a safeguard of doctrinal uniformity, would strengthen the church by making it more independent financially and so ensuring its prosperity even in the event of disestablishment. To those who were critical of the idea of lay representation, Fuller simply replied that as long as ecclesiastical government was monopolized by the clergy, it was unreasonable to expect the laity to contribute to the support of the church. "The laity alone have in their hands what can supply our wants," he wrote. "Before we can avail ourselves of it, we must allow them to have some voice in its disbursement. This is human nature." If the church refused to accept this fact and ignored the importance of establishing a new form of government, it would undoubtedly suffer severe consequences. For as Fuller noted in conclusion, any delay in the implementation of desperately required institutional reforms would fatally weaken the church in its efforts to protect its own flock against the forces of "popery," infidelity, and dissent.<sup>11</sup>

Fuller's commitment to the idea of synodical government was shared by other Anglican clergymen. In November 1835 the Western Clerical

<sup>11</sup> T. B. Fuller, Thoughts on the Present State and Future Prospects of the Church of England in Canada, with Hints for some improvements in her Ecclesiastical Arrangements; Humbly Addressed to the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop and the Rev. Clergy (1836), *passim*.

Society, meeting in William Bettridge's rectory in Woodstock, proposed the calling of a general meeting of the clergy to discuss the need for a church synod and a separate Upper Canadian diocese. Strachan accepted this proposal, and shortly afterwards, in February 1836, the Western Clerical Society not only gave its approval to Strachan's constitution for an Anglican synod, but also began sending circulars to clergymen throughout the province inviting them to discuss the subject of Anglican self-government.<sup>12</sup>

This meeting of the Upper Canadian clergy took place in October 1836, a mere one month after Stewart's deteriorating health had led to his return to England, where he was to die within the year, and to the appointment of G. J. Mountain as suffragan bishop of the diocese. In his address to the assembled clergy Strachan contended that the Upper Canadian church, deprived of the financial assistance of the SPG and threatened with a loss of its "vested rights" was "in a manner cast off & left to herself."<sup>13</sup> From this perception of the church's position it was but a short step to the claim that significant alterations in the structure of ecclesiastical government would have to be effected immediately. Strachan, anxious to resolve any doubts which might hinder the church's evolution into a self-governing institution, noted that English history provided numerous examples of church synods, that the

<sup>12</sup> See William Bettridge's letter to the Church, 27 June 1850; and T. R. Millman, "Beginnings of the synodical movement in colonial Anglican churches, with special reference to Canada," JCHS, XXI (1979), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Strachan, The Church of the Redeemed, p. 27.

principle of lay representation had been accepted by the apostolic church, and that the church in Upper Canada was legally empowered to act on its own and establish a diocesan synod. He also emphasized that the creation of a synod with lay representation was necessary if the church was to be able to exist on its own financial resources, minister to the needs of a growing flock, and defend its privileges in an increasingly turbulent political climate.<sup>14</sup> With respect to the last point, he made it very clear that the project of synodical government was inseparable from the church's struggle against the forces of voluntarism. After declaring that "it is quite evident that a greater degree of union is necessary among us than has hitherto prevailed," and that the church would have to act in "one compact body" if it hoped to surmount its present "dangers, troubles and anxieties," he went on to state that

a season of emergency has evidently arrived. . . . Are we to wait for a season still more perilous? Attempts are making to deprive us of our most valuable privileges, and to degrade and vilify our religious institutions in public estimation.—And are such difficulties to be overcome by shutting our eyes? It has been my full persuasion for many years, that the obstacles in the way of the progress of the Church are only to be conquered by organized meetings of the Clergy, assisted by the Laity; and that had such been instituted when suggested much evil would have been prevented.<sup>15</sup>

The actual proceedings of the archdiaconal meeting of 1836 remain something of a mystery. Many years later William Bettridge stated in a

<sup>14</sup> The above section is based on ibid., pp. 27-40.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

letter to the Church that the 1836 meeting had given its unanimous support to a resolution advocating the creation of a synod with lay representation.<sup>16</sup> This view, however, was contradicted by another clergyman, E. J. Boswell. Besides claiming that the movement for the revival of church convocations was a conspiracy on the part of the low church party, Boswell noted that at the 1836 meeting some clergymen-- he did not specify how many--objected to the proposal for an Anglican synod with lay representation. He also asserted that "when the clergy met in Toronto, they were not forgetful of what too many appear willing to forget now, that this branch of Christ's Church is not independent and consequently that there are persons in authority at Home, who have to be consulted."<sup>17</sup>

Whatever the outcome of this meeting, a long time was to pass before Strachan's plans for a church synod became a reality. Although Stewart died in July 1837, the imperial government did not take advantage of this event to reconstruct the colonial church's ecclesiastical government: Upper Canada was not transformed into a separate diocese, no church convocation was created, and, to add insult to injury, G. J. Mountain was appointed Stewart's successor as bishop of Quebec, an appointment which to a bitter Strachan seemed tangible proof that, in the race for worldly honours, influence in high circles was often more

<sup>16</sup> The Church, 27 June and 25 July 1850.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 27 June and 8 Aug. 1850.

important than superior qualifications.<sup>18</sup> Soon after Mountain's elevation to the episcopacy, moreover, the rebellion broke out, and for the next several years the internal security of Upper Canada and the political developments of the union period diverted the attention of Anglican clergymen from the comparatively less pressing question of institutional reform. The result was that over ten years elapsed after the archdiaconal meeting of 1836 before synodical government once again attracted the active support of Upper Canadian churchmen. What was even more striking, in that entire period the subject of a diocesan synod was mentioned only once, and even then it was mentioned only to be dismissed as impractical. The occasion referred to was in 1841, when Strachan declared in his first charge as bishop that, as it was futile to expect the imperial authorities to relent in their opposition to the idea of a colonial convocation, the cause of synodical government was hopeless. He also contradicted his earlier position and announced that he was opposed to the inclusion of lay representatives in a church body, an astounding intellectual reversal that is difficult, if not impossible, to explain. This deviation from an otherwise consistent position--he would never again question the wisdom of including lay representatives in a church synod--was summed up in his statement that the election of laymen to the conventions of the American Episcopal Church was "a most dangerous innovation on her Constitution,

<sup>18</sup> Strachan's attitude towards Mountain's appointment was revealed in his correspondence with Mahlon Burwell in 1836 and in his address at the opening of Burwell's church in Port Talbot in the same year (Strachan Papers, 12 April 1836).

and likely to lead in time to the most deplorable consequences."<sup>19</sup>

True to form, the cause of synodical government emerged from its state of limbo when the struggle for the separation of church and state reached a new level of intensity in the middle and late 1840s. In 1846 it was asserted in a Church editorial that "the combinations of events in recent times have created the conviction, we believe, in the minds of most men really attached to the Church that her power of self-government should be increased rather than diminished."<sup>20</sup> Two years later the Church claimed in another editorial that the Church of England in the British Isles needed a convocation to protect itself against state oppression, a claim that was obviously meant to be applicable to the Upper Canadian church as well.<sup>21</sup> Even more revealing, a layman signing himself "Y.Z." emphasized in an 1849 letter to the Church that the creation of a diocesan synod would allow the Church of England, now dependent upon an inadequate landed endowment, to become more self-supporting financially. He explained that "if the Church in this Province at least held her regular convocations, the laity would be early taught to know their duty, and quickly become acquainted with her temporal wants; as it is, most of us labour under a vague idea that she possesses some secret El Dorado from which she is upheld."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Strachan, A Charge Delivered on the 2nd September, 1841, pp. 32-34.

<sup>20</sup> The Church, 25 Sept. 1846.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 7 Jan. 1848.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 12 April 1849.



Ironically, the individual primarily responsible for rekindling interest in the idea of synodical government was regarded by many clergymen as a traitor to the Anglican cause. Peter Boyle De Blaquièrè, a prominent Anglican layman, a member of the Legislative Council, and, to his lasting discredit in the eyes of several of his co-religionists, first Chancellor of the "godless" University of Toronto, had two major concerns as a public figure in the early 1850s: defending a non-sectarian system of university education against Strachan's attempts to establish an exclusively Anglican "church university"; and increasing the influence of the laity in the internal affairs of the Church of England.<sup>23</sup> The latter concern, which probably reflected a desire to liberalize the church's political position by vesting greater authority in the hands of a more flexible laity, was the motivating factor behind De Blaquièrè's decision to give his support to the cause of synodical government. In a letter to the Church in February 1850 De Blaquièrè unveiled a plan for a diocesan synod which he intended to submit to the legislature in the form of a comprehensive church government bill. This plan--which was apparently based on the assumption (and a curious assumption it was for a liberal like De Blaquièrè) that the legislature could alter the government of a church that was still, in theory at least, the established church of the colony--resembled Strachan's earlier proposals in its acceptance of the idea of lay representation. But, in another respect, it signified an important step forward in the

<sup>23</sup> Comments on De Blaquièrè's career can be found in Moir, Church and State in Canada West, pp. 24, 42, 109, 120, and 131.

institutional evolution of the Church of England, since its most distinctive provision gave the proposed synod the power to elect bishops, a power that was without precedent in the history of Anglicanism in the British Empire.<sup>24</sup>

Anglican clergymen, convinced that Britain if not Upper Canada still recognized the principle of church establishment, did not object to the idea that the civil arm could remodel their church's form of government. At the same time, however, they had little use for the proposal that the local rather than the British government should interfere in church affairs. In addition, they strongly objected to the democratic features of De Blaquière's plan for a diocesan synod. The Church denounced De Blaquière for his ignorance of the principles of church government, and announced its determination to "protect both the Laity and Clergy from the results of an undue preponderance of Lay influence," which had already reached alarming proportions because of the laity's possession of the "power of the purse."<sup>25</sup> William Macaulay and the vestry committee of St. Mary's Church, Picton, claimed that De Blaquière's scheme would vest control over "the important subjects connected with the Church" in the "unskillful hands" of the laity.<sup>26</sup> H. C. C. Cooper attacked De Blaquière's "republican proposition," emphasizing that such a proposal, besides "upsetting the entire fabric

<sup>24</sup> The Church, 14 Feb. 1850.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 21 Feb. and 22 Aug. 1850.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 12 April 1850.

of the polity of the church," would eventually bring spiritual doctrines "within the scope of popular jurisdiction," and would undermine "the prerogative of the Sovereign in whom the appointment of Bishops has been vested for many centuries, thus severing another link of the union of our Province with the Crown." He also expressed his indignation that the promise of increased power in ecclesiastical government was being used as a bribe in order to encourage the laity to contribute financially to the support of the church.<sup>27</sup>

Yet, if the Church, Macaulay, and Cooper were violently critical of De Blaquière's proposals, the reaction of church authorities was more cautious and conciliatory. A. N. Bethune and G. O. Stuart, the Archdeacons of York and Kingston respectively, were in charge of the church during the period of Strachan's mission to England on behalf of Trinity College, and in June 1850 they persuaded De Blaquière to delay the introduction of his church government bill until the opinions of the bishop and clergy could be ascertained.<sup>28</sup> An equally tactful approach was adopted by Strachan upon his return to Upper Canada in the fall of the same year. In a letter to De Blaquière that was later published in the Church, Strachan expressed his regret that a plan for

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 14 and 21 March, and 11 April 1850. Also of importance was a letter to the Church from "A Rector" on 21 Feb. 1850. Interestingly enough, Francis Evans, a leading evangelical clergyman, expressed his support of De Blaquière's scheme in a letter to the Church on 11 April 1850, a fact which would seem to point to a connection between "low church" Anglicanism and demands for greater lay influence in church affairs. This question will be dealt with in the following chapter.

<sup>28</sup> The Church, 6 June 1850.

a diocesan synod had been introduced in his absence, but he also agreed that an overhaul of the church's institutional structure was needed immediately. Although he ignored De Blaquière's proposal that a church synod should have the power to elect bishops, and although he pointed out that the idea of lay representation presented certain difficulties and that the permission of the crown would have to be obtained before the Upper Canadian church could establish a synod, he promised to give the question of synodical government his careful consideration and to discuss it in the near future both with his own clergy and with his fellow bishops in Lower Canada.<sup>29</sup> That he intended to fulfil these promises became apparent in early 1851, when he attended a meeting of the British North American bishops in Quebec City. Resolutions agreed upon at this meeting called for the creation of diocesan synods with lay representation and the appointment of a provincial metropolitan.<sup>30</sup>

Strachan's letter to De Blaquière and his support of the Quebec City resolutions clearly revealed that his views on the subject of a diocesan synod were once again in a state of flux, that since the time of his 1841 charge he had grown less wary of the idea of lay representation and less pessimistic about the prospects of the cause of synodical government. To prove that this change in attitude was brought about by

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 21 Nov. 1850.

<sup>30</sup> The Quebec City meeting is discussed in Armine W. Mountain, A Memoir of George Jehosaphat Mountain (Montreal, 1866), pp. 290-99.

a heightened awareness of the relationship between synodical government and the maintenance of the policy of church establishment, it is only necessary to examine Strachan's justification for a decision he made just after his return from Quebec City, a decision that was to be of vital importance to the future of the church. In a pastoral letter of 3 April 1851, surely the most significant pronouncement of his entire episcopate, Strachan declared that "many of the most pious and respectable members of our communion, both lay and clerical," had come to the conclusion that "the church . . . ought to express her opinion as a body, on the posture of her secular affairs, when an attempt is again making by her enemies to despoil her of the small remainder of her property . . . and that it is not only her duty to protest against such a manifest breach of public faith, but to take such steps as may seem just and reasonable to avert the same." Since he himself agreed with the view that the entire church would have to act in unison if it was to resist the attacks of its opponents and retain its landed endowment, he instructed the regular communicants of each congregation to elect two lay delegates to a visitation that was to be held on 1 and 2 May in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto.<sup>31</sup> This visitation, a synod in fact if not in name, was to have a three-fold purpose: it was to set a precedent for lay representation in a church body; it was to convince the imperial government that a diocesan synod was desired by an overwhelming majority of Upper Canadian Anglicans; and it was to provide

<sup>31</sup> The pastoral letter can be found in Proceedings of Synod, Diocese of Toronto, 1851, pp. 1-2.

the church with the foundations of the institutional structure it so desperately required if it was to respond more effectively to the threat of disestablishment.

Unexpected in its timing and portentous in its implications, Strachan's letter naturally produced, as one layman reported at a Toronto branch of the Church Society, a feeling of "nervous distress" in some quarters of the church.<sup>32</sup> But it also renewed the hope of many clergymen and laymen that the creation of a synod was within the realm of possibility. James Beaven, for instance, speaking at the same meeting of the Church Society, asserted with a visible air of exultation that the approaching visitation would be an epochal event in the history of Upper Canadian Anglicanism, providing the movement for synodical government with an important historical precedent and a popular base of support, and initiating the process by which a miserly Anglican laity was to be instructed in its financial obligations to the church.<sup>33</sup>

Beaven's confident, aggressive tone was a foretaste of the spirit of militancy that was to prevail during the visitation. In his opening charge to the enormous gathering of clergy and laity, the first such gathering in the history of the Upper Canadian church, Strachan declared that "our meeting and proceedings will begin a new era in the history of the Colonial Church, and may be the prelude, not only of diocesan Synods, but of the ultimate union of all the British North

<sup>32</sup> This meeting was held in St. George's church. See the Church, 24 April 1851.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

American Bishops, to convene at stated times in general Synods or convocations."<sup>34</sup> He also underlined the point that the demand for a synod was directly related to the church's efforts to defend its established status. After denouncing the agitation for the secularization of the clergy reserves as a manifestation of "the torrent of infidelity and radical licentiousness which is threatening pure and undefiled religion, and all the foundations of social peace and order,"<sup>35</sup> he urged the assembled clergy and laity to forward petitions to the colonial legislature and imperial government protesting against the proposed secularization of the clergy reserves, demanding the right to establish Anglican separate schools, and requesting permission to create a diocesan synod with lay representation, a form of government that would allow the church to act as a united body in defence of its "temporalities."<sup>36</sup> This stirring appeal did not go unanswered. With the unanimous consent of all present, resolutions were passed attacking the voluntarist crusade, defending the Anglican claim to separate schools, and calling on imperial authorities to sanction the formation of a church synod in Upper Canada. Committees were established to draft the necessary petitions to the two levels of government.<sup>37</sup> One of these committees finished its work shortly after the conclusion of

<sup>34</sup> Strachan, A Charge Delivered in May, MDCCCLI, p. 47.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>36</sup> Proceedings of Synod, 1851, pp. 6-7.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-12.

the visitation, and a petition on the subject of a church synod was forwarded to the Queen. Accompanying this petition were addresses from Strachan on the same subject to the Colonial Secretary and the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>38</sup>

In the period immediately after the 1851 visitation, the cause of synodical government was still seen as an essential part of the church's strategy to survive the current campaign for disestablishment. The Church, no longer fearful of the influence of the laity, argued in an 1853 editorial that the purpose of an "ecclesiastical parliament" was to ward off the impending blow against the clergy reserves.<sup>39</sup> Strachan insisted in his Letter to the Right Hon. Lord John Russell on the Present State of the Church in Canada that imperial authorities, having severed the union of church and state, could no longer withhold the right of self-government from the Church of England, and that the creation of a synod in Upper Canada would allow the church to defend itself against "a host of enemies from every quarter . . . agreeing in no one thing but their wish to destroy the only true branch of the Catholic Church which is able to stem the torrent of irreligion, fanaticism, and presumption, which is threatening to overwhelm the civilization of the world."<sup>40</sup> A similar statement on the relationship between synodical government and the church's struggle against the

<sup>38</sup> The petition of the synod and Strachan's addresses were published in the Church, 17 July 1851.

<sup>39</sup> The Church, 22 Sept. 1853.

<sup>40</sup> Strachan, A Letter to Lord John Russell, pp. 20-25.



forces of evil was made in January 1852, when Strachan told a group of Anglican laymen that the church was now compelled "to present herself in action as a determined and united body, and thus to protect herself from the daily aggressions of the many bitter enemies with which she is environed."<sup>41</sup> He then added that

were the Church to meet annually in synod, she would not only be able to defend her own just rights but feel herself, with God's blessing, in a position to arrest the torrent of socialism and infidelity, which has made so frightful progress among our secularly educated population during the last four years as to threaten us with total anarchy, and the destruction of every thing valuable in this splendid country.<sup>42</sup>

Even the forcefulness of Strachan's arguments, however, could not camouflage the ambiguity that was now apparent in the ultimate objectives of the movement for synodical government. It has already been pointed out that the Anglican defence of the policy of church establishment in the 1840s and early 1850s was coupled with an evolving conception of the Church of England as an institution that was independent of the state and more narrowly religious in the range of its concerns. This contradiction, a revealing indication of the confusion of Anglican clergymen as they came face to face with the prospect of disestablishment, was also visible in the case for synodical government after the visitation of 1851. A diocesan synod was now defended not only as an instrument of self-defence that would be of valuable assistance in the efforts of the church to resist the attacks of its enemies and maintain

<sup>41</sup> The Church, 16 Jan. 1852.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

its established status, but also as a form of government that would allow the church to throw off the yoke of an oppressive state connection.

The latter view, with its strong anti-erastianism, revealed the influence of the tractarian movement on Upper Canadian Anglicanism; a subject that will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter. Equally important, it provided additional evidence that Anglican clergymen were beginning to reconsider the place of their church in Upper Canadian society. According to the line of reasoning on which it rested, synodical government was made necessary by the following facts: political authorities in both England and Upper Canada were anxious to dissolve the union of church and state; recently, moreover, the Church of England's close ties with the government had resulted in its own persecution; it was therefore clear that if the church was to protect itself against future persecution and escape from its humiliating dependence on a hostile government, it would have to accept the fact that the separation of church and state was inevitable, and become an independent, self-governing institution, an institution that was responsible for the management of its own affairs and free to pursue its religious activities unfettered by political interference.

Anti-erastianism was first expressed in a Church editorial of August 1851, in which it was declared that the demand for "synodical action" was a natural response to the desire of politicians "to treat the church as a mere state machine, of human invention and of human foundation."<sup>43</sup> The same argument was presented in a series of

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 21 Aug. 1851.

editorials on church organization published in the summer of 1852. The unifying theme of these editorials was that the church's present plight, both in England and Upper Canada, was the direct result of its subordination to the state. Convinced that the "Erastian system of government" had enabled the state to persecute the church with impunity, to interfere in its internal affairs, and to deprive it of the organizational structure it needed to meet its religious responsibilities and defend itself against the attacks of rival denominations, the Church announced in a spirit of icy determination that the time had come to free the Anglican cause from the "thraldom" of the "civil arm." Pointing to the situation in Upper Canada in particular, it noted that "in this Province legislation has discarded the Church, and placed her, so far as it has the power, in the position of a purely Missionary Church. . . . Fewer branches of the Church have been more sorely tried . . . and none has more cruelly suffered the yoke of oppression . . . while her enemies have had complete and wild freedom, she has been chained by absolute laws to the State, a mark for the arrows of her foes." If the Church of England was to improve its position in Upper Canadian society, the Church explained in its conclusion, if it was to be able to resist its opponents and cope with the challenge of religious destitution, a synod would have to be created; it was for these reasons that the Upper Canadian church demanded "her inheritance--the inheritance of Christian Englishmen--Freedom!"<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 29 June, 1 July, and 8 July 1852.

The stage was set for another expression of anti-erastian sentiment when in the fall of 1853 the Colonial Church Regulation Bill, legislation enabling Anglican churches in the colonies to establish synods, failed to pass the British House of Commons and was temporarily shelved. Shortly after this latest setback to the campaign for synodical government, a second visitation of clergy and elected lay delegates was held in Toronto. In the episcopal charge delivered on the opening day of the visitation, Strachan referred to the "dark and threatening" position of the Anglican cause and expressed the hope that the passage of a bill designed to "emancipate" the church would not be delayed much longer.<sup>45</sup> The clergy and laity were no less alarmed by the situation of the church, and resolutions protesting against the clergy reserves agitation and demanding the right to establish Anglican separate schools were passed unanimously.<sup>46</sup> On the subject of synodical government, however, differences of opinion soon emerged. James Bovell, a layman, declared that the church was entitled to take synodical action "without any permission, and that it would be an act of the grossest and most oppressive tyranny to throw any obstacle in our way." He then moved a resolution which announced the intention of Upper Canadian Anglicans to assert their "right to meet as a Synod, refusing to admit the right of interference from any quarter." This resolution was seconded by Benjamin Cronyn and supported by Arthur

<sup>45</sup> Strachan, A Charge Delivered on Oct. 12, 1853, pp. 43 and 46.

<sup>46</sup> Proceedings of Synod, 1853, pp. 10-15.

Palmer and Captain Baker, a layman; but it was opposed by Strachan and James Beaven on the grounds that it ignored the legal impediments which would have to be overcome before a synod could be established.<sup>47</sup>

Eventually a committee composed of both clergymen and laymen prepared the way for an acceptable compromise by proposing a resolution which protested against the deferral of the Colonial Church Regulation Bill, and by drawing up a petition which stated that the imperial government, "having in its wisdom thought it right to withdraw from the Church that protection in regard to its property which it had hitherto enjoyed," could not in fairness maintain "the restrictions hitherto imposed on the free action of the Church in reference to the holding of Diocesan Synods, while it is entirely deprived of the advantages of an Establishment."<sup>48</sup> In the ensuing debate H. C. C. Cooper introduced an amendment which claimed that "all further discussions . . . or any memorial or remonstrance" relating to the defunct Colonial Church Regulation Bill was "utterly unnecessary and derogatory to this synod." The principal argument he advanced in defence of his amendment was that the church in Upper Canada, having been stripped of its privileges, should not have to recognize the supremacy of an "infidel" parliament.<sup>49</sup> Although Cooper's anti-erastian speech, as it was later said in the report of the visitation, "elicited much applause,"<sup>50</sup> the

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-13. See also Cooper's letter to the Church, 27 Oct. 1853.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

somewhat reckless nature of his proposal was viewed with a good deal of alarm. Several clergymen and laymen spoke out in opposition to the Cooper amendment, and Arthur Palmer went so far as to accuse Cooper himself of "hoisting the flag of Canadian independence."<sup>51</sup> In the end, Cooper's amendment attracted only two votes, and the committee's resolution on the Colonial Church Regulation Bill, together with the accompanying petition to the same effect, passed in its original form.<sup>52</sup>

Notwithstanding the fate of Cooper's amendment, hostility towards the state connection remained strong after the conclusion of the 1853 visitation. In December 1853 the Church carried an overtly anti-erastian letter from James Bovell that was addressed to all Upper Canadian Anglicans. It was Bovell's belief that the dissolution of the union of church and state destroyed the basis of all objections to the idea of a self-governing Church of England, and that recourse should be had to the colonial legislature if the imperial government remained obdurate and continued to reject Anglican appeals for a diocesan synod. After emphasizing that "the time has come, the hour has arrived at which we are forced to act, our enemies are mighty, we have no arm of flesh to lean on now," he issued the following proclamation, a proclamation that contrasted strangely with the ringing declarations in support of the unity of church and state which had resounded

<sup>51</sup> For the debate on Cooper's amendment, see ibid., pp. 11-13; for Palmer's speech, see ibid., p. 12.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

in Anglican circles a scant decade earlier:

we are not striving to free ourselves from our mother Church, but we are determined to be freed from unjust State persecution, and as England's Crown has been removed from beneath the altar of the Colonial branch of the Anglican Church then is that Church bound to emancipate itself from the hands of the Crown. . . . Let the Church in this Diocese, acting as if endowed with life, cease to cringe at the feet of a Colonial Secretary or an Archbishop thrust upon us, not by any Ecclesiastical law but by the illegal intrusion of the Crown. . . .<sup>53</sup>

Significantly, once the campaign for the secularization of the clergy reserves entered its final phase in 1854, the Church and Strachan began echoing the call for unilateral synodical action. The Church argued in an article of 1854 that the dissolution of the state connection made it incumbent upon civil authorities to extend the right of self-government to the Upper Canadian church;<sup>54</sup> and in an editorial in late July it declared that since the imperial government was totally blind to the needs of the colonial church, the Anglican community should act independently in asserting its right to manage its own ecclesiastical affairs.<sup>55</sup> Strachan shared this point of view, and in a letter to the Bishop of Nova Scotia in early June he stated that "threatened with the loss of the small remainder of our Church property & with diminished Assistance from the two great Church Societies Synods or Convocations are necessary to our vitality," a statement which was

<sup>53</sup> The Church, 22 Dec. 1853.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 4 May 1854.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 27 July 1854.

coupled with the suggestion that "so soon as we have established Synods in our Several Dioceses we must unite as an Ecclesiastical Province & have a general Synod of the British American Dioceses under a Metropolitan with a House of Bishops."<sup>56</sup> Later, at a meeting of a committee established at the last visitation, Strachan announced that if the Colonial Church Regulation Bill was not passed during the current parliamentary session, the Upper Canadian church would be justified in establishing a synod without the approval of the imperial government.<sup>57</sup> This determination to circumvent the dilatory tactics of imperial authorities was again evident at the visitation held in Toronto in late October. At that visitation Strachan claimed that although the Colonial Church Regulation Bill had not yet been passed by the British government, the Church of England would have no legal impediments to overcome if it decided to move unilaterally and transform its visitations of clergy and lay delegates into de jure synods.<sup>58</sup>

It should be clear from the above discussion that the movement for synodical government made remarkable progress in the post-rebellion period. By the early 1850s clergymen and laymen alike were unanimous in the belief that the Church of England should have greater powers of self-government, and visitations were functioning as de facto synods

<sup>56</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1854-62, Strachan to the Bishop of Nova Scotia, 2 June 1854.

<sup>57</sup> The Church, 15 June 1854.

<sup>58</sup> Proceedings of the Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in the Diocese of Toronto, Held October 25, 26, & 27, 1854 (Toronto, 1854); pp. 3-4.



with lay representation. It now only remained to be seen whether the imperial authorities would succumb to the demands of the colonial church and press ahead with the necessary enabling legislation. A failure to act positively on this issue, from the standpoint of the clergy and laity, would have serious results. For whether a synod was to act as a symbol of the separation of church and state or as a bulwark of the policy of church establishment, it clearly was to play a vitally important role in the future of the Church of England in Upper Canada.

## II

As if the state of the church's organizational structure was not sufficient cause for concern, Anglican clergymen after 1830 also had to come to terms with their deteriorating financial position. For the first two decades after the foundation of the see of Quebec in 1793, the salaries of clergymen, paid partly by the SPG and partly by the local government, tended to vary greatly, ranging from £100 to over £200 annually. This situation changed substantially after 1815, when the SPG, aided by an annual grant from the imperial government, assumed a greater degree of responsibility for the maintenance of the colonial church.<sup>59</sup> One result of the new set of arrangements was that variations in clerical salaries were eliminated: with the benefit of its government

<sup>59</sup> In Lower Canada the imperial government continued to be responsible for a number of expenses relating to the colonial church, including the salary of the bishop (Millman, Life of Stewart, p. 114).

grant, the SPG was able to provide each clergyman with an annual stipend of £200. Another, and less beneficial, result was that after 1815 the fortunes of the colonial church were directly tied to the fortunes of the SPG. The dangers implicit in such a relationship became apparent when in 1831 the Whig government of Lord Grey announced that the parliamentary grant to the SPG, which then amounted to just over £15,000, was to be reduced to £12,000 in 1832, to £8,000 in 1833, and to £4,000 in 1834; and that after 1835 the SPG was to receive no grant whatsoever.<sup>60</sup> The SPG, dependent upon its parliamentary grant for roughly £7,000 of the £10,000 it spent annually on the church in the Canadas, immediately protested against the government's decision, pointing out in particular that a shortage of funds would now force it to betray those clergymen who had gone to the colonies before 1831 on the understanding that they would receive a stipend of £200. Eventually, in 1834, the government agreed to a compromise whereby the Society was to receive, for a limited period of time, an annual grant of £4,000 to enable it to pay the salaries of clergymen then resident in the colonies. But even this concession could not alter the fact that the SPG would have to reduce drastically the amount of its financial assistance to the Canadian church. As it turned out, the government's new policy meant that clergymen appointed before 1833 were to receive 85% of their present stipends, or approximately £170 annually, as long as they lived, while clergymen appointed after 1833 were to

<sup>60</sup> Much of the above section is drawn from Millman, Life of Stewart, pp. 114-23.

receive stipends of only £100, exactly 50% less than the salaries previously enjoyed by SPG missionaries.<sup>61</sup>

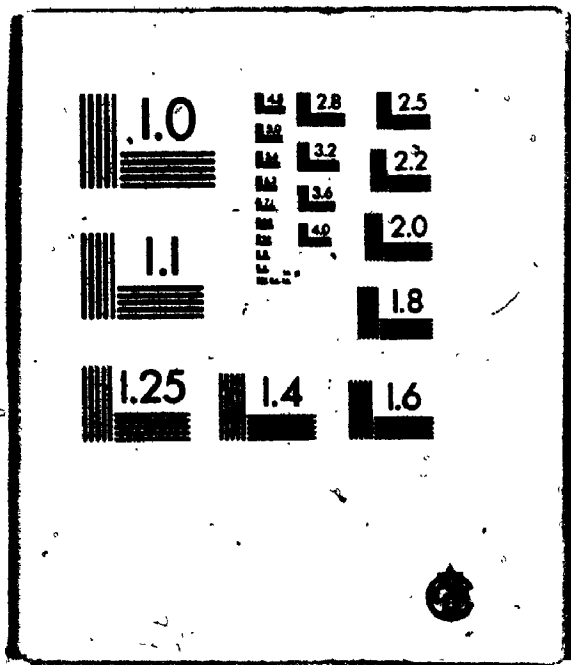
These arrangements remained fixed until the late 1840s, when the government announced that a surplus was available in the clergy reserve funds. At that time no fewer than seventeen clergymen from the Eastern District argued that the SPG, which had control over reserve revenues under the Act of 1840, should raise the salaries of clergymen appointed before 1833 to the £200 level. Strachan, enraged by this display of "insubordination and selfishness," quelled the controversy by persuading the SPG to agree to an arrangement under which clergymen of twelve years' service would receive stipends of £150, and those of nine years' service £125.<sup>62</sup>

The reduction in SPG stipends, when combined with the loss of a large portion of the clergy reserves as a result of the settlement of 1840, made it necessary for the Church of England to rely more and more

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> See SPG Letters, Series C, Box V/43, no. 516; memorial from clergy of the Eastern District, 5 July 1849. Also: John Strachan, The Secular State of the Church, in the Diocese of Toronto, Canada West (Toronto, 1849); Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to A. N. Bethune, 17 Nov. 1848, Strachan to Arthur Palmer, 5 Dec. 1848, Strachan to the Bishop of Montreal, 20 Dec. 1848, Strachan to Clergy, 2 March 1849, Strachan to anonymous clergyman, 8 May 1849; ADO, Stuart Papers, G. O. Stuart to A. N. Bethune, 1848(?); F. J. Lundy Diaries, 1849-67, 29 Jan. 1849; AO, Bishop Strachan Letters, Strachan to A. N. Bethune, 7 March 1849, R. G. Cox to A. N. Bethune, 18 April 1849, Strachan to A. N. Bethune, 8 Oct. 1849; SPG Letters, Series C, Box V/46, no. 547, F. J. Lundy, 15 Jan. 1849; SPG Letters, "D", 14, vols. 8-9, Edward Denroche, 16 Feb. 1850, and Job Deacon, 9 Feb. 1850; the Church, 9 Nov. 1848, 18 Jan. 1849, and 8 Aug. 1850 (letter from Edward Denroche).

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on the voluntary contributions of its own members. Unfortunately, if the church was to become financially self-reliant, a number of problems would have to be overcome. Perhaps the most difficult of these problems was one which had been isolated by Stuart, Addison, and Langhorn in the 1790s--the unwillingness of many Anglicans to contribute to the support of the church. This failing on the part of the Anglican faithful was commented upon by F. L. Osler in the 1830s, by C. Wade in a sermon preached at a meeting of the Midland Clerical Association in 1840, by the Church in editorials of 1841, 1843, 1845, and 1848, and by Strachan in numerous letters to various clergymen and laymen in the 1840s.<sup>63</sup> Of special interest in this regard was a letter written by Strachan in 1843 in response to the complaint of one layman about the extent of religious destitution in his township. "I am grieved to say," Strachan wrote,

that in the different townships our people are very ready to complain but they will give little or nothing to the service of God--they speak of their poverty when you ask them to assist the Church & yet they blame the Bishop because he does not send Missionaries whom they refuse to support. Now our people are not poorer than other denominations . . . yet other denominations pay for the support of their ministers--if our people were to do their duty as

<sup>63</sup> Osler Papers (Series I-1, vol. 21), Osler to Procter, 26 Oct. 1837; SPG Letters, Series C, Box IV/41, no. 492, F. L. Osler, 3 Nov. 1837; the Church, 30 Jan. 1841, 18 Aug. 1843, 24 Oct. 1845, 20 March 1848; Strachan Letter Book, 1839-43, Strachan to Wilson, 3 Jan. 1843, Strachan to S. S. Strong, 4 Dec. 1843, Strachan to W. Wood, 5 Dec. 1843; Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Joseph Biddle and George R. Johnston, churchwardens, Trinity Church, Moore Township, 7 Aug. 1846, Strachan to Thomas Coleman and John Smith, (?) Oct. 1846, Strachan's reply to petition from Maryburgh, (? Oct.) 1847; Wade's sermon was published by the Church on 5 Sept. 1840.

Gods people we should very soon have Clergymen in all quarters but until they feel & are convinced that it is their bounden duty to give of their substance to sustain the worship of God we shall continue to have many waste places. . . . were you & others instead of talking of neglect & dissatisfaction & making unjust complaints to bestir yourselves to join together as the Friends of our Saviour ought to do in binding yourself to support a Clergyman & build a Church in your own locality we should have the happiness to see a Church & Clergyman in every township.<sup>64</sup>

As noted earlier, the Anglican laity's niggardliness had a number of causes, one of the most important of which was the widespread belief that the clergy reserves provided the Church of England with abundant financial resources. This belief, which seems to have gained popularity when the reserves became more profitable in the 1830s and 1840s, was frequently commented upon by Anglican clergymen. James Magrath told the SPG in 1834 that although he was experiencing severe financial difficulties as a result of the reduction in his stipend, many of his parishioners refused to contribute to his support, maintaining that his salary should be paid out of the clergy reserves fund.<sup>65</sup> George Mortimer, rector of Thornhill, declared that his congregation, when asked to support the church financially, had "that admirable loop-hole for escape--the clergy reserves, which seemed to promise every thing, but have done scarcely anything; a broken reed which is perpetually piercing those who lean on it with sorrow; but which affords our people

<sup>64</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1839-43; Strachan to John Wilson, 3 Jan. 1843.

<sup>65</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/40, no. 467, James Magrath, 25 June 1834.

so ready an excuse for refusing to come to our aid."<sup>66</sup>

In addition to the parsimonious habits of Anglican laymen, one other problem stood in the way of the church's achievement of financial self-reliance. This was the belief of clergymen themselves that the voluntary system, the system by which religious groups were required to depend exclusively on the voluntary contributions of their own members, was both impractical and a threat to their "respectability." Regarding the impracticality of the voluntary system, the Anglican position was straightforward, if unconvincing. Conveniently ignoring the fact that other denominations, notably the Methodists, had flourished without the benefit of state support, Anglican clergymen argued that the laity was too impoverished to provide the church with the funds it needed; that voluntarism was inherently illogical, for the church would have to possess sufficient financial resources to spread the Christian message before naturally sinful individuals could be expected to see the light and assist the cause of religion with their worldly "substance"; and that a church supported solely by the contributions of its members would never be able to minister effectively to a society where a rapidly growing population was scattered over an immense distance and where religious destitution had reached staggering proportions. These three arguments appear again and again in Church editorials, reports of clergymen to the Upper Canadian travelling Missionary Fund, and the

<sup>66</sup> The Life and Letters of the Rev. George Mortimer, M.A. Rector of Thornhill, in the Diocese of Toronto, Canada West, Compiled and Prepared by the Rev. John Armstrong (London, 1847), pp. 209-11.

writings of Strachan.<sup>67</sup>

More complex than the above arguments was the belief of clergymen that voluntarism threatened their "respectability." To arrive at a proper understanding of the basis and significance of this belief, it is necessary to know something of the class position of the Church of England in Upper Canadian society. The first scholar to apply a class analysis to the history of Upper Canadian Anglicanism was S. D. Clark, who argued in his Church and Sect in Canada that the élitist character of the Church of England was a serious handicap in a frontier environment. In brief, Clark maintained that the Anglican church in Upper Canada, as an old world "church type," was by its very nature an upper-class institution. It was his contention that Anglican clergymen came from an upper-class socio-economic background, that the church itself gained its support amongst "persons of property, governmental officials and army officers" in the well-established "rural communities" and "larger towns," and that the Anglican religious "style" was tailored to suit the tastes of those "respectable" individuals who had nothing but contempt for the vulgar hysterics of evangelical religion. The principal result, he wrote, of such a close association

<sup>67</sup> See especially: Strachan, Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis, pp. 108-9; Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Waddilove, 30 April 1840; the Church, 8 May 1841; Upper Canadian Travelling Missionary Fund reports, 1838-40 (Thomas Green's 13th, 16th, and 17th letters; extract from a Toronto clergyman's letter, n.d.--included in 1838 report; 2nd, 4th, and 7th letters from George Petrie); A Charge Delivered at Visitations of the Clergy and Churchwardens of the Archdeaconry of York, Held at Thornhill, on Thursday, April 22; at Hamilton, on Tuesday, April 27; and at London, on Thursday, April 29, 1852, by the Ven. A. N. Bethune, D.D. Archdeacon of York (Toronto, 1852), pp. 5-7.



between the Church of England and the colonial upper class was that Anglicanism was hopelessly weak amongst the "large rural population." For the humble of the Upper Canadian frontier, with their disdain for "status relationships" and their attachment to values of "individual worth and equality," naturally shunned a church that was so intimately connected with the forces of "social privilege," turning instead to denominations whose ministers were entirely lacking in social snobbery and "class prejudices," and whose emotional religious appeal was perfectly designed to meet the cultural needs of a pioneer society.<sup>68</sup>

The flaw that was earlier detected in Clark's interpretation of the record of the Church of England at the level of missionary activity is also apparent in his application of a class analysis to Upper Canadian religious development. To state the matter bluntly: Turnerian frontierism, fused with a simplistic interpretation of the church-sect typology of Troeltsch and Niebuhr, has once again led to conclusions which rest on little, if any, evidence. The essence of Clark's argument is that since a "church type" is basically an institution of the dominant classes, it therefore logically follows that the Church of England was bound to wither in Upper Canada, where the influence of the frontier had given birth to a society that was far more egalitarian and far less class-structured than the society of the old world. The problem with this argument is that neither in Troeltsch's The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, nor in Niebuhr's The Social Sources

<sup>68</sup> Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, pp. 125-29.

of Denominationalism, is the "church type" portrayed as a primarily upper-class institution. Admittedly, both Troeltsch and Niebuhr maintain that sects tend to represent the "dispossessed," while the social and political élite generally belong to the more established churches; and that the church's conservatism on secular issues is a reflection both of the class position of its leading members, and of its own vested interest in the preservation of the social, economic, and political status quo. Yet it is also true that according to the interpretative framework of Troeltsch and Niebuhr, a "church type" is a socially inclusive institution, drawing its members not only from the élite but from all classes in society. Indeed, it is the church's inclusiveness as an institution that, among other things, distinguishes it from the sect, a type of religious organization which, however strong in popular support, embraces a particular group or class rather than society as a whole.<sup>69</sup>

The validity of the latter observations is certainly evident in the case of Upper Canada. Although the nature of the extant sources rules out an attempt to analyze in a precise fashion the class composition of any denomination, it does seem clear that Clark's portrayal of the Church of England as an upper-class institution has serious flaws. This is not to suggest, of course, that the Church of England did not have upper-class adherents; on the contrary, it is impossible

<sup>69</sup> These points are made, albeit indirectly, throughout Ernst Troeltsch's The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, 2 vols. (London, 1931), and H. Richard Niebuhr's The Social Sources of Denominationalism (Connecticut, 1929).

to ignore the fact that one of the most striking characteristics of Upper Canadian society was the disproportionately high number of Anglicans amongst the social and political élite. Still, if the strong position of Anglicanism amongst the upper class is to be admitted, it also has to be stressed that the Church of England resembled the Troeltsch-Niebuhr model of the inclusive "church type." To substantiate this claim, it is only necessary to scan the reports of clergymen to various missionary organizations, since these reports, with their numerous references to the religious destitution of impoverished Anglicans, make it abundantly clear that the Church of England's members came not only from the colonial élite in the well-established "rural communities" and "larger towns," but from every class and group imaginable, including that rapidly growing body of recently arrived immigrants who were dispersed throughout the backwoods.<sup>70</sup> If additional proof of the broad base of support enjoyed by the Anglican cause is still desired, it might be useful to recall that the census of 1841 showed the Church of England to be the single largest denomination in Upper Canada. It seems safe to assume that such a level of numerical strength would never have been attained if the Church of England had been mainly an institution of the colonial gentility.

Clark is on surer ground when he discusses the social standing of Anglican clergymen, but even here he cannot be said to have grasped the significance of a basic feature of the Church of England's experience,

<sup>70</sup> This is particularly true of the Upper Canadian Travelling Missionary Fund reports.

both in Britain and Upper Canada. Ever since the Henrician reformation of the sixteenth century, the Church of England's status as the established church of the realm and one of the main institutional props of the social and political order had provided its clergymen with a position of some distinction in English society. The inevitable result was that Anglican clergymen, though usually no wealthier and often considerably poorer than the flocks they served, adopted a lofty view of their social importance, regarding themselves as a class of "gentlemen" whose educational qualifications and commission from a catholic and apostolic church clearly set them apart from the mass of their fellow mortals. Naturally, this consciousness on the part of the clergy of its status as a class was also noticeable in the branch of the Church of England that was planted in Upper Canada.

The clergymen who served in Upper Canada after 1791 were not, as Clark claims, uniformly upper class in their socio-economic background. Nor can they be described as upper class in terms of their financial situation; for while the salary of £200 provided by the SPG in the period 1815 to 1831 must have been a respectable sum in a society where cash was scarce and many economic activities were still conducted by barter, the reduction of stipends after 1834 made life extremely difficult for Anglican clergymen, with the exception only of those few individuals like Strachan, R. D. Cartwright, William Macaulay, and William Herchmer who were independently wealthy.<sup>71</sup> At the same time,

<sup>71</sup> Strachan's salary as rector of York and then as archdeacon, combined with his wife's dowry, enabled him to build a house, known as the Palace, that was regarded as the "finest house in the town." It

however, it cannot be denied that Anglican clergymen in Upper Canada, like clergymen in the mother country, had a high opinion of their social status, an opinion that was based on the Church of England's position as the established church and on their own perception of themselves as representatives of a denomination which was a branch of the catholic and apostolic Church of Christ. Furthermore, it also has to be stressed that the clergy's sense of social superiority had some justification. Although Anglican clergymen, as a group, were hardly wealthy enough to emulate the lifestyle of the larger landowners and the more prosperous bourgeoisie, they were still influential figures in Upper Canadian society. As was the case with the ministers of other denominations, the average Anglican clergyman was a member of that tiny minority in a pioneer society who could boast of a higher education.<sup>72</sup> Equally important, in his role as an instrument of socialization he was often the pivot around which the life of a community revolved, the respected pastor whose advice was eagerly sought, whose ministrations were much appreciated by isolated and religiously destitute settlers,

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also allowed him to give entertainments that outshone those of the Lieutenant Governor (Eric Arthur, Toronto: No Mean City [Toronto, 1964], p. 37). Similarly William Herchmer was wealthy enough to donate £1,000 to St. George's Church, Kingston (the Church, 1 Jan. 1842); William Macaulay was able to contribute £12,000 to the building of his church and parsonage in Picton (ibid., 11 Oct. 1844); R. D. Cartwright in 1842 had savings of £1,500 and was willing to pay a clergyman £100 annually to act as his assistant in Kingston (Cartwright Papers, Cartwright to ?, 24 Oct. 1842 and 3 March 1843).

<sup>72</sup> The importance of the clergy's superior education was first pointed out by Professor S. F. Wise in his article, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History," United Church Bulletin, no. 18 (1965), p. 6.

and whose values and opinions, as expressed in sermons, exercised an enormous influence on his flock. In sum, it seems incontestable that on the basis of his educational training, the more refined intellectual and cultural tastes which that training had undoubtedly fostered, and his social importance at the local level of Upper Canadian life, the Anglican clergyman's claim to membership in the colonial élite was entirely legitimate.

The view held by Anglican clergymen of their class position was revealed, in an indirect fashion, in their boast that large numbers of socially distinguished individuals were members of the Church of England, a boast which was clear evidence of their tendency to identify themselves not with the lower orders but with the local élite. The Church noted with pride on several occasions that the Church of England possessed great influence among the colony's "better classes." For instance, in 1838 the Church stated that Anglicans comprised "a great proportion of the wealth, the education, and the virtue of Upper Canada."<sup>73</sup> A few years later, in 1841, the Church announced that the Church of England identified itself with "that large body of Conservatives in the province, embracing individuals of the most prominent standing, the greatest stake, and the highest talents in the country."<sup>74</sup> An even more interesting declaration was made in 1844, when the Church, describing a service that Strachan held at the Lake Shore in the course of his pastoral visitation, reported that "here the Bishop was much

<sup>73</sup> The Church, 13 Oct. 1838.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 10 April 1841.

gratified at meeting several of the principal inhabitants of the neighbourhood, many of whom had moved in the best society, both in England and in India, and all of whom appeared to evince a most friendly feeling to the Church."<sup>75</sup>

The Anglican clergy's class consciousness was also revealed in its response to the SPG's decision in 1834 to reduce the stipends of colonial missionaries. In a memorial sent to the Colonial Secretary shortly after the action of the SPG had become known in Upper Canada, sixty-four Anglican clergymen, claiming bitterly that they would never have come to Upper Canada if they had realized their livelihood was to be so precarious, warned that the new financial arrangements would destroy their "respectability" by causing them "positive and severe embarrassment and distress," by forcing them to dismiss the servants who until now had performed the "menial offices of the house," and by making them dependent on the laity, which was barely able to support itself.<sup>76</sup> This fear that a loss of income would have serious consequences for the social status of clergymen was still strong at the end of the decade. In an 1839 article the Church asserted that an impoverished Anglican clergy would be of little use among either the upper or lower class. Insisting that "if there was a time when Gospel preachers had to toil as fishermen, or labour at tent-making for their subsistence, it was because a better provision for their wants was not practicable,"

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 16 Aug. 1841. On this subject see also a Church editorial of 25 Sept. 1841, and a letter to the Church on 5 April 1849 from "One of the Laity."

<sup>76</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/41, Memorial to Lord Stanley.

it declared its opposition to the policy of reducing the salaries of clergymen, which

in worldly condition would place them almost upon an equality with the day-labourer . . . while such lowliness of earthly state would too often exclude from all companionship with, and all influence upon, the higher orders of society, there are very many of its humblest grades who would be amongst the foremost to regard with indifference or contempt an office so apparently degraded.<sup>77</sup>

Of course, the argument of Anglican clergymen that their financial position was of crucial importance to their social status in Upper Canadian society was far from novel. As early as 1801 Bishop Mountain had told the SPG that the financial needs of a clergyman ought to be considered in the light of "the rank of the society with which he ought to mix" and of "the appearance he should maintain."<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Strachan, in his 1830 Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis, quoted Chalmers's statement that clergymen must be characterized "by the genteel independence of their circumstances," and expressed his own opinion that "there has, for some years past, been a progress in the circumstances of the Clergy, towards obscurity and degradation,--let this be suffered to continue for a few years to come and their usefulness is annihilated, and their respectability is gone forever," a prospect that was all the more dreadful to contemplate when it was remembered that "religion will lose its estimation the moment that Ministers lose their influence &

<sup>77</sup> The Church, 3 Jan. 1839.

<sup>78</sup> SPG Journals, vol. 28, Jacob Mountain, 18 Dec. 1801.



respectability."<sup>79</sup>

Yet if this argument was already a familiar one, it certainly was advanced with special intensity after the announcement in 1834 of the new salary schedules for SPG missionaries. With a mounting sense of urgency it was now repeatedly explained that Anglican clergymen had to have an adequate income if they were to preserve their respectability as a class and retain their influence amongst all levels of Upper Canadian society. Typical, perhaps, was a Church editorial of 1841, in which it was remarked that an annual salary of £100 was hardly sufficient "to maintain the appearance of a gentleman," and that an Anglican clergyman would have to possess sufficient financial resources if he was "to be all things to all men," the implication of the latter point again being that a poverty-stricken clergy would accomplish little amongst the upper class.<sup>80</sup> The same emphasis on the relationship between the clergy's income and its social status was apparent in a Church editorial of 1848, which insisted that clergymen should have enough money to live lives of "comfort and respectability."<sup>81</sup> It was also apparent in Stuart's 1846 charge to the Archdeaconry of Kingston, in an anonymous individual's speech of the same year at a meeting of the Thornhill branch of the Church Society, and in an 1847 letter to the Church from one John Dawson, an Anglican churchwarden.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Strachan, Letter to Thomas Frankland Lewis, pp. 104-5.

<sup>80</sup> The Church, 17 July 1841.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 21 Jan. 1848.

<sup>82</sup> Stuart's charge and the speech at the Thornhill branch of the Church Society were published in the Church on 24 July 1846. The letters from Dawson appeared in the Church on 14 July 1847. The belief of:

The last two pieces of evidence are particularly interesting, for their common concern was the fact that a clergyman, who, as Dawson put it, was expected "to live like a gentleman," earned the same salary as a "mechanic" or labourer."<sup>83</sup>

It was this class consciousness on the part of Anglican clergymen that prevented them from embracing the voluntary system. From their viewpoint, the most decisive argument in favour of the policy of church establishment was that the voluntary system was incapable of providing them with the income they needed if they were to live like "gentlemen." They also felt that such a method of church financing, if applied to the Church of England, would undermine their independence by transforming them into public wards who, in order to eke out a miserable livelihood, would have to tailor their teachings to suit the tastes and whims of their congregations.

This position on the subject of the voluntary system, first advanced by Strachan in an 1812 article for the Kingston Gazette,<sup>84</sup> became a common refrain in the 1830s and 1840s, when the reduction of

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Anglican clergymen that their meagre incomes prevented them from living like gentlemen can also be seen in the following: Upper Canadian Traveling Missionary Fund reports, 1838-40 (9th and 24th letters from Thomas Green, and 2nd letter from George Petrie); SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/41, no. 489, Richard D'Olier, March 1835. In some cases this belief was well founded. James Coghlan was forced to resign his parish of Port Hope after the reduction in his SPG stipend had led to his imprisonment for debt (SPG Letters, Series C, Box IVA/40, no. 478, 1 Sept. 1834, 1 July 1837, and 27 Feb. 1838).

<sup>83</sup> The Church, 24 July 1846, and 14 July 1847..

<sup>84</sup> Kingston Gazette, "The Reckoner," 21 Apr. 1812.

SPG stipends and the success of the campaign for disestablishment made it seem clear that at some time in the near future the Church of England might be thrown on its own resources. Richard Cartwright wrote in 1836 that "a minister paid by his congregation & dependent upon them for his support must in nine cases out of ten preach to please . . . God preserve his Ministers from such a state of dependence."<sup>85</sup> A. N. Bethune expressed identical sentiments in his lectures at the Cobourg Theological Institute, informing his students that voluntarism turned a clergyman into a beggar, a prisoner of a "capricious multitude" who adapted his preaching to suit popular fancies.<sup>86</sup> Equally categorical were a number of statements in the Church. In 1846 the Church claimed that the voluntary system made the clergyman "subservient to the will and caprice of the richer and poorer portion of his flock at least, if he would maintain his living,"<sup>87</sup> and two years later it pointed to the sad state of the church in England, where an Anglican clergyman in a rural area was generally a "half-starved menial" who was frequently tempted to "flatter" the "foibles" of his "capricious, much exacting, miserly paymasters."<sup>88</sup>

Still, if Anglican clergymen were opposed to an exclusive reliance on the "voluntary principle," they never denied that the Church of England should supplement its state support with the voluntary contribu-

<sup>85</sup> Cartwright Papers, Cartwright to Conway Dobbs, 21 July 1836.

<sup>86</sup> Bethune's Manuscript Lecture Notes, Lectures XXII-III, "On the Lawfulness & Benefits of a Church Establishment."

<sup>87</sup> The Church, 26 June 1846.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 26 Oct. 1848.

tions of its members. This commitment to a limited form of voluntarism became especially strong when the political developments and SPG cutbacks of the 1830s cast a pall over the church's financial future. The most tangible result of the church's desire to make itself more self-reliant was the founding in 1830 of the SCCIPGDS, the objective of which was to encourage the laity to contribute financially to the cause of missionary expansion. Another was the launching of the campaign for synodical government, a campaign which, as has already been shown, was inspired by the conviction that laymen would be more generous in their support of their church as soon as they were given a voice in the management of ecclesiastical affairs.

Although Bishop Stewart failed to lend his support to the demand for an Anglican synod, he too was aware of the need to make the church less dependent on the assistance of the state. Soon after learning in May 1832 of the imperial government's decision to cut its ties with the SPG, he set out on an episcopal tour of his diocese, holding visitations in Montreal, Kingston, and York. In the charge delivered on these occasions he expressed his regret that the parliamentary grant to the SPG had been withdrawn, and urged his clergy to "represent to His Majesty's Government, the claims of the Church on their bounty and justice, especially considering the means for her support which are in their power." He also announced his intention "to issue a circular to the Clergy of this Diocese, directing them to point out to their congregations their obligations to honour the Lord with their substance, in giving a part of it towards the support of the services of the

sanctuary and those who perform them."<sup>89</sup>

In the late 1830s and early 1840s Anglican efforts to make the church more independent financially gained momentum. The Church argued in editorials of 1838, 1839, and 1840 that Anglican laymen were obliged to devote a portion of their worldly resources to the maintenance of their ministers and to the support of the church as a whole.<sup>90</sup> This argument was echoed in resolutions passed by the Eastern Clerical Association in 1840,<sup>91</sup> and in a sermon by Saltern Givins in St. Peter's Church, Cobourg, in 1841.<sup>92</sup> It also received concrete expression in Strachan's actions as bishop. Immediately after his elevation to the episcopacy in 1839, Strachan made it clear that in the future a clergyman would not be assigned to a parish until the congregation of that parish had agreed to build a parsonage, to set aside four to six acres for a church site and cemetery, and to supplement the basic SPG stipend of £100 with at least £50 in voluntary contributions.<sup>93</sup> A couple of years later, in 1842, he was instrumental in the creation of the Church

<sup>89</sup> A Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Quebec Delivered at the Visitation in Montreal, Lower Canada, 9th August, Kingston, Upper Canada, 23d August, York, Upper Canada, 5th September. In the year 1832 (Quebec, 1834), pp. 16-20.

<sup>90</sup> The Church, 24 March 1838, 13 July 1839 (editorial on a book by Henry Caswall entitled America and the American Church), and 11 Jan. 1840.

<sup>91</sup> The Church, 29 Feb. 1840.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 13 March 1841.

<sup>93</sup> Strachan announced these pre-conditions for the appointment of clergymen to parishes in a report to the SPG in 1840 (SPG Report, 1841, p. lxiv) and in a letter of 1840 (Strachan Letter Book, 1839-43, Strachan to Andrew Geddes, 20 Feb. 1840).

Society, which absorbed the SCCIPGDS and in the future played a crucial role in the church's struggle to become more self-supporting.

The Church Society was established in a mood of euphoria at a meeting of clergy and lay representatives in Toronto's City Hall on 28 April 1842. According to its constitution, its main objectives were the creation of an endowment for the bishopric of Toronto, the provision of salaries for archdeacons and clergymen, the building of a parsonage and a stone or brick church in every township, the establishment of Sunday Schools, and the accumulation of the funds that were necessary to appoint additional resident clergymen and travelling missionaries. It also declared its intention to distribute religious books and tracts, and to furnish financial assistance to young men studying for the ministry, to clergymen incapacitated by age or illness, and to the widows and orphans of deceased clergymen.<sup>94</sup>

Obviously, such a broad range of objectives would be achieved only if the Church Society was able to encourage the laity to contribute financially to its support. It was therefore no accident that laymen were allowed to occupy a dominant position at every level of the Church Society's organizational structure. Under Strachan, who as bishop of the diocese was President of the Church Society, were approximately fifty vice-presidents, well over half of whom were laymen, and a Central Board of Management composed of roughly fourteen clergymen and thirty-

<sup>94</sup> The Constitution and Objects of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto. Established 28 April, 1842 (Toronto, 1842), pp. 6-10.

seven laymen.<sup>95</sup> Control over the actual operation of the Church Society was vested neither in the vice-presidents, who appear to have been mere figureheads, nor in the Central Board of Management, but in a separate committee of nineteen laymen. Membership in the Church Society was open to any Anglican who was willing to pay a fee of 15s per annum or £12 10s for life. The payment of this fee enabled an individual to become a member of a Parochial Branch of the Church Society, a body whose affairs were conducted by a committee composed of the local clergyman and churchwardens. It also made him a member of one of the Church Society's District Associations, which were managed by the clergymen of the district and one or two laymen from each parish or mission. The clergymen and laymen on these district boards attended the general meeting of the Church Society that was held in June of each year. At this time the work of the parent organization was reviewed and the Central Board of Management was elected.<sup>96</sup>

Just as significant as the dominance of the laity in this elaborate and democratic organizational structure was the system adopted in the management of Church Society funds. The revenues of the Church Society were derived from the contributions of its members and from the sale of the Church of England's share of the clergy reserve lands. Obviously,

<sup>95</sup> It is impossible to give exact figures when analyzing the composition of the upper echelons of the Church Society, since the chairmen of the district associations, who could be either clergymen or laymen, were also vice-presidents and members of the Central Board of Management.

<sup>96</sup> The above information can be found in The Constitution and Objects of the Church Society, pp. iii-10.

if these two sources of revenue were placed at the disposal of the parochial branches of the Church Society, clergymen would inevitably become financially dependent on their congregations, a situation that from their perspective would have an adverse effect on their social status. To guard against this possibility, care was taken to ensure that the expenditure of all funds belonging to the Church Society was made the responsibility not of the parochial branches but of the district associations and of the central body. Consequently, the Lay Committee and the Central Board of Management had exclusive control over the expenditure of funds accruing from the sale of clergy reserve lands, while the expenditure of fees and donations collected at the local level was the joint responsibility of the District Associations and the parent organization in Toronto.<sup>97</sup>

The advantages of these arrangements are self-evident. Under the voluntary system a clergyman was dependent for his livelihood on the munificence of his congregation, which could decide at any time to reduce the amount of his salary. In contrast, the system adopted by the Church of England in the 1840s meant that a clergyman was far more dependent on the Church Society and its District Associations than on his own parishioners. This system was designed both to encourage the laity to contribute to the support of the church, and to use these contributions, together with the Church Society's other funds, in such a fashion so as to provide clergymen with a stable and adequate income,

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-10.



thus protecting their "independence" and their status in the community at large. Its significance lay in the fact that it was an attempt to reap the benefits of the "voluntary system," while at the same time avoiding the unfortunate consequences which so often ensued when individual congregations were directly responsible for the maintenance of their ministers.

The duty of the laity to assist the Anglican cause financially was frequently emphasized in the decade following the foundation of the Church Society. It was one of the subjects addressed in Strachan's charges of 1844, 1847, 1851, and 1854, and it was discussed at length in the Church Society's annual reports, in Church editorials, in Stuart's 1848 charge to the Archdeaconry of York, and in sermons preached by A. N. Bethune, Job Deacon, and Henry Patton.<sup>98</sup> As a review of the Church Society's record indicates, however, appeals to Anglican laity to do their share in the maintenance of the church met with mixed results. From one point of view, it is true, the Church Society was quite successful. Unlike the SCCIPGDS, the Church Society attracted its support not only from the Toronto élite but from all classes and regions: in 1854 the Church Society had approximately 4,000

<sup>98</sup> The Church editorials in question appeared on 24 and 31 Oct. 1850; the charges of Stuart and Bethune can be found in ibid. (28 Dec. 1848 and 1 Nov. 1849); for the sermons of Bethune and Deacon, see ibid., 7 Feb., 25 June, and 1 Aug. 1845; finally, the need for contributions to the support of the church was emphasized in Attachment to the Church of God. A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. James's, Toronto, on Wednesday, October 12th, 1853, at the visitation of the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Toronto. By the Reverend Henry Patton, Rural Dean and Rector of Cornwall (Toronto, 1853), pp. 20-21.

subscribers, the vast majority of whom lived outside of Toronto and made annual contributions of less than £1. Furthermore, whereas the funds of the SCCIPGDS ~~never~~ amounted to more than a few hundred pounds annually, the financial resources of the Church Society were considerable, if not overwhelming. Thanks to the generosity of its members, whose donations came in the form of both money and land, the central body's funds increased from £1,836 in 1843 to £5,419 in 1854, while its landed endowment, which stood at 12,124 acres in 1843, reached 27,976 acres in 1854.<sup>99</sup> The district branches, especially those in the western part of the province, showed a comparable increase in funds. By 1851 the total funds of the various district associations were as follows: Newcastle and Colborne District, £195; Midland District, £195; Niagara District, £305; Gore and Wellington District, £890; London, Huron, and Western District, £2,083.<sup>100</sup> Finally, it also has to be pointed out that the Society's fairly secure financial position enabled it to achieve some of the objectives that had been set out in the 1842 constitution. Funds were established for the endowment of the bishopric of Toronto; and the assistance of divinity students and the widows and orphans of deceased clergymen. More impressive still, the Church Society and its District Associations were able to support a total of twenty-two travelling missionaries in the period 1842 to 1854.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>99</sup> See Church Society reports, 1842-54.

<sup>100</sup> The Ninth Annual Report of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, for the year ending on the 31st March, 1851. (Cobourg, 1851), pp. 60-61.

<sup>101</sup> This figure is based on a study of Church Society reports.

From another point of view, however, the record of the Church Society was disappointing. In 1848 one clergyman rightly noted in a letter to the Church that the Church Society's total of 2,800 subscribers was nothing to boast about in a society where 32,101 individuals attended Anglican worship, and that in the past year only 67 of 190 churches and 102 of 210 stations had bothered to make collections in aid of the Church Society.<sup>102</sup> A few years later the Church Society itself presented an analysis of its popular support. A Select Committee of the Church Society composed of one layman, P. D. De Blaquière, and four clergymen, Stephen Lett, Dominick Blake, W. S. Darling, and T. S. Kennedy, reported in 1853 that the Church Society's subscription list, which then had 4,000 names, had to be regarded as highly unsatisfactory when it was recalled that the Church of England in Upper Canada possessed roughly 200,000 members and that 40,000 of these regularly attended Anglican services. It also reported the following facts: sixty missions had not established parochial branches; only forty-four of 129 missions had made all of the appointed collections on behalf of the Church Society; thirty-seven of eighty-one parochial branches had not fulfilled their obligation to direct one-quarter of their funds to the central body of the Church Society; and sixty-seven of 138 clergymen had failed to pay their annual fee of 15s to the Widows and Orphans Fund.<sup>103</sup> As a result of this lack of zeal on the part of

<sup>102</sup> The Church, 10 March 1848.

<sup>103</sup> Report of a Select Committee of the Church Society. Presented on Wednesday, February 2nd, 1853 (Toronto, 1853), pp. 1-9.

the clergy and laity, the Church Society was unable to accomplish its objective of providing Anglican clergymen with an adequate income.

Strachan had stated in 1842 that the Church Society should aim to raise clerical salaries to roughly £250 annually,<sup>104</sup> but by 1853 most clergymen still earned incomes ranging from £100 to £150.

Although the half-hearted response of Anglican laymen to the Church Society was hardly surprising given their long-standing reluctance to help the church financially, the attitude of clergymen was another matter and deserves a few words of explanation. It should first be emphasized that Anglican clergymen, without exception, were solidly behind the Church Society's efforts to make the Church of England more self-reliant by convincing the laity of its financial obligations to the cause of religion. The problem seems to have been not a lack of support for the idea of a financially independent Church of England but a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the management of the central body of the Church Society. In part, this dissatisfaction was due to an unfortunate occurrence in 1851, when Thomas Champion, Assistant Secretary of the Church Society, defaulted with £700.<sup>105</sup> But it was also due to more subjective factors, specifically to the manner in which certain Church Society policies were perceived by many clergymen and to the suspicion that the Church Society was a bastion of high Anglicanism.

<sup>104</sup> The Constitution and Objects of the Church Society, p. 12.

<sup>105</sup> This cause célèbre was mentioned in the Eleyenth Annual Report of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, for the year ending on the 31st March, 1853 (Cobourg, 1853), pp. 12-15. See also Thomas Fuller's Letter to the SPG in SPG Letters, "D," 14, vols. 8-9, 11 March 1852.

The importance of both these factors can be easily demonstrated. John Flood, for example, in an 1851 memorial to the SPG, expressed his opinion that "the Clergy Reserves Fund, instead of being applied as far as practicable in supporting ministers in poor settlements . . . seems to be expended in satisfying the demands of individuals who are in wealthy parishes & who have been receiving a large amount from their congregation"; and he added that "under such circumstances" he would not use his considerable political influence in Carleton County to return members to the House of Assembly who would protect the church's landed endowment.<sup>106</sup> Two other individuals made it clear that criticisms of the Church Society were directly related to the growing tension between "high church" and "low church" Anglicans. In a letter to the Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder, an evangelical newspaper established in Port Hope in 1851, a correspondent signing himself "X.Y.Z." drew attention to the possibility that the Tract and Book Depository of the Church Society were disseminating works of a "Romanizing tendency."<sup>107</sup> A more indirect assault on the theological complexion of the Church Society was made by John [redacted], a clergyman stationed in Belleville, in an 1849 letter to the SPG in which he complained angrily about a recent Church Society decision to appropriate a portion of the Widows and Orphans Fund for the payment of salaries to the Bishop and

<sup>106</sup> SPG Letters, "D," 14, vols. 8-9, Memoiral of John Flood, 6 Aug. 1851.

<sup>107</sup> The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder (hereafter referred to as the Echo), 18 Nov. 1851.

Archdeacon of York and for the support of the Cobourg Theological Institute. The thinly veiled message of this letter was that the Church Society's decision, by raising the spectre of an opulent ecclesiastical hierarchy and by endowing an educational institution whose principal was widely suspected of "puseyism," had antagonized evangelical clergymen. Grier praised his fellow clerics in the western section of the province, where evangelical sentiment was strongest, for their opposition to the Church Society's "fraud," and warned that "such a wrong will lessen our exertions for the various objects of the Church Society & drive some of us out of it altogether."<sup>108</sup>

The last aspect of the Church Society that requires attention is the extent to which the campaign to lay the foundations of a self-supporting Church of England was a reflection of the Anglican clergy's growing acceptance of the inevitability of disestablishment. On first glance, it might seem as though the Church Society was formed to assist the Church of England in its struggle to maintain its established status. This conclusion, indeed, would not be far off the mark, since reports of the Church Society, at both the central and local levels, are replete with proclamations denouncing politicians for their oppression of the church and calling on the Anglican community to exert itself to the utmost to preserve its educational privileges and its share of the clergy reserves.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, to view such proclama-

<sup>108</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box V/43, no. 509, John Grier, 26 March 1849.

<sup>109</sup> See The Constitution and Objects of the Church Society, pp. 22-26 and 47; The Twelfth Annual Report of the Church Society of the

tions as a case in point of the Anglican clergy's inability to adapt to a new religious and political order is to ignore other evidence which, in the long run, is far more significant. In this regard the most interesting evidence, paradoxically enough, was the work of the Church Society itself, for no organization would have been established to render the Anglican cause more independent financially if the clergy and a large number of laymen had not been convinced that the Church of England could no longer depend upon state support.

For further confirmation of the relationship between Anglican efforts to become less dependent on state assistance and the church's gradual acceptance of the inevitability of disestablishment, it is only necessary to examine the reports of the Church Society itself. For instance, certainly one of the most striking features of the reports of the central body of the Church Society was the fact that defences of the policy of church establishment were coupled with the view that the Church of England should pride itself not on its political position but on its mission to preach the Gospel to a religiously destitute society and on its character as a branch of the catholic and apostolic church. This changing perspective on the church's place in Upper Canadian society, with its underlying implication that some sectors of the

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Diocese of Toronto, for the year ending on the 31st March, 1854 (Cobourg, 1854), p. 18; The Thirteenth Annual Report of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, for the year ending on the 30th April, 1855 (Cobourg, 1855), pp. 11-12; St. George's Parochial Branch of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto. Report and Proceedings of the Annual Meeting Held in St. George's Church, on the 17th April, 1851 (Toronto, 1851), p. 10.

Anglican community were coming to regard the separation of church and state as unavoidable, was also evident in the 1847 report of the Gore and Wellington District Association of the Church Society. In this report it was argued that the Church of England, "instead of having been supported and encouraged, has been abandoned by the state, and . . . thrown upon her own resources, viz., the zeal, devotion, and liberality of her members."<sup>110</sup>

Even more instructive were declarations on the same theme made by private individuals. At the 1849 meeting of a parochial branch of the Church Society in St. George's Church, Toronto, a certain Mr. Cooper emphasized that the Church of England should reconcile itself to dis-establishment and concentrate on its religious responsibilities. Announcing that "the civil power throws us off, in one country as well as in the other" and that "it has pleased the ALMIGHTY to place us in this position," he proclaimed that "if each one will do his duty, then, with the blessing of Providence, although the Church of England in Canada may not stand as an Establishment--may not have the state for its patron, its protector or its friend, that Church may occupy a more Holy eminence still, it will be, among Christian communities, the foremost, in doing good."<sup>111</sup> In the following year, at a meeting in Toronto of the St. Paul's parochial branch of the Church Society, another layman, also with the name of Cooper, stated that the Upper Canadian church depended for its prosperity "not on state favour, or state endowments or political aid . . . but on the dutiful conduct of

<sup>110</sup> The Church, 19 Feb. 1847.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 22 March 1849.



her children and the blessing of God thereon."<sup>112</sup>

### III

The achievements of the movement for synodical government and the work of the Church Society were an immense boost to the fortunes of the Church of England. True, the advocates of a diocesan synod still had to overcome the lethargy of imperial authorities, the Anglican laity remained reluctant to contribute to the church's support, and the progress of the Church Society was hindered by internal dissension. Yet it cannot be denied that by the early 1850s the first steps had been taken to provide the laity with a more influential role in the organizational structure of the church and to turn the church itself into a self-governing and self-supporting institution.

There were important similarities between the Church Society and the campaign for a diocesan synod. Both were inspired by the belief that laymen would be more willing to assist the Anglican cause with their worldly resources if they were given a voice in the management of church affairs, and that the financial support of the laity was indispensable if clergymen were to have an income befitting their status as "gentlemen" and leading figures at the level of the local community. Further, all attempts to enhance the Church's economic and political independence shared a common perspective on the position of the church in Upper Canadian society. The idea of synodical government,

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 7 March 1850.

which was initially a reflection of the church's determination to defend its established status, became increasingly intertwined with anti-erastian sentiment and with a growing awareness of the inevitability of the separation of church and state. Similarly, the driving force behind the Church Society was the conviction that the church should accept disestablishment as a virtual fait accompli, turn its back on an oppressive state, and confine its energies to those religious tasks which were beyond the reach of political interference. Underlying this conviction was the image of the church as, to cite a phrase used in the 1847 report of the Church Society, "a city on a hill"<sup>113</sup>--a religious organization whose greatness was based not on its influence in the world of politics but on its divine commission to save souls and to act as a witness to the true faith.

<sup>113</sup> The Fifth Annual Report of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, for the year ending on the 31st March, 1857 (Cobourg, 1847), p. 28.

## VIII

### A HOUSE DIVIDED

The one major obstacle to the church's evolution into a "spiritual society" was the factional struggle that developed amongst the Anglican clergy after the emergence of the Oxford movement in the 1830s. The Church and a large number of clergymen, including Strachan, were enthusiastic champions of tractarian theology, a religious philosophy noted for its socio-political conservatism, its anti-erastianism, its intolerance of dissent, and its concept of the "beauty of holiness." But there were also several clergymen who denounced tractarianism as a form of "popery" and opposed all demands for a greater emphasis on ritual and ceremony in Anglican worship. This confrontation between high churchmen and evangelicals was serious enough when it took the form of vitriolic debates on theological subjects and open hostility towards the doctrinal position of the Church. It was even more serious when the two groups engaged in quarrels relating to the management of the church's internal affairs, and when theological controversy began to hinder the efforts of Strachan and others to establish a new "church university" and to avert the secularization of the Anglican share of the clergy reserves. By the early 1850s it had become apparent that almost fifteen years of internal strife had weakened the church's ability to respond as a united body to the threat of disestablishment. It had also become apparent that a divided Church of England lacked a

sense of its own religious character, something that it could not do without if it was to evolve into a primarily spiritual institution.

## I

The history of the Oxford movement can be briefly summarized. On 14 July 1833 John Keble, author of a celebrated book of poetry known as The Christian Year, declared in a sermon preached in the University Pulpit, Oxford, a sermon later published under the title of National Apostasy, that the government's recent decision to suppress several Irish bishoprics was an act of intolerable oppression and that Anglicans everywhere should rally to the defence of their church. Shortly afterwards, while plans were being made, principally by Arthur Palmer of Oriel, for the presentation of petitions on the subject of the Irish Church bill to the Archbishop of Canterbury, a small group of Oxford divines led by John Henry Newman and Richard Hurrell Froude began publication of the Tracts for the Times, a series of pamphlets on theological issues designed to strengthen the church's intellectual and spiritual foundations. The first tract, written by Newman himself, appeared on 9 September 1833, and roughly twenty others had followed by the end of that year. Contributors to the series included John Keble and Edward Pusey, an Oxford professor of divinity and one of the church's leading intellectual figures.

The tractarian movement was not to experience uninterrupted progress, however. Soon after the launching of the Tracts for the Times the suspicion arose that the proponents of the Oxford theology

were sympathetic to "romanism," a suspicion that was confirmed by the publication in 1836 of Froude's Remains, and by the appearance in 1839 of Keble's tract On the Mysticism of the Fathers in the Use and Interpretation of Scripture and of a tract by Isaac Williams entitled On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge. The turning point for the movement came with the publication in 1841 of Tract 90, in which Newman's growing concern about the theological tenability of the Anglican via media was indirectly revealed in his claim that the Thirty-Nine articles were perfectly compatible with Roman Catholic doctrine. University authorities promptly condemned this latest tractarian heresy, and Newman, by now the acknowledged leader of the Oxford movement, was forced to agree to the demand of his diocesan that the publication of the Tracts be discontinued. Two years later, after Pusey had been temporarily suspended from university preaching because of a controversial sermon on the subject of the Holy Eucharist, Newman resigned his living at St. Mary's, Oxford, and became a virtual recluse in his "monastery" at Littlemore. When in October 1845 he eventually decided, along with a few of his closest disciples, to be received into the Roman Catholic church, the tractarian movement at Oxford entered a period of irreversible decline, although its central theological principles gained increasing support in the nation at large.

The major reason for the impact of the tractarian movement is not difficult to discover, for at the basis of the Oxford theology was an anglo-catholic view of the church's religious character which was both intellectually sophisticated and emotionally compelling, qualities that were noticeably lacking in the brand of Anglicanism espoused by most

clerics in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Throughout the 1830s it was maintained in the Tracts for the Times, as it had been maintained long before by Hooker, the Caroline divines, and the non-jurors, that the Church of England was a branch of the catholic and apostolic church of Christ, that the doctrinal position of the church was noted for its conformity to the teachings of Christ and his Apostles, and that the church's episcopal government was sanctioned by ecclesiastical tradition and headed by bishops who stood in a line of direct succession from the twelve apostles. Other anglo-catholic doctrines expounded in the Tracts dealt with the church's authority as an institution, an authority that was embodied in its role as the intermediary between God and man in the salvation of souls; the responsibility of the church to act as a guide to the private judgment of the individual in the interpretation of scriptures; the nature of the sacraments not as mere symbols but as instruments of divine grace; the spiritually enriching effects of the Anglican liturgy and ritual; and the need for the church to insist upon a strict observance of its fasts and festivals, and of the various rubrics and ordinances found in the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles.

Linked to this anglo-catholic view of the church's religious character was an anti-erastian attitude towards the state connection, an attitude which marked a sharp break from previous Anglican political theory. According to Newman, Keble, Pusey, and their small band of followers, the most disturbing feature of the times was the civil government's policy of undermining the church's position as the established church of the realm while at the same time depriving it of

control over the management of its internal affairs. In these circumstances, they argued, the church had to grow less dependent on a sinful government if it was to protect itself against state oppression. It also had to make it clear, both to its own members and to the nation as a whole, that its authority was derived not from its alliance with the state but from its divine commission to uphold the pure and unadulterated Christianity of the apostolic age.<sup>1</sup>

The profound influence of tractarianism on the Church of England in Upper Canada was well illustrated in the case of Strachan. In the 1820s, as explained earlier, Strachan's growing concern about the religious and political turmoil of Upper Canadian life had undermined his allegiance to the basic tenets of eighteenth-century latitudinarianism and had led to his adoption of a high church theological position, a position which provided him with a battery of arguments for his ideological critique of dissent.<sup>2</sup> This changing perspective on the church's religious character was of decisive importance in determining his reaction to the Oxford movement. In an 1839 letter to Newman, written in London while he was awaiting consecration as the first bishop of the diocese of Toronto, Strachan requested

<sup>1</sup> The above section on the history and ideas of the Oxford movement is based on the following: Yngve Brilioth, The Anglican Revival: Studies in the Oxford Movement (London, 1933); R. W. Church, The Oxford Movement, Twelve Years, 1833-1845 (London, 1891); Geoffrey Faber, Oxford Apostles: A Character Study of the Oxford Movement (London, 1933); and John Henry Newman, Apologia Pro Vita Sua (London, 1888).

<sup>2</sup> See chapter four.

assistance "in making me personally known to yourself and your associates in your invaluable labours to protect the Church from Popery on the one hand & dissent on the other," adding that "it will be to me a source of permanent delight while travelling in the silent & primeval forests of my Diocese to have spent a single day nay even an hour with men whom I already love and admire for the inestimable services they have done to our beloved Church." He also revealed that the teachings of the tractarians had served not to inspire him with a view of the church with which he had previously been unfamiliar, but to strengthen his commitment to the high church principles he had embraced in the 1820s. Admitting that "when I went to Canada about forty years ago my notions respecting the Church--her Government, the efficacy of the blessed Sacraments the Succession etc [?] were crude & unsatisfactory," he noted that "it pleased God by reflexion rather than books of which I had few to improve my views on all these points" and expressed his joy at discovering in the Tracts "the results at which I had slowly and laboriously arrived carried still further and a flood of light let in upon them which I trust in God will never be extinguished."<sup>3</sup>

Although Strachan was unable to meet Newman or any of the other tractarians during his stay in England in 1839, he continued to lavish praise on the Oxford movement after his return to Upper Canada. In a second letter to Newman in 1840 he indicated that he had read tracts one to eighty, expressed "the high opinion which I cherish for you &

<sup>3</sup> Strachan Papers, Strachan to Newman, 13 Aug. 1839.



your Friends and of the vast benefit which your labours are conferring upon the church we love," and stated his approval, with a few reservations, of Froude's controversial Remains.<sup>4</sup> One year later, in his first episcopal charge, he announced that the tractarians, while sometimes guilty of doctrinal errors, "have been instrumental in reviving most important and essential truths, and in awakening the members of the Church to a higher estimate of her distinctive principles."<sup>5</sup>

After the publication of Tract 90 in 1841, Strachan's attitude towards the Oxford movement underwent a gradual change. In yet another letter to Newman in 1842 Strachan reiterated his belief that the "earlier Numbers [of the Tracts] wrought wonders for our Church and revived with a force never I trust to be diminished that Spirit of reverence for primitive truth & order which in many places seemed to be entirely forgotten," but he emphasized that he could not "accord with severe Strictures on our early reformers--or with the tone not always dutiful to my Mother Church of England--or with some palliations as they seem to me of the Church of Rome."<sup>6</sup> These reservations about certain aspects of the Oxford theology were not as evident in a sermon of 1843, in which Strachan declared that the "discordant materials" of the current religious awakening "will be gradually purged away" or combined & harmonised so as to favour through the influence of the Holy

<sup>4</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1839-43, Strachan to Newman, 22 May 1840.

<sup>5</sup> A Charge Delivered on the 9th September, 1841, pp. 17-18.

<sup>6</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1839-43, Strachan to Newman, 21 May 1842.

Spirit the movement heavenward which has been so happily begun."<sup>7</sup> But in the following year he again stated in an episcopal charge that while the tractarian movement deserved to be praised for its revival of anglo-catholic doctrines, it also had to be strongly condemned for "indulging a leaning towards Rome" and attempting "to gloss over or palliate" some of "her numerous and deadly corruptions."<sup>8</sup> When Newman converted to Roman Catholicism in 1845, Strachan told Henry Patton that the positive achievements of the tractarian movement did "not excuse the insidious proceedings of Mr. Newman & his Party--whose conduct appears to be a sort of insanity--we are well rid of such men they have proved themselves totally unequal [?] to the crisis and unworthy of confidence."<sup>9</sup> The same point of view was expressed in 1847, when Strachan reflected bitterly in his triennial charge that individuals whom the church

had treated as her favoured children . . . have turned against her with a simulation [?] almost without parallel in the history of delusion. They continued within her pale, sapping her foundations and undermining her influence; and when concealment was no longer practicable, they deserted to her most powerful enemy against which they had so frequently protested.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Strachan Sermons, "Through the tender Mercy of our God; whereby the day spring from on high hath visited us" (25 Dec. 1843).

<sup>8</sup> A Charge Delivered on the 10th June, 1844, pp. 53-54.

<sup>9</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Patton, 19 Nov. 1845.

<sup>10</sup> A Charge Delivered in June MDCCCXLVII, p. 35.

Yet, if Strachan became increasingly hostile towards the "romanizing" tendencies of the Oxford movement and eventually repudiated Newman as a traitor to the Anglican cause, he never left any doubt that the basic tenets of tractarian theology were identical to his own high church principles. In his charges of 1841, 1844, 1847, and 1851, and also in innumerable sermons preached both before and after Newman's defection, Strachan vigorously maintained that the church's claim to greatness rested on its character as a witness to the true faith. Underlying this argument was a set of ideas which, though long central to Strachan's theological perspective, had been reinforced by the Oxford movement's revival of the church's anglo-catholic heritage. Like the tractarians, Strachan portrayed the Church of England in the following terms: it was a branch of that catholic and apostolic church established in the first few centuries of the Christian era, when the message of the gospel had not been contaminated by Roman Catholic novelties and superstitions; its doctrinal principles, inherited from the apostolic age and restored to their original purity during the reformation, were equally removed from the errors of Rome and Geneva; its bishops were descendants of the apostles and transmitted their authority to the clergy through the rite of ordination, thereby enabling the church as a whole to pride itself upon its apostolic succession; its beautiful and edifying liturgy was without parallel in the Christian world; its sacraments, instituted by Christ himself, acted as a channel of grace between God and man; and its knowledge of ecclesiastical tradition

allowed it to play a key role in the interpretation of scriptures.<sup>11</sup>

Besides accepting the fundamental ideas of tractarian theology, Strachan made it clear that the Oxford movement had influenced him in two basic ways. In the first place, by expounding his high church principles on a more frequent basis than ever before, Strachan demonstrated conclusively that tractarianism had strengthened his determination to provide Upper Canadian Anglicans with a more coherent, comprehensive, and sophisticated view of the distinguishing characteristics

<sup>11</sup> See A Charge Delivered on the 9th September, 1841, pp. 13-18; A Charge Delivered on the 6th June, 1844, pp. 20-23 and 54-57; A Charge Delivered in June MDCCCXLVII, pp. 38-45; A Charge Delivered in May MDCCCLI, pp. 12-13. Also, the following sermons in the collection of Strachan Sermons at the AO: "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints (9 March 1834); "When the fulness of time was come God sent forth his Son made of a woman" (25 Dec. 1835); "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world" (10 Oct. 1838); "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ" (25 Dec. 1838); "And they continued steadfastly in breaking of bread and in prayers" (24 March 1839); "Ye are our Epistle written in our hearts known and read of all men" (22 Dec. 1839, first sermon as bishop); "The Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved" (28 May 1840); "Whereas there is among you Envy and Strife and Divisions are ye not Carnal and walk as men?" (11 July 1840, "Something from Newman"); "And Jesus came and spoke unto them saying all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (20 April 1841); "For I say unto you among those that are born of women there is not a greater Prophet than John the Baptist" (24 June 1841); "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine" (Dec. 1843); "But I speak concerning Christ and his Church" (10 Aug. 1845); "Thy Kingdom come" (12 June 1844); "Now when David knew that the writing was signed he went into his house" (Feb. 1845); "Hold fast the form of sound works" (15 May 1845); "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits even the God of our Salvation" (25 Sept. 1845); "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (17 Oct. 1847); "And the Lord said unto the Servant Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in" (12 Dec. 1847); "But continue them in the things which thou has learned and been assured of--knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (30 July 1848); "So we being many are one Body in Christ" (22 Oct. 1848).

of their own denomination. Secondly, after his appointment as bishop of Toronto in 1841, Strachan revealed his intellectual debt to the Oxford movement by stressing the need both for a strict observance of the church's rubrics and for a revival of liturgical practices that had fallen into disuse, subjects that he had largely ignored in earlier years. This new concern about religious "externals" was evident in Strachan's belief, expressed only privately, that the offertory prayer and the prayer for the Church Militant should again be used in Anglican worship.<sup>12</sup> It also received concrete expression in his support of the idea that the surplice rather than the gown should be worn in the pulpit, though he was careful to point out that this practice would not be insisted upon.<sup>13</sup> Even more significant were his instructions to the clergy in his episcopal charges to maintain proper standards of clerical dress, to conduct morning prayer services whenever it was possible, to administer communion on a monthly basis, to celebrate religious holidays and saints' days, and to perform baptisms and churchings during public worship rather than in private homes.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Bethune, ? Nov. 1845.

<sup>13</sup> A Charge Delivered on the 6th June, 1844, p. 30; Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to the Bishop of Montreal, 7 May 1845, and Strachan to John Fletcher, 27 Nov. 1848. Even this attitude of flexibility had its limits, however. When H. J. Grasett, an evangelical, refused to wear the surplice while preaching at the opening of St. George's Church, Toronto, Strachan did not bother to conceal his annoyance. See Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Grasett, 4 Sept. 1845; Strachan to Bethune, 7 Oct. 1845; and Strachan to William Boulton, 14 Oct. 1845.

<sup>14</sup> A Charge Delivered on the 9th September, 1841, pp. 23-24; A Charge Delivered on the 6th June, 1844, pp. 24-41; A Charge Delivered

The enormous influence of the Oxford movement was also apparent in the case of the Church. In August 1839 the Church's editor, A. N. Bethune, admitting that he had just begun to read the Tracts for the Times, stated that "the champions of the Oxford theology," though open to criticism for displaying a "tendency" to "erroneous" doctrines and resorting to "expressions and sentiments" which were "inexpedient" and "of questionable lawfulness," should be applauded for restoring "many a half-buried and forgotten truth to a prominence and importance, to which they have long been strangers."<sup>15</sup> This position on the subject of tractarianism, advanced again in an editorial of October 1839<sup>16</sup> was not even shaken by the publication of Tract 90. In 1841 the Church, still under the editorship of Bethune, criticized Tract 90 but at the same time acknowledged that Anglicans should be deeply grateful to the Oxford theologians for "rescuing from oblivion, and revealing to the religious inquirer many points in the Christian government, discipline, and usages of the early ages, which are of the highest value."<sup>17</sup> Early in the following year the paper's new editor, the layman John Kent, who shortly before had coupled an attack on Tract 90 with the admission that his knowledge of the Tracts as a whole was confined to three or

in June MDCCCXLVII, pp. 62-64.

<sup>15</sup> The Church, 24 Aug. 1839. It should also be noted that even as late as 1846 Bethune could still announce that he had read little of the Tracts for the Times and that his religious opinions had been formed before the birth of the Oxford movement (the Church, 18 Sept. 1846).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 19 Oct. 1839.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 15 May 1841.

four of the initial issues,<sup>18</sup> stated his opinion that the principles known collectively as "Puseyism" were in accord with the fundamental doctrines of the church.<sup>19</sup> He returned to the same theme in March 1843, when he again professed his ignorance of the Tracts for the Times, defended Puseyism against the charges of its critics, and noted with respect to the objectionable features of the Oxford theology that "some imperfections, and some extravagances & excesses" were naturally to be expected in the great "work of restoration and reformation" which the church was currently experiencing.<sup>20</sup>

As Newman moved inexorably forward on the journey that would eventually lead to Roman Catholicism, the Church repeatedly argued that the achievements of the tractarian movement could not be obscured by the doctrinal errors of a single individual. In an April 1843 editorial, Kent declared angrily that "the sooner the church is rid of such wavering Protestants as Mr. Newman, the sooner will her peace be restored," but he also expressed his confidence that "the same principles which, carried to excess, are luring Mr. Newman into Romanism, have, in the exercise of their legitimate and scriptural influence, restored thousands to the arms of the Church, and will, we firmly believe, still more promote the cause of unity and Apostolic order."<sup>21</sup> Bethune was even more generous in his praise of the Oxford movement after his return as editor in July 1843. In an editorial of August of that year he stated

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 26 Feb. 1842.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 4 April 1842.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 10 and 17 March 1843.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 28 April 1843.

that the tractarians, the "overwhelming majority" of whom were "sound and steadfast in the faith," had transformed the church from an institution which was "trampled upon, insulted and reviled" into one which raises "her head in majesty and strength."<sup>22</sup> Later, when Newman was admitted into the Roman Catholic Church, Bethune went so far as to intimate in another Church editorial that the "sin and peril of his calamity," a calamity occasioned by serious mental instability, could possibly have been avoided if worldly-minded elements had not offered factious opposition to the tractarian movement.<sup>23</sup> Even in 1847 Bethune could still assert in the Church that "the good that has been effected by this movement is now a matter of history: the contingent evils by which it has been attended, however deeply to be deplored, are as nothing in comparison with the benefits that have been achieved."<sup>24</sup>

As was true of Strachan, moreover, the Church's expressions of support for the Oxford movement were inseparable from its whole-hearted acceptance of the basic theological principles of tractarianism. Dozens of Church editorials in the period from the late 1830s to the early 1850s were detailed and lengthy disquisitions on the importance of the church's apostolic succession and episcopal government in setting it apart as a guardian of the true faith and in providing its clergy with a spiritual authority which other denominations lacked.<sup>25</sup> Countless

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 4 Aug. 1843.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 14 Nov. 1845.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 5 March 1847.

<sup>25</sup> See especially the Church, 24 June, 15 July, 5 Aug., and 26 Aug. 1837; 3 Feb. 1838; 16 Feb., 27 April, 8 June, 19 Oct. 1839; 28 March



other editorials, also revealing the influence of tractarian theology and the entire anglo-catholic tradition, emphasized the role of the sacraments in the communication of grace, the significance of the liturgy in the religious life of the faithful, the duty of the church to provide direction in the interpretation of scriptures, and the via media of Anglican doctrines between the fallacies of dissent and the "corruption" of Roman Catholicism.<sup>26</sup>

The Church's theological viewpoint was revealed in an equally striking fashion in editorials relating to the question of religious "externals." Like Strachan, the Church strongly believed in the importance of upholding Anglican rubrics and of reviving those liturgical practices that had been swept aside in the latitudinarian climate of the eighteenth century: in the 1840s it echoed Strachan's position on the practice of wearing the surplice while preaching, and called on clergymen to provide daily religious services whenever possible, to observe all religious fasts and festivals, to administer baptism during the public worship, to use the offertory prayer and the prayer for the Church Militant, and to celebrate the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist on a weekly basis.<sup>27</sup> It also argued that the church's "catholic"

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and 30 May 1840; 18 Sept., 31 Oct., 13 Nov., and 27 Nov. 1841; 1 Jan. and 2 Sept. 1842; 16 June 1843.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 24 June, 5 Aug., 19 Aug., and 28 Oct. 1837 ("The English Layman"); 29 July and 9 Nov. 1839; 23 Jan., 24 Oct., and 28 Nov. 1840 ("The English Layman"); 20 Feb., 29 May, 5 June, and 24 July 1843; 6 Dec. 1844; 28 March, 30 May, and 31 Oct. 1845; 20 Feb., 6 Nov., and 27 Nov. 1846.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 6 March 1841; 4 April and 2 Dec. 1842; 7 April and 26 May 1843; 4 April, 14 June, and 27 Nov. 1844; 7 Feb. and 19 Sept.

character could be strengthened by placing altars in the east end of churches and by using the word "altar" instead of the expression "holy table."<sup>28</sup>

Of even greater significance than the response of Strachan and the Church to tractarian theology was the growing popularity of anglo-catholic principles amongst the Anglican clergy, a popularity that was almost certainly due to the influence of the Oxford movement. Although it is impossible to calculate the exact number of clergymen who espoused anglo-catholic ideas, it does seem clear that high churchmen vastly outnumbered their low church counterparts. One scholar, Harry E. Turner, has concluded that by the late 1870s four-fifths of the clergy in the Diocese of Toronto could be described as high churchmen,<sup>29</sup> and, another study dealing with the influence of tractarianism in British North America in the second half of the nineteenth century has definitively established that while the high church and low church parties were equal in strength in the area west of Toronto, the former was the dominant force in the central and eastern regions.<sup>30</sup> True,

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1845; 17 April 1846; 11 Feb. 1848.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 21 Aug. 1841 and 10 Oct. 1845.

<sup>29</sup> Harry E. Turner, "The Evangelical Movement in the Church of England in the Diocese of Toronto, 1839-1879," M.A. Thesis, Toronto, 1959, p. 10.

<sup>30</sup> Christopher F. Heaton, "The Influence of the Oxford Movement upon the Church of England in Eastern and Central Canada, 1840-1900," Diss., Religious Studies, McGill, 1974, passim.

these studies cannot be used as a basis for conclusions about the state of Upper Canadian Anglicanism in the 1840s and early 1850s. But surely it is reasonable to assume that the position of the high church party in the post-1860 period was roughly similar to the position it occupied in earlier decades. That such an assumption is not unwarranted is indicated by a statement made by F. L. Osler, a leading evangelical, in a letter of 1846. In this letter Osler complained that "a large portion of our Clergy if not literally Puseyites are yet very ultra."<sup>31</sup>

The sermon literature of the post-rebellion period further attests to the broad base of support enjoyed by anglo-catholic principles in Upper Canada. From the late 1830s to the early 1850s, no fewer than seventeen sermons preached by eleven different clergymen dealt with themes which were central to tractarian theology and the high church tradition, notably the importance of apostolic succession and episcopal government as marks of the true church, the role of the sacraments in the communication of grace, and the responsibility of the Church of England to exert its authority as a spiritual institution in matters of doctrine and in the interpretation of the Bible.<sup>32</sup> One of the most

<sup>31</sup> Osler Papers, Series I-1, vol. 2; Osler to Procter, 22 June 1846.

<sup>32</sup> See the following: Arthur Palmer, "On the Nature and Extent of Christian Unity" (sermon preached at meeting of Western Clerical Association; published in the Church, 25 Aug. 1838); "The Christian Shepherd: An ordination sermon, preached in Christ Church, Montreal, on Sunday the 12th of August, and in St. James's Church, Toronto, on Sunday the 7th October, by the Rev. A. N. Bethune, Rector of Cobourg" (published in the Church, 10 Nov. 1838); sermon preached by James Padfield at meeting of Eastern Clerical Association (published in the Church, 13 April 1839); sermon preached by William Leeming at meeting of Niagara Clerical

thoughtful of these sermons was delivered by Henry Patton at Strachan's 1853 visitation. According to Patton, the Church of England was "the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth," the "divinely constituted instrument for the salvation of immortal souls," and the "most scriptural and perfect Branch" of the "Catholick and Apostolical Church." To substantiate his argument, he pointed to the "evangelical purity of Anglican doctrines," which were founded on the Word of God, and praised the church's willingness to avail itself of the "assistance to be derived in the interpretation of Scripture from the writings of those godly and learned men, who lived the nearest to

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Association (referred to in the Church, 9 Nov. 1839); sermon preached by John Grier at meeting of Midland Clerical Association (referred to in the Church, 15 Feb. 1840); sermon preached by Thomas Creen at meeting of Niagara Clerical Association (referred to in the Church, 29 Feb. 1840); A. E. Elliott, "A Sermon, Preached in Christ Church, Hamilton, on the 13th May, 1840, before the Western Clerical Society, and published at their request" (the Church, 25 July 1840); "The Church of God. A Sermon preached in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, on Thursday, Sept. 9, 1841, at the primary Visitation of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, by the Rev. A. N. Bethune, Rector of Cobourg and Chaplain to the Lord Bishop" (published in the Church, 18 Sept. 1841); Ask for the Old Paths. A Sermon Preached at the Opening of the New Church of St. James, at Dundas, in Upper Canada, on Sunday, December 31st, 1843: by James Beaven (Cobourg, 1843); "A Sermon, Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, on Thursday, June 6th, 1844, on Occasion of the Visitation of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese by the Rev. William Macaulay" (published in the Church, 28 June 1844); Arthur Palmer, "On the Difficulties and Encouragements of the Christian Ministry" (published in the Church, 16 and 23 July 1847); A. N. Bethune, A Charge Delivered on April 29, 1852; Henry Patton, Attachment to the Church of God; Scadding Sermons, A 108, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host" (25 Dec. 1848); ibid., A 106, "And it came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about" (n.d.); ibid., A 107, "The lip of Truth shall be established for ever" (n.d.); ibid., A 107, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (21 Oct. 1850).

the apostolic age." He then drew attention to the efficacy of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper in infusing divine grace into the souls of men, described the Anglican liturgy as an "unrivalled" work of art, and asserted that the church's three-tiered ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons dated to the time of the apostles.<sup>33</sup>

This anglo-catholic conception of the church's nature as a religious organization was also evident in the writings of James Beaven, in an 1844 pamphlet by Thomas Fuller, and in letters to the Church. Beaven advanced high church opinions on a number of subjects, including the function of the sacraments as channels of grace and the church's authority in doctrinal questions and in the interpretation of scriptures, in his Help to Catechising and his Catechism on the Thirty-Nine Articles; and the same opinions were set forth at greater length in his Life and Writings of Saint Irenaeus, a work which also revealed a strong belief in the value of patristic studies and in the importance of ecclesiastical tradition as the basis of the church's doctrinal position.<sup>34</sup> Fuller showed less intellectual sophistication in his 1844 pamphlet, The Roman Catholic Church Not the Mother Church of England, but he too displayed an essentially high church theological perspective in his argument that the Church of England at the time of the reforma-

<sup>33</sup> Patton, Attachment to the Church of God, pp. 5-14.

<sup>34</sup> A Catechism on the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (New York, 1853); A Help to Catechising for the Use of Clergymen, Schools, and Private Families (New York, 1843); An Account of the Life and Writings of S. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons and Martyr (London, 1841), pp. ix-x, xiv-xvi, 74-87, 147, 172-76.

tion, already in possession of the orders of the ministry established by Christ and his Apostles," "reformed herself and returned to the independence and the purity which she possessed before she had any connexion with Rome," thus "resuming her rank as an independent branch of the Church Catholic."<sup>35</sup> Similar views on the church's religious character were expressed in letters to the Church from Adam Townley, one "H.C." of Brockville, and Joseph Flanagan, a former Methodist who had become an Anglican clergyman.<sup>36</sup> Townley's letter deserves special attention, for it stressed "the necessity of Episcopacy and of an Apostolic succession in order to constitute a comple[te] and valid ministry," "the sacramental character of the Church as the Body and Bride of Christ," and the church's role as "the only Divinely appointed keeper and interpreter of Holy Writ . . . the voucher of its authenticity and genuineness, the interpreter of its doctrinal mysteries, and the authorized dispenser of its promised salvation and blessings."<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps the most impressive testimony to the influence of the Oxford movement in Upper Canada was the fact that a number of Anglican clergymen, like Strachan and the Church, revealed a growing interest in the question of ecclesiastical rubrics. In 1842 a correspondent of

<sup>35</sup> The Roman Catholic Church Not the Mother Church of England; or the Church of England, the Church Originally Planted in England (1844), pp. 10-12.

<sup>36</sup> The Church, 3 July 1851, 6 April 1839, 28 March 1840.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 3 July 1851. For yet another exposition of high church doctrines, see A Memorial of the Reverend William Honeywood Ripley . . . Being the sermon preached in Trinity Church . . . Oct. the 28th, 1849. By Henry Scadding (Toronto, 1849).

the Church signing himself "A Presbyter of the Diocese of Toronto" expressed his unqualified agreement with the rubrical principles laid down in Strachan's recent charge, explaining that he had long been "deeply convinced of the great disadvantage under which the Church labours from the want of due attention to the Rubrics, and consequently of uniformity in the performance of her public services."<sup>38</sup> This point of view, also put forward in letters to the Church in the early 1840s from "A Catholic Presbyter," "Prester Ergenia," and "You know who,"<sup>39</sup> underlay the attempts of many individuals in the post-rebellion period to revive various religious practices that had fallen by the wayside. In 1841, for example, at a meeting of the Eastern Clerical Association, seven clergymen discussed the obligation of Anglicans to observe the appointed fasts and festivals of the church,<sup>40</sup> a subject that was later expanded upon in an 1843 sermon delivered by T. S. Kennedy before the Midland Clerical Association and in Henry Patton's 1851 pamphlet, Questions on the Chief Festivals and Holy Days.<sup>41</sup> Two other clergymen, G. M. Armstrong of Louth and William Shaw of Emily, together with a few Church correspondents who concealed their identity by using pseudonyms, gave their support to the idea of a distinctive form of clerical dress

<sup>38</sup> The Church, 2 Dec. 1842.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 26 March 1842, 13 Jan., and 24 Feb. 1843.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 20 March 1841.

<sup>41</sup> A reference to Kennedy's sermon can be found in the 10 March 1843 issue of the Church; Questions on the Chief Festivals and Holy Days . . . By the Rev. Henry Patton (Toronto, 1851).

and to such practices as daily religious services, wearing the surplice while preaching, the celebration of the Eucharist on a weekly basis, the churching of women, and the performance of baptisms and marriages in churches rather than in private homes.<sup>42</sup>

Related to this preoccupation with church rubrics was a tendency on the part of many Anglicans to place increased emphasis on the role of ritual in religious worship, a tendency which was additional proof of the influence of tractarianism in Upper Canadian society. While Strachan and the Church had largely ignored the ritualist movement that had arisen in England as part and parcel of the anglo-catholic revival, several clergymen were joined by a large number of Church correspondents in calling for a variety of alterations in the format of religious worship and in the architectural design of churches. These alterations, some of which were borrowed from Roman Catholicism, were designed to enhance the beauty and mysticism of Anglican religion, thereby strengthening the church's ability to act as a channel of communication between God and man. With this end in view, eleven of the twelve clergymen assembled at a meeting of the Western Clerical Association in 1838 gave their approval to the "ancient and edifying practice" of bowing at the name of Jesus during the recitation of the Apostles Creed,<sup>43</sup> and in an 1852 letter to the Church a correspondent with the

<sup>42</sup> See SPG Letters, Series C, Box IV/45, no. 552, William Shaw, 13 April 1841; and Box IV/43, no. 517, G. M. Armstrong, 20 April 1841; also letters to the Church, 26 March and 25 Nov. 1842, and 13 Jan. 1843 from "A Catholic Presbyter," "Prester Ergenia," and "Anglicanus."

<sup>43</sup> The Church, 18 Aug. 1838.



pseudonym "Anglo-Catholic" suggested that an Anglican minister should conduct religious services with his back to the congregation.<sup>44</sup> Other changes in the church's religious "style" that were recommended, and in some cases actually implemented, in the post-rebellion period included the following: the presence of baptismal fonts inside the entrances of churches; the use of crosses both in the interior of churches and on the tops of steeples; the placing of candlesticks on altars; the erection of rood screens to separate the minister and congregation during public worship; the decoration of churches with images and sculptures; and the printing of the monogram "I.H.S." on clerical vestments and altar cloths.<sup>45</sup>

Several factors have to be taken into account if the impact of tractarianism on the church in Upper Canada is to be adequately explained. One of the most basic of these factors was the relationship of tractarian theology to the Anglican critique of dissent. In the 1820s and 1830s Strachan had repeatedly denounced the "sectaries" as promoters of "enthusiasm" and as schismatics from a branch of the catholic and apostolic church, a church whose episcopal government, doctrinal purity, and edifying liturgy marked it out as God's chosen

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 11 April 1852.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 13 April 1839 (sermon by James Padfield at meeting of Eastern Clerical Association), 23 Nov. 1839 (letter from Henry Scadding), 24 Jan. 1850 (letter from a layman), 22 Feb. 1849 (letter from "A.B."); Scadding Sermons, A 106, "And David built there an Altar unto the Lord" (n.d.). In some cases, innovations in Anglican ritual led to conflicts between clergymen and their congregations. See the F. J. Lundy diaries, 11 June and 9 July 1850.

instrument in the salvation of souls.<sup>46</sup> This high church attitude towards dissenting denominations remained a significant feature of Strachan's ideological make-up after the emergence of the Oxford movement. In the period following the rebellion, Strachan made it clear that the anglo-catholic revival had strengthened his determination to discredit the theological position of the Church of England's sectarian rivals: in three sermons preached throughout the 1840s and 1850s, Strachan emphasized that secession from the Church of England was a sinful act, that "sectarianism" had transformed the Christian church into a collection of warring fragments, and that dissenters would have to face the consequences of divine wrath if they continued in their evil ways.<sup>47</sup> What was even more important, these various expressions of religious intolerance pointed to one of the main motivating factors behind Strachan's response to the Oxford movement. Specifically, they demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that tractarianism attracted Strachan's support because its central tenets had confirmed his own objections to the theological basis of dissent.

The connection between tractarian theology and Anglican intolerance was not typified solely by Strachan. After the birth of the

<sup>46</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>47</sup> Strachan Sermons: "The Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved" (throughout 1840 and 1842); "Whereas there is among you Envy and Strife and Division are ye not Carnal and walk as men" (15 July 1840; 6 June, 3 Aug. 1841; September 1842; 23 Sept. and 30 Sept. 1842; 3 Aug. 1851); "And the Lord said unto the Servant Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in" (throughout 1847 and 1849).

Oxford movement, what had previously been Strachan's one-man campaign against dissent was assisted by the efforts of other Anglican clergymen and of the Church newspaper. The idea that dissenters were sinful schismatics was now advanced in countless Church editorials and in sermons and pamphlets published by James Clarke, William Macaulay, Adam Elliott, J. A. Mulock, Henry Scadding, Arthur Palmer, and A. N. Bethune.<sup>48</sup> Further, as was true in the case of Strachan, these declarations on the subject of dissent served to underline the fact that tractarian theology and the Anglican attitude towards "sectarianism" were intimately related. At one level, the above editorials, sermons, and pamphlets indicated that the tractarian revival of anglo-catholic principles had had the

<sup>48</sup> The Church, 8 June 1839; 30 May and 31 Oct. 1840; 13 March and 18 Sept. 1841; 1 Jan. and 26 March 1842; 22 Sept. and 6 Oct. 1843; 1 March 1844; 6 June, 15 Aug., and 12 Sept. 1845. Also: a sermon preached by Arthur Palmer at a meeting of the Western Clerical Association (the Church, 25 Aug. 1838); a sermon preached by A. E. Elliott at a meeting of the Western Clerical Association (the Church, 25 July 1840); A. Bethune, "The Church of God," (the Church, 18 Sept. 1841); Address to a Large and Respectable Body of Freemasons, on their laying the Corner Stone of St. George's Lodge, no. 15, and of Several Other Lodges (St. Catherine's, U.C., 1835); A Sermon, Preached by the Rev. W. Macaulay, Rector of St. Mary Magdalene, Picton, Upper Canada, on Monday, March 20th, 1837, on occasion of the funeral of Mrs. Catherine Wright (Picton, 1837); Scadding Sermons, A 107, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord" (1844); *ibid.*, A 106, "All the abominations that were spread in the Land of Judah" (n.d.); *ibid.*, A 107, "The lip of truth shall be established for ever" (n.d.); *ibid.*, A 106, "And it came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about" (n.d.); *ibid.*, A 107, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (21 Oct. 1850); *ibid.*, A 107, "Lease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of" (1 Dec. 1850). Finally, see Methodism unmasked, in a Review of "A Vindication of the Methodist Church" (so called). "In a Pastoral Address." By Benjamin Nankevell, Wesleyan Minister. By J. A. Mulock, Presbyterian of the Church of England (Carleton Place; Ogdensburgh, N.Y., 1850).

effect of encouraging several clergymen to speak out publicly on the theological fallacies of dissent. At another level, the same writings made it plain that tractarianism gained broad appeal in Upper Canada because it confirmed many traditional Anglican prejudices towards dissenting denominations while at the same time providing some clergymen with a distinctive view of the church's religious character.<sup>49</sup>

Another reason for the influence of the Oxford movement on the Upper Canadian church was the fact that certain tractarian doctrines coincided perfectly with the conservative ideology of Anglican clergymen. This was particularly true of the tractarian argument that Anglican bishops and clergymen traced their authority to the twelve apostles and that the hierarchical structure of the church's internal organization was sanctioned by ecclesiastical tradition. From the standpoint of a conservative-minded Anglican clergyman, the theory of apostolic succession was based on the principle that secular and spiritual leaders owed their position not to the multitude but to the will of God himself; A. N. Bethune could thus declare in an 1838 sermon, later published as The Christian Shepherd, that both kings and Church of England ministers obtained their "commission" from the "same heavenly source," rather than from the voice of the people.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, in the eyes of Upper Canadian anglo-catholics, the tractarian commitment to the church's three-tiered government of bishops, priests, and deacons

<sup>49</sup> The last two points are well illustrated in Arthur Palmer's sermon, cited above.

<sup>50</sup> The Church, 10 Nov. 1838.

had a twofold significance: it served to emphasize that the Church of England's hierarchical structure was a reflection of the graded social order in which it operated; and it underlined the basic truth that a church which accepted the "episcopal principle" also accepted class distinctions as the work of God. With respect to the second point, an article published in an 1838 issue of the Church is especially interesting. In this article, entitled "The Want of a Bishop in Upper Canada," Kent drew a direct connection between episcopacy and the advantages of the "Great Chain of Being." As he put it:

were there no social inequalities in the world, men would quickly forget their allegiance to God, and seeing no one in their pilgrimage below uplifted beyond their own level, would rebel in their hearts against the majesty of heaven. Thus, in civil polity, man may be considered as a monarchial;--and, in ecclesiastical government, as an episcopal,--being. . . . In Episcopacy . . . we not only conform to the rule of Scripture, and the apostolical practice, but we act in accordance with the laws of nature herself. We admit, in effect, what none will deny in the abstract, that there is a diversity of gifts among men,--that some are born to command, and others to obey; that as, in the scale of creation, there is a descending link from man to the most sagacious and semi-human of the irrational tribes, and from thence downwards to the scarcely animated zoophyte, so among men, even in a state of refined civilization, there exist a variety of intellectual gifts which can only be brought into full and beneficial operation by a corresponding diversity of situations, each ranking below the other.<sup>51</sup>

The most important reason for the popularity of tractarian principles in Upper Canada was intertwined with the church's perception of its position in relation to the state. As was pointed out earlier, the Oxford movement was committed to the view that the Church of

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 19 May 1838 ("The English Layman").

England should respond to the changing conditions of political life by becoming less dependent on an apostate civil government, and by reminding its own members that its authority was based not on its ties with the state but on its character as a branch of the catholic and apostolic church. This frame of mind could not have been more suited to the needs of the Church of England in Upper Canada. To begin with, the anti-erastian attitude of the tractarians struck a responsive chord in the hearts of those Upper Canadian Anglicans who were displaying a growing hostility towards the state connection. Equally important, the tractarian claim that the church's relationship with the state had no bearing whatsoever on its greatness as a religious institution was a source of much consolation to the Upper Canadian clergy. When it became increasingly apparent in the late 1840s and early 1850s that disestablishment was only a matter of time, an Anglican high churchman could find solace in the tractarian argument that the church's loss of its temporal privileges would have little effect on its ability to act as a witness to the true faith. The Church could accordingly announce in 1846 that although "the state, in its liberality, has well nigh stripped us of all the adventitious advantages connected with the implied alliance," it should not be forgotten that "no earthly power, much less an earthly opposition or railing, can divest the church" of her "holy character and spiritual pre-eminence--it is hers by gift of her Divine head."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 20 Nov. 1846.

All this raises an interesting question concerning the connection between tractarianism and the growing introversion of the Upper Canadian church. In previous chapters it has been frequently pointed out that the campaign for disestablishment after the mid-1830s gradually gave rise to the view that the Church of England should sever its ties with a hostile state and become a primarily spiritual institution. It must now be emphasized that tractarianism gained considerable support in Upper Canada partly because it provided many clergymen with a sense of religious mission, something that was indispensable if the church as a whole was to turn its back on the state and evolve into a "spiritual society." The importance of this sense of mission to the church's changing self-image was particularly evident in Strachan's 1837 address to the Archdeaconry of York. On that occasion, as noted in chapter five, Strachan declared that the Church of England should respond to the loss of its "temporalities" by devoting itself to its responsibilities as a "Missionary Church."<sup>53</sup> Yet he also made it obvious that he could never have looked forward with confidence to the church's future as a "missionary organization" if the Oxford movement had not inspired him with a compelling view of the Anglican mission in Upper Canadian society. After announcing that it was through the Church of England that Upper Canadians could "transform this beautiful country to a moral garden," he went on to state that

<sup>53</sup> See chapter five, pp. 189-91.

our Apostolical church seems to stand alone, as a beacon on a hill, emitting a clear and steady light, for the direction of the world; and her wisdom in adhering, through good report and evil report, to the doctrines and principles of the primitive age will yet appear in this growing Province, and be fully admitted by many who now consider such adherence to be little else than the extreme of bigotry and folly.<sup>54</sup>

## II

Although tractarianism was ideally suited to the needs and temper of the Upper Canadian church, it also produced a serious rift in the Anglican community. In the 1840s and early 1850s high churchmen and evangelicals quarrelled bitterly not only over a variety of theological issues, but also over questions relating both to the authority of the bishop in ecclesiastical government and to the response of the church to developments in the political arena. This internal strife, besides undermining the church's efforts to maintain a united front in the face of its enemies, cast a pall of uncertainty over the future of Anglicanism in the religious life of Upper Canada. By 1854 it even seemed doubtful whether an internally divided Church of England would be able to realize its ambition of evolving into a primarily spiritual organization.

The root cause of the factionalism of the 1840s and early 1850s was the theological ambiguity of the Anglican via media. The Elizabethan settlement had provided the Church of England with a doctrinal position that was a delicate balance of Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and

<sup>54</sup> Address to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of York, pp. 9-11.



Calvinist ideas. Although this compromise was certainly ingenious, its lack of intellectual precision meant that the Anglican religious message could be interpreted in a variety of ways. The inevitable result was that the Church of England from the sixteenth century onwards was internally divided along theological lines. These internal divisions were particularly noticeable in the period after the emergence of the Oxford movement. At that time the church was split into three groups. There was a small and increasingly isolated "broad church" faction that adhered to the ideas of eighteenth-century latitudinarianism; there was a high church party, itself divided between the supporters of tractarianism and a more orthodox and conservative wing, which espoused the "catholic" principles of Hooker, the Caroline divines, and the non-jurors; and there was a large and influential body of low churchmen who stressed the Protestant heritage of the Anglican faith, and who traced their intellectual ancestry to the puritanism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and to the evangelical movement which had arisen in the 1770s, 1780s, and 1790s.

The theological differences between low church and high church Anglicanism were numerous. First of all, low church Anglicanism placed far more emphasis on the "reformed" nature of the Anglican faith than on the Church of England's character as a branch of the catholic and apostolic church. Secondly, evangelical Anglicans were primarily concerned with the spiritual welfare of the individual rather than with the religious life of the entire body of faithful. Thirdly, the central tenet of low church theology, the doctrine of justification through faith alone, went hand in hand with a tendency to downplay the

importance of the visible church as an intermediary between God and man in the process of salvation. Finally, the low church position on several specific theological points and on the subject of the Church of England's religious "style" was firmly grounded on the doctrinal principles of the reformation. According to the low church tradition, episcopacy was not a mark of the true church but a matter of administrative convenience; Christians had the right to exercise their private judgment in theological questions and in the interpretation of scriptures without being restrained by the authority of the church; sacraments were commemorative symbols rather than channels of divine grace; ritualism and ceremonialism in religious worship savoured of "popish corruption" and should be avoided at all costs; and the sermon was the centrepiece of the Anglican liturgy.<sup>55</sup>

In Upper Canada, the cause of low church Anglicanism had certain regional and ethnic characteristics which deserve careful attention. After the early 1830s Upper Canada, and in particular the area between Toronto and the Thames River, became the home of a large number of clergymen who had been born and educated in Ireland, a country whose brand of Anglicanism had always been noted for its intense antipathy

<sup>55</sup> On Anglican evangelicalism, see: L. E. Elliott-Binns, The Evangelical Movement in the English Church (London, 1928); G. R. Bal-  
leine, History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England (Lon-  
don, 1909); Charles J. Abbey and John H. Overton, The English Church  
in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1902), pp. 313-403; F. W. Cornish,  
The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, 2 vols. (London, 1910),  
I, 1-34; S. C. Carpenter, Eighteenth Century Church and People (London,  
1959), pp. 17-36; and Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England:  
From Watts and Wesley to Maurice, 1690-1850, pp. 210-40.

towards Roman Catholicism and its low church theological orientation.<sup>56</sup> It was therefore hardly surprising that evangelical ideas were especially prevalent in the western section of the province and amongst those clergymen of Irish origin. In the post-rebellion period, there were thirty-three clergymen who could be definitely described as evangelicals.<sup>57</sup> Of this group, four (G. O. Stuart, R. D. Cartwright, Saltern Givins, and William Herchmer) had long associations with Upper Canada--a fact which serves as a reminder that low church Anglicanism, like the "high churchism" espoused by Strachan, pre-dated the birth of the Oxford movement. Even more important, fifteen of these clergymen resided west of Toronto, four were stationed in the Kingston area, and the remainder were scattered throughout the province.<sup>58</sup> Further, of

<sup>56</sup> Walter Alison Phillips, ed., History of the Church of Ireland, Vol. III: The Modern Church (London, 1933), pp. 325-59 and 381.

<sup>57</sup> The following "litmus test" was used in determining which clergymen were evangelicals: all clergymen who expressed open hostility to tractarianism and/or took the low church side in the religious controversies of the 1840s and 1850s have been placed within the evangelical camp. Using this rule of thumb, the thirty-three clergymen identified here as evangelicals were: Samuel Armour, A. F. Atkinson, R. D. Cartwright, B. Cronyn, H. J. Grasett, Francis Evans, Richard Flood, Thomas Green, R. V. Rogers, George Mortimer, Saltern Givins, Jonathan Shortt, William Herchmer, A. St. George Caulfield, Michael Boomer, E. C. Elwood, William Bleasdel, F. A. O'Meara, C. C. Brough, S. B. Ardagh, F. L. Osler, H. C. Cooper, B. C. Hill, C. B. Gribble, Alexander Sanson, [R.?] Revell, Hannibal Mulkins, E. C. Bower, G. O. Stuart, F. W. Sandys, John Fletcher, T. W. Marsh, and Alexander Pyne. For profiles of five evangelical clergymen, see Osler Papers (Series I-1, vol. 2), Diaries and Journals ("Sketch of My Life"); Reminiscences of Colonial Life and Missionary Adventure in both Hemispheres. By the Rev. Alex. Pyne, A.M. (London, 1875); The Life and Letters of the Rev. George Mortimer; SPG Letters, "G mss," vol. 3, Journals of the Upper Canada Clergy Society, Journal of B. C. Hill; and Rev. S. J. Boddy, A Brief Memoir of the Rev. Samuel B. Ardagh (Toronto, 1874).

<sup>58</sup> The fifteen clergymen stationed west of Toronto were: A. F. Atkinson (St. Catherine's), Benjamin Cronyn (London), Francis Evans

the same group of thirty-three evangelicals, twelve had been born in Ireland, and eleven of these had received their educational training at Trinity College, Dublin, a bastion of low church Anglicanism.<sup>59</sup>

Strachan could accordingly declare as early as 1834 in a letter to the Archbishop of Dublin that "with the exception of one or two clerical Gentlemen introduced to me by your Grace the Clergymen who come to this country from Ireland are strongly Calvinistic in their sermons & go much farther than those who are called Evangelical in England." He then asserted that "these persons are so wild in their doctrines & unguarded in their statements that I am really afraid to allowing [sic] them to preach for they seem never to have known the distinctive principles of the Church of England or to have thrown them away on the voyage."<sup>60</sup>

Another interesting feature of the theological climate of the post-rebellion period was the strength of evangelicalism amongst the Anglican laity. Harry E. Turner has estimated, in a study already

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(Simcoe), Richard Flood (Thames River), Thomas Green (London District), A. St. George Caulfield (St. Thomas), Michael Boomer (Galt), E. C. Elwood (Goderich), F. A. O'Meara (Lake Huron), B. C. Hill (Niagara), C. B. Gribble (Dunnville), F. W. Sandys (Chatham), John Fletcher (Mono), T. W. Marsh (Elora), Alexander Pyne (Lake St. Clair). The four evangelicals in the Kingston area were R. D. Cartwright, R. V. Rogers, W. Herchmer, and G. O. Stuart.

<sup>59</sup> Those born in Ireland were: Samuel Armour, A. F. Atkinson, Benjamin Cronyn, Francis Evans, Thomas Green, A. St. George Caulfield, Michael Boomer, E. C. Elwood, F. A. O'Meara, C. C. Brough, S. B. Ardagh, and Alexander Pyne. Armour received his educational training at the University of Glasgow,

<sup>60</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1827-39, Strachan to the Archbishop of Dublin, 28 April 1834.

cited, that in the diocese of Toronto in the period from the late 1850s to the 1870s the overwhelming majority of laymen active in church affairs were evangelicals, and he leaves little doubt in the course of his analysis that the major reason for this state of affairs was the violent antipathy towards Roman Catholicism that pervaded Upper Canadian society and was particularly strong in middle-class circles in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup> In support of this claim, it should be noted that even in the years before the secularization of the clergy reserves, evangelical clergymen themselves operated on the assumption that the laity was sympathetic to their cause. As will be shown presently, the evangelical campaign for a more democratic form of ecclesiastical government was partly based on the belief that the influence of tractarianism could be checked only if the laity, or rather those middle-class laymen likely to be interested in such matters, were given a larger voice in the church's internal affairs. The accuracy of their analysis of the religious sentiments of the Anglican faithful was demonstrated in the 1857 episcopal election in the new diocese of Huron. In that election the votes of clergymen were almost equally divided between A. N. Bethune, the high church candidate, and Benjamin Cronyn, the leader of the evangelical forces of western Upper Canada. The latter's popularity amongst the lay delegates, however, proved decisive. Twenty-three laymen voted for Cronyn, while

<sup>61</sup> Turner, "The Evangelical Movement in the Church of England in the Diocese of Toronto," passim.

only ten voted for Bethune.<sup>62</sup>

Part of the conflict between high and low churchmen revolved around the Church of England's relations with inter-denominational organizations. While the anglo-catholic party frequently made known its view that Anglicans should remain aloof from all organizations which were open to rival denominations,<sup>63</sup> evangelical clergymen tended to adopt a more tolerant attitude. Ignoring the criticisms of Strachan and the Church,<sup>64</sup> evangelicals took the position that since the Church of England was an essentially "protestant" denomination, Anglicans should be encouraged to cooperate with Presbyterians and dissenters in ventures that would prove beneficial both to the cause of religion and to the welfare of society.<sup>65</sup> Acting on this belief, the low church

<sup>62</sup> See S. W. Horall, "The Clergy and the Election of Bishop Cronyn," OH, LVIII (December 1966), 205-20; and Headon, "The Influence of the Oxford Movement upon the Church of England in Eastern and Central Canada, 1840-1900," p. 190. Horall claims that twenty clergymen voted for Bethune, while Headon has increased this total to twenty-three.

<sup>63</sup> The Church, 13 Feb. 1841 (report of the Midland Clerical Association); Strachan Letter Book, 1839-43, Strachan to G. J. Mountain, 6 July 1841; the Church, 25 Nov. 1842 (reference to the Rev. A. Williams's refusal to join inter-denominational societies); ibid., 24 Jan. 1845 (letter from J. Wilson); Strachan, A Charge Delivered on the 9th September, 1841, pp. 29-31; the Church, 21 May 1842 (letter from "E"); ibid., 26 Aug. 1842 and 31 March 1843.

<sup>64</sup> See Strachan Letter Book, 1839-43, Strachan to Wade, 27 Jan. 1841; the Church, 16 Sept. 1842 and 10 Feb. 1843; Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to R. V. Rogers, 12 April 1845; ibid., Strachan to R. Smanklin, 18 Nov. 1848.

<sup>65</sup> See Joseph Harris, A Letter to the Hon. & Ven. Archdeacon Strachan in Reply to Some Passages in his "Letter to Dr. Chalmers on the Life and Character of Bishop Hobart," Respecting the Principles and Effects of the Bible Society (York, 1833); the Church, 30 April 1842 (letter from T. E. Welby); ibid., 31 March 1843 (letter from "Candidus").

party gave its support to temperance societies and Sunday School Unions, and to such organizations as the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society, the Evangelical Alliance, the Scripture Readers Association, the Irish Church Missions, and the Anti-Slavery Association. The clergymen involved in these various organizations included Joseph Harris, R. V. Rogers, T. E. Welby, Alexander Sanson, John Grieg, E. C. Bower, William David, J. A. Mulock, Benjamin Cronyn, Hannibal Mulkins, Jonathan Shortt, S. B. Ardagh, F. A. O'Meara, Edmund Baldwin, Francis Evans, and B. C. Hill.<sup>66</sup>

High and low churchmen also came into conflict over a number of theological issues. For example, evangelical clergymen ostracized themselves from their anglo-catholic brethren by performing baptisms in private homes and by altering many aspects of the Anglican form of worship.<sup>67</sup> Although frequently attacked by Strachan and the Church

<sup>66</sup> For information regarding evangelical participation in these various organizations, see Osler Papers (Series I-1, vol. 2), F. L. Osler to Henry Osler, 30 Aug. 1837; and Osler to Proctor, 13 June 1839; SPG Letters, "G mss," vol. 3, Journals of Upper Canada Clergy Society, Journal of B. C. Hill, 12 Dec. 1838; and Journals of Alexander Pyne, 16 Jan. 1842; the Church, 2 Oct. 1846; 7 July, 24 Nov., and 15 Dec. 1853; the Echo, 19 Oct. and 24 Nov. 1853, 30 June and 3 Nov. 1854; Joseph Harris, A Letter to the Hon. & Ven. Archdeacon Strachan; and the Life and Letters of the Rev. George Mortimer, p. 290. For the Echo's attitude towards these organizations, see the following issues of that journal: 9 Dec. 1851, 14 July and 20 Oct. 1852. If the ministry of B. C. Hill was any indication, low church tolerance of inter-denominational organizations also entailed a highly cooperative attitude towards dissenters in all areas of religious life. See SPG Letters, "G mss," vol. 3, journal of B. C. Hill; and ibid., Series C, Box IVB/42 and Box IV/42, no. 502, letters of Hill to Upper Canada Clergy Society.

<sup>67</sup> See Osler Papers, Diaries and Journals (Series II-1), "Sketch of My Life"; Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to T. H. M. Bartlett, 8 Jan. 1845; Strachan to John Pope, 8 Jan. 1845; Strachan to R. V. Rogers, 5 May 1845; Strachan to F. W. Sandys, 24 June 1848; and the Church, 29 Jan. 1842 and 30 Dec. 1842 (letter from clergyman).

for these rubrical and liturgical irregularities,<sup>68</sup> low churchmen generally remained tactfully silent. On one occasion, however, the different positions of high and low churchmen on this highly contentious subject were publicly set forth in a debate conducted in the pages of the Church. In December 1842 a Lower Canadian clergyman using the pseudonym "Philahosmos" wrote a letter to the Church in which he attacked his clerical colleagues in the diocese of Quebec for ignoring many of the church's rubrics.<sup>69</sup> Early in the new year an Upper Canadian churchman with the initials "A.B." replied to the charges of "Philahosmos" by explaining that some rubrical practices were simply impractical in a society where clergymen had "to supply on a Sunday two or three congregations at remote distances from each other."<sup>70</sup> This position was in turn attacked by an anglo-catholic clergyman who signed himself "E." After remarking that he had been able to observe the rubrics even though he lived in the "back-woods" and was responsible for three congregations, "E." declared that "to follow the rule of A.B. would be to open the door to every kind of novelty--to shortening the services, to altering them, to mutilating them, which in England and Ireland, and I believe in this Province, has been done in the Baptismal Service." His letter concluded with an excerpt from a pamphlet dealing with the Church of England in Britain which, in his view, was equally applicable to the state of Upper Canadian Anglicanism. The

<sup>68</sup> See Strachan letters quoted above and the Church, 29 Jan. 1842.

<sup>69</sup> The Church, 16 Dec. 1842.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 6 Jan. 1843.



central theme of this pamphlet was that many clergymen were showing their contempt for the Book of Common Prayer by neglecting to observe the church's fasts and festivals, ignoring the offertory prayer and the prayer for the Church Militant, and baptizing children "in their father's dining-room" rather than "at the font during Divine Service."<sup>71</sup>

This exchange between a high churchman and an evangelical was restrained in tone compared to other theological debates of the post-rebellion period. In letters to the Church throughout these years, representatives of the church's opposing factions aired their differences not only on the controversial practices of preaching without notes, wearing the surplice in the pulpit, and using the word "altar" rather than the expression "holy table," but also on such thorny matters as the nature of the sacraments, the place of ritual and ceremony in religious worship, and the role of the church in the interpretation of scriptures.<sup>72</sup> One of the most violent of these debates was waged in 1848 when "H." and "B.C.," the latter individual probably being Benjamin Cronyn, traded ad hominem attacks in the course of an argument on the advantages and disadvantages of "extempore preaching." The debate began calmly enough when "B.C.," in a letter

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 3 Feb. 1843. See also letter of "Prester Ergenia" on 13 Jan. 1843 relating to this controversy.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 12 Feb., 5 March, 16 Dec., and 23 Dec. 1842; 12 Feb., 19 Feb., 21 May, 4 June, 11 June, 7 Aug., 20 Aug., 3 Sept., 10 Sept., and 17 Sept. 1847; 4 Feb., 9 June, 28 Sept., 19 Oct., 16 Nov., 23 Nov., and 30 Nov. 1848; 21 Dec. and 1 Feb. 1848; 15 March, 5 April, 12 April, 3 May, 17 May, 7 June, 14 June, 21 June, 2 Aug., and 23 Aug. 1848; 3 Dec. 1849; 3 Oct., 10 Oct., and 31 Oct. 1850; and 3 Feb. and 30 June 1853.

to the Church in September 1848, defended the practice of extempore preaching against certain criticisms that had been advanced by "H." a few weeks earlier. Shortly afterwards, however, an enraged "H." denounced "B.C." for being addicted to that "irreverent and uncertain mode of address from his pulpit, which I have deprecated and condemned," for "attempting to push his opinions and practices down my throat," and for displaying in his writings the same "cumulative, blundering inconclusiveness . . . which generally characterize extempore preachers in their public prelections." This hysterical tirade prompted "B.C." to repeat his arguments in favour of extempore preaching, and to remark contemptuously that "H." was hardly fit to criticize another's writing style when his own letters to the Church made it evident that "he is not qualified to instruct even boys of ten years old in the first elements of English composition."<sup>73</sup>

Less vitriolic, but even more revealing of the theological differences between high and low churchmen, was an 1847 debate between "A Catholic" and "H.C.C." (probably H. C. Cooper) on the relationship between the private judgment of the individual and the authority of the church in the interpretation of scriptures. In the opening stages of this debate, which lasted from May until September, "A Catholic"

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 31 Aug., 28 Sept., 19 Oct., 16 Nov., 23 Nov., and 30 Nov., 1848. Preaching without notes seems to have been quite common. See the following: Strachan Letter Book, 1852-66, Strachan to W. Tucker, 5 Nov. 1853; Osler Papers (Series II-1, vol. 2), Osler to Proctor, 12 July 1837; F. L. Osler to Henry Osler, 30 Aug. 1837 and 15 Jan. 1838; Osler to Proctor, 26 Oct. 1837; the Church, 25 March, 1852 (letter from "Anglo-Catholic"); Scadding Papers (Diaries), 2 May 1847, 8 Oct. 1848.

argued that "the Church is the Divinely appointed interpreter of Holy Scripture" and that a reliance on the private judgment of the individual inevitably led to the proliferation of schismatic sects and to the corruption of biblical truth. He also declared that his objective was "to save His blessed Word from the dangerous corruptions necessarily consequent in a greater or less degree, upon the weak, fallible, or wilful interpretations of individuals, and to place it in the hands of that Universal Church which He who cannot lie, has promised ever to be with." "H.C.C." responded angrily to these arguments, declaring that "A Catholic"'s "manner of viewing the Church has been the very process by which some minds of late years have been most egregiously misled," and warning that "the belief . . . of an infallible power of interpretation existing in the Church . . . conducts . . . to the principles on which the Papal usurpation, with all its concomitant heresies, is grounded." To these attacks on his position, "A Catholic" replied by reiterating his view that "the decision of the church catholic" was "infallible," and by expressing his indifference over the abuse he was receiving from "a self-idolizing section of the church."<sup>74</sup>

One of the principal causes of division between evangelicals and anglo-catholics was the Church newspaper. Throughout the post-rebellion period the Church published editorials criticizing specific aspects of evangelical Anglicanism, such as the practice of extempore preaching,

<sup>74</sup> The Church, 21 May, 4 June, 11 June, 7 Aug., 20 Aug., 3 Sept., 10 Sept., and 17 Sept. 1847. Cooper, later an editor of the Echo, also revealed his low church opinions in the 1847 pamphlet, Characteristic Principles of the Church of England.

and attacking evangelicals themselves for hindering the progress of the Anglican revival.<sup>75</sup> Not surprisingly, these editorials, combined with frequent expositions on the doctrines of anglo-catholic theology and sympathetic reviews of the work of the Oxford movement, enraged the church's evangelical wing. In November 1843 F. L. Osler wrote in a letter to a clerical friend in England that the Church was continually excusing "the errors of the Oxford heresy." He also stated that "there is a large body of the most influential clergymen strongly opposed to the principles advocated by the paper--some have already refused to take it unless a great change is soon made . . . most of us will enter a protest," adding that "this will be the more awkward to do as the Bp is a personal friend of the Editor and holds the same views."<sup>76</sup> Strachan was not oblivious to these feelings of dissatisfaction with the doctrinal position of the Church. Writing to Bethune in January 1844, he noted that Osler and Francis Evans, the Anglican clergyman in Simcoe, were among the "Promoters" of the current agitation against the Church, and expressed his belief that although "the persons who object are of morbid temperaments and miserable judges--yet as they can do mischief we must yield a little in taking selections now & then from their own School when it can be done without any compromise of prin-

<sup>75</sup> The Church, 29 May, 5 June, and 24 July 1841; 12 Aug. 1842; 20 Oct. 1843; 22 Aug. 1845; 2 Oct. 1846; 5 Feb. and 26 March 1847; 31 Aug. 1848; 6 Sept. 1849; 3 Feb. and 18 Aug. 1853.

<sup>76</sup> Osler Papers (Series I-1, vol. 2), Osler to Proctor, 13 Nov. 1843.

principles."<sup>77</sup> Two years later he declared in a letter to the Bishop of Nova Scotia that "complaints are made by the Low Church that it [the Church] does not pay sufficient respect to their views & are not therefore zealous in its favour."<sup>78</sup>

The Church's unpopularity amongst evangelical clergymen was reflected in the statements made by some of its correspondents. In a series of letters in 1847 "B.C." attacked the Church for claiming that ecclesiastical tradition was infallible and of equal authority with scripture, a principle which had recently brought about defections from the Church of England to Roman Catholicism and which every loyal clergyman "must repudiate with horror."<sup>79</sup> Two other churchmen were even harsher in their criticisms. In March 1847 C. C. Brough, the Anglican clergyman in Cavan, stated that "the character of many of the articles, found from time to time in the Church newspaper, has awakened an apprehension in the minds of many, at home and in this country, that our orthodoxy is unsound," and that were he not actually "upon the spot to see, and believe, and hope otherwise," he too would come to the conclusion after reading the Church that "there existed in Canada an approximation to the system which has of late plunged so many of our communion

<sup>77</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Bethune, 29 Jan. 1844.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Strachan to the Bishop of Nova Scotia, 15 May 1846.

<sup>79</sup> The Church, 15 Jan., 12 Feb., 26 Feb., 12 March, and 9 April 1847.

into the abyss of Romanism."<sup>80</sup> A couple of years later, in April 1849, a Church editorial praising the creation of Anglican convents and monasteries in England led a certain "Lucius" to exclaim that such views "are pregnant with danger to our venerable Church establishment, and were your design to undermine her foundations, and to pull down her walls and battlements, a more effectual path could not be chosen."<sup>81</sup>

This conviction that the Church was subverting the doctrinal position of the Church of England in Upper Canada prompted many evangelical clergymen to give their support to rival Anglican journals. In the 1840s the Berean, a low church newspaper published in Quebec City, was supported by a number of evangelicals in Upper Canada, including H. J. Grasett, the curate of St. James's Cathedral and Strachan's personal secretary and chaplain, A. F. Atkinson, R. V. Rogers, and S. B. Ardagh, the latter two individuals even acting as the paper's agents in their respective parishes of Kingston and Barrie.<sup>82</sup> When the Berean folded in 1849, Upper Canadian evangelicals lost little time in launching a journal of their own. The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder, under the editorship of the Reverend Jonathan Shortt, began

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 19 March 1847. Interestingly enough, Brough's accusation was sparked by the Church's denunciation of W. Carus Wilson, an English evangelical who was to become involved in the Cobourg affair, which is discussed on pp. 355-58. See the Church, 12 and 19 Feb. 1847.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 25 April and 24 May 1849.

<sup>82</sup> Strachan criticized Atkinson and Grasett for supporting the Berean in a letter of 1845 (Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Atkinson, 20 Oct. 1845). The Berean listed Rogers and Ardagh as its agents throughout the period of its publication; it also had agents in Toronto, Ancaster, Niagara, Dunnville, and London.

publication in Port Hope in 1851, and within one year had established its reputation as the organ of the low church party in Upper Canada. Heading the Echo's list of approximately one thousand subscribers was the layman, P. B. de Blaquière, and a large group of twenty-three evangelical clergymen, prominent among whom were George O'Kill Stuart, Benjamin Cronyn, and John McCaul, the former principal of King's College. Four of these clerical subscribers, namely Cronyn, R. V. Rogers, Alexander Sanson, and S. B. Ardagh, along with the editor Jonathar Shortt, were on the Echo's Trustees and Managing Committee, and Sanson and Rogers also served as the journal's travelling agents.<sup>83</sup>

A divided press, of course, was a severe handicap to a church that was struggling to redefine its role in the religious life of Upper Canada. Unfortunately, when the Church suggested that the Anglican press should submerge its differences, the Echo merely insisted that it would never agree to compromise its fundamental religious principles. In September 1854 the Church, while referring to the "fallacies and shortcomings" of its "quasi-church rival," emphasized that "we long for unity; we abhor controversy," and proposed that it and the Echo be replaced by a non-partisan ecclesiastical gazette. The Echo dismissed

<sup>83</sup> The figure of 1,000 subscribers is taken from the 20 Oct. 1852 issue of the Echo. In addition to Cronyn, Stuart, and McCaul, the clerical supporters of the Echo were: A. Jamieson, D. E. Blake, H. J. Grasett, Hannibal Mulkins, E. Baldwin, Francis Evans, A. St. George Caulfield, Thomas Greene, T. W. Marsh, J. W. Marsh, C. C. Brough, Allen, Alexander, Michael Boomer, Hepden, George Mortimer, R. V. Rogers, Alexander Sanson, E. Grasett, S. B. Ardagh; all these individuals were listed as supporters in the pages of the Echo itself. See the 24 Nov. 1853 issue for the members of the Board of Management, and the issues of 13 Oct. and 19 Oct. for references to Sanson and Rogers as the paper's agents.

the Church's proposal with the curt statement that neutrality was out of the question when the church was "threatened with great innovations from within both of doctrine and of practice."<sup>84</sup> This position was advanced again in a December editorial, in which the Echo argued that "surely this is no time for peace; when professed clergymen of the Church of England are inculcating, directly and indirectly, some of the most subtle, insidious, and dangerous of the Romish doctrines."<sup>85</sup>

Another bone of contention between high and low churchmen was the teaching provided by A. N. Bethune at the Diocesan Theological Institute in Cobourg. The first signs of hostility towards the new seminary appeared after the arrival in Cobourg in 1844 of Edward Ellis, later described by Strachan as "a sort of religious adventurer." Admitted into the Institute on a trial basis, Ellis soon made his presence felt by criticizing Bethune's high church views, distributing evangelical tracts throughout the parish of Cobourg, and attending the religious services of dissenters. Bethune was about to report these antics to Strachan and to recommend that Ellis be dismissed from the Institute when he was forced to turn his attention to another matter. In September 1845 two of Ellis's fellow students, a certain Marsh and Isaac Hellmuth, were so offended by a Bethune lecture that they left Cobourg and made their way to Montreal. Soon afterwards the two exiles wrote a letter to the English evangelical journal, the Record,

<sup>84</sup> The Church, 21 Sept. 1854, and the Echo, 29 Sept. 1854.

<sup>85</sup> The Echo, 8 Dec. 1854.



in which the Cobourg Theological Institute was described as a "fearful hotbed of Tractarianism," and on the basis of this report the Record's editor, W. Carus Wilson, published a series of articles attacking the Cobourg Institute and accusing Bethune and Strachan of having tractarian sympathies.<sup>86</sup> Strachan responded to these charges in a letter to Wilson in January 1846 by denying that either he or Bethune were tractarians, by attacking the malcontents who had caused so much trouble in Cobourg, and by expressing his deep regret that Wilson himself had become associated with "a Party of which it is painful to observe that some of its Leaders are more prominent in efforts to disturb the peace and order of the Church than to promote truth of doctrine, unity of sentiment & holiness of life."<sup>87</sup>

In the year following Strachan's reply to Wilson, the town of Cobourg was in a state of turmoil. Edward Ellis, informed by Strachan several months previously that he would never be ordained in the diocese of Toronto,<sup>88</sup> remained in Cobourg and, in the words of one witness, imitated "the conduct of the turbulent and factious politician who, other measures failing, invariably has recourse to agitation,

<sup>86</sup> The above account of the Cobourg affair is based on the following: Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Bethune, 29 Sept. 1845; Strachan to Ellis, 7 Oct. 1845; Strachan to W. Carus Wilson, 19 Jan. 1846; Strachan to Rev. F. S. Bevan, 20 Jan. 1846; Bishop Strachan Letters, Strachan to Bethune, 29 Dec. 1845; the Church, 23 Jan. 1846; SPG Letters, Series C, Box V/45, Robert Harding, October 1846.

<sup>87</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, Strachan to Wilson, 19 Jan. 1846.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., Strachan to Ellis, 7 Oct. 1845.

exciting discord, where before was harmony."<sup>89</sup> His efforts in this direction received a check when in the month of May seventeen former pupils of the Cobourg Institute signed an address to Bethune in which they expressed their firm conviction that "the standard of Divinity which you have adopted is built upon the testimony of the Holy Scripture, and the authentic exposition set forth by the Church of England in her Articles and Formularies."<sup>90</sup> But even such a tribute to Bethune's theological orthodoxy could not calm the troubled waters of religious controversy. This fact became particularly evident when Robert Shanklin, a student at the Institute who had refused to sign the May address, began announcing publicly in the parish of Cobourg that Strachan and Bethune were tractarians.<sup>91</sup> By now Strachan had lost all patience with the troublemakers in Cobourg, and he promptly informed Shanklin that he was no longer considered a suitable candidate for the ministry.<sup>92</sup> When A. F. Atkinson, the Anglican clergyman in St. Catharine's, dared to defend Shanklin as a victim of persecution and to assert that tractarian doctrines were taught at the Cobourg Institute and that ministerial candidates in Upper Canada were subjected to unlawful tests,<sup>93</sup> a furious Strachan told Bethune in a letter of September 1846 that "I

<sup>89</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box V/45, Robert Harding, October 1845.

<sup>90</sup> The Church, 22 May 1846.

<sup>91</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, "Narrative of a dispute with a Mr. Shanklin and Rev. A. F. Atkinson, circa 1846."

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

am roused against this set of ungrateful heartless men, who under the cloak of religion sacrifice for party everything truly just & honourable."<sup>94</sup> He only regained his composure in the following month, when Shanklin agreed to retract his charges, thus setting an example that would later be followed by Atkinson. At this point Strachan was prepared to forget the past, and on 16 October he reversed an earlier decision and admitted Shanklin into Orders.<sup>95</sup>

Bethune was also at the centre of the conflict between high and low churchmen over the choice of a bishop for the diocese of Kingston. The origins of this dispute dated to late 1853, when the Reverend John Wilson of Ancaster and the Reverend William McMurray of Grafton distributed circulars promoting Bethune as the best candidate for the diocese which, it was rumoured, the imperial government was about to establish in the Kingston area.<sup>96</sup> The reaction of the low church party to these tactics was immediate: George O'Kill Stuart, besides asking each of his clergymen in the Archdeaconry of Kingston for their opinion of Bethune's qualifications, made plans for the holding of a clerical meeting to discuss the proposed bishopric, plans which were jettisoned

<sup>94</sup> Bishop Strachan Letters, Strachan to Bethune, 23 Sept. 1846.

<sup>95</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1844-49, 9 and 16 Oct. 1846. For other material relating to the Cobourg affair, see the Church, 28 Aug. 1846 (letter from "A Proctor"), 4 Sept. 1846 (letter from "A Presbyter"), 11 Sept. 1846 (address presented to Strachan by the Anglican parishioners of Cobourg), 18 Dec. 1846 (letter from T. S. Kennedy). The dispute is also dealt with in J. D. Purdy's "John Strachan and the Diocesan Theological Institute at Cobourg, 1842-1852," OH, LXV (June 1973), 113-23.

<sup>96</sup> For the first reference to the plan to create a Kingston bishopric, see the Church, 12 May 1853:

only when Strachan sternly warned that such a course of action would be both illegal and a threat to the church's unity;<sup>97</sup> and a number of laymen from the Kingston area, with Stuart's active support, sent a delegate to London to block Bethune's candidacy for the bishopric.<sup>98</sup> In addition, in letters published in the Echo during the period from December 1853 to the summer of 1854, several low churchmen attempted to arouse opposition to Bethune's candidacy by attacking his tractarian views and by reviving accusations that had been levelled during the Cobourg "affair." Benjamin Cronyn attacked the "partizanship" and "secret proceedings" of McMurray and Wilson, and asserted that Bethune's appointment would be "a measure fraught with danger to the Church in this country."<sup>99</sup> Similarly, R. V. Rogers urged that a memorial be sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury "praying that no such affliction be suffered to fall on our struggling church in this Province as the appointment of one so distasteful to those that are without, and possessing so little of the confidence of those within our communion," adding that "the appointment, not only of Dr. Bethune, but of any man

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 16 March 1854 (letter of Alexander Pyne) and 6 April 1854 (letter of G. O. Stuart); Strachan Letter Book, 1852-66, Strachan to Stuart, 19 Dec. 1853; Bishop Strachan Letters, Strachan to Bethune, 28 Dec. 1853 and 4 Jan. 1854; SPG Letters, "D" 14, vols. 8-9, William Herchmer, 13 Feb. 1854.

<sup>98</sup> The Church, 6 April and 16 May 1854. /

<sup>99</sup> Published Correspondence and Papers Called Forth By a Canvas Among a Section of the Clergy of the Province of Toronto, Having in View the Recommendation of the Venerable the Archdeacon of York, in Said Diocese, as the Incumbent of the Proposed New Bishopric of Kingston, Canada West (1854), pp. 32-36.

of his extreme views would greatly paralyze, if not destroy our Church."<sup>100</sup> "A Layman" stated in equally categorical language that

we do not want a Bishop to avow and teach the pernicious and Romanizing doctrines of Dr. Pusey--that traitor within the Church; we want not a man who will, in a most unwarrantable manner, press his anti-Protestant and unscriptural views upon Divinity students as a sine qua non to their ordination. . . . what, may I ask, is to be expected, if, under Bishop Bethune, the novelty of a white surplice should be uplifted in the Pulpit as a badge or standard of a party, and other novelties introduced where they have not yet appeared? . . . Instead, then, of the Archdeacon of York being the man "of all others the best qualified," he is, of the clergy in this diocese, the most unfit to preside over the new See of Kingston. . . . Far better that we should have no Bishop at all, and that we should remain as we are, than that Dr. Bethune should be appointed over us.<sup>101</sup>

These statements elicited an angry response from the high church party. In a letter to the Echo in December 1853 Bethune, while emphasizing that he had no designs on the Kingston bishopric and that the action of his supporters in resorting to an episcopal "canvas" had set a "vicious precedent," challenged his critics to prove "that I have taught or preached any doctrine not in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England; or that, as a conscientious member of that Church, I entertain or advocate 'extreme views of doctrine.'"<sup>102</sup> Other Anglicans were no less indignant. "A Presbyter," writing to the Church, defended Bethune's theological orthodoxy and chastized R. V. Rogers for displaying "morbid sensitiveness," noting that "the task is onerous

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 17-19.

enough of counteracting the effects of division around us, without engendering strife amongst ourselves."<sup>103</sup> Adam Townley, though deprecating the practice of episcopal canvassing, urged all Anglicans to refrain from patronizing the Echo, a journal intent on "sowing schism," and warned that "the unhappy violence of a meagre faction" was bringing disgrace upon the Upper Canadian church.<sup>104</sup> John Wilson defended Bethune's conduct in the Cobourg affair, and criticized the Echo for being blinded "by the spirit of party" and for "fomenting strife and envy, and heartburning, amongst brethren."<sup>105</sup>

The dispute between high and low churchmen over the see of Kingston was closely related to the more general issue of the manner in which future bishops were to be chosen. When the rumour first began to circulate that the imperial government was about to establish a diocese in eastern Upper Canada, the Echo suggested that the new bishop should either be appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury from amongst the ranks of the English clergy, or elected by a synod composed of clergymen and lay delegates.<sup>106</sup> The latter suggestion had strong appeal for high churchmen and evangelicals alike, for while both groups believed that a more democratic and broadly based system of ecclesiastical government was essential if the church was to become financially self-supporting, the evangelical party also operated on the conviction that

<sup>103</sup> The Church, 26 Jan. 1854.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 5 Jan. 1854.

<sup>105</sup> Published Correspondence and Papers, pp. 21-25.

<sup>106</sup> The Echo, 11 May 1853.

its own episcopal candidates would stand a better chance of election if they were able to draw upon the support of the laity. At the same time, however, there is evidence to indicate that the Upper Canadian church was not without its internal differences on the subject of the synodical election of bishops. In late 1853, at Strachan's triennial visitation, Adam Townley isolated himself from his clerical and lay brethren by contending that bishops should be appointed by the crown as long as the Church of England in Upper Canada relied on the SPG for much of its financial support, a contention which he was again to put forward in a letter to the Church in January 1854.<sup>107</sup> Later, in an editorial of November 1854, the Church itself took the position that "the choice of a bishop is the natural and exclusive prerogative of the clergy. In the choice of their head and overseer, it does not seem right that there should be dictation, or control, or pressure from any other body. . . ."108

The idea that bishops should be elected rather than appointed, and the uncertainty which prevailed over the manner in which these episcopal elections were to be conducted, gave rise to some interesting developments in the region west of Toronto, the stronghold of Anglican evangelicalism. At the 1853 visitation clergymen and laymen reached a consensus that sees should be created in the western and eastern sections of Upper Canada, that efforts should be made immediately to

<sup>107</sup> Published Correspondence and Papers, p. 3, and the Church, 5 Jan. 1854.

<sup>108</sup> The Church, 16 Nov. 1854.

establish an endowment fund in each of the proposed dioceses, and that the bishops chosen to preside over these dioceses should be elected by synod.<sup>109</sup> But they also sowed the seeds of future difficulties by totally ignoring the question of whether the bishops of the new sees were to be elected by local synods established for that purpose or by the synod of the Upper Canadian church as a whole. Their failure to deal with such a basic issue led directly to the dispute over the Kingston bishopric, when clergymen from the Archdeaconry of York intervened in the religious affairs of the eastern region. It also led to a surprising scene at a meeting of the London District Branch of the Church Society in February 1854. At this meeting Benjamin Cronyn, in his capacity as chairman, emphasized that future bishops should be drawn from those clergymen who were "perfectly independent" of Strachan, and his lay and clerical listeners, no doubt with the Kingston dispute much in their minds, passed a resolution stating that contributions to the episcopal endowment fund in western Upper Canada should "be solicited on the express condition that the clergy and lay delegates from the several congregations within the limits of each diocese respectively shall be permitted to elect their own bishop."<sup>110</sup> Although the purpose of this resolution was obviously to ensure that the high church clergy of the central and eastern regions would be barred from voting in an episcopal election in western Upper Canada, Strachan made

<sup>109</sup> Proceedings of Synod, 1853, pp. 10 and 17.

<sup>110</sup> The Church, 23 March and 6 April 1854.



it known that the principle of local synodical elections had his approval.<sup>111</sup> Cronyn, who seemed to be everywhere soliciting contributions to the western endowment fund, relayed Strachan's message to meetings of the Gore Rural Deanery in Hamilton and the Brock and Talbot Rural Deanery in Simcoe.<sup>112</sup> Interestingly enough, however, not even Strachan's conciliatory stance could prevent the Simcoe meeting, as well as a meeting held at an unspecified location in the Home Rural Deanery, from passing resolutions identical to the one that had recently been passed in London.<sup>113</sup>

High churchmen and evangelicals also clashed over the question of rectory patronage. During the summer of 1852 the local legislature passed an act vesting in the Church Society the "patronage" of the forty-four rectories established by Colborne in 1836, which essentially meant that individuals appointed to these charges would now be "nominated" not by the governor-general in consultation with the bishop, as had previously been the case, but by an organization representing the clergy and laity of the church as a whole.<sup>114</sup> This piece of news sparked a lengthy debate in the Church. In August 1852 a Church editorial dealing with the government's action suggested that whenever

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 30 March 1854.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 23 March 1854.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 23 March and 13 May 1854.

<sup>114</sup> The method of appointment previously followed was described by Strachan in his speech to a special meeting of the Church Society in 1852. See Report of the Special General Meeting of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, Held on Wednesday, 10 Nov., 1852, To Take into consideration the future disposal of the Patronage of the Rectories (Toronto, 1852), p. 10.

a rectory became vacant, the Bishop should appoint one of three candidates nominated beforehand by the members of the Church Society.<sup>115</sup> When a correspondent signing himself "D.C.L." criticized this suggestion and recommended instead that the bishop have exclusive control over all clerical appointments,<sup>116</sup> the whole subject of rectory patronage became charged with emotion. Another correspondent, "A Well-Wisher of the Church Society," noted that while the Church's plan would vest excessive power in a Toronto group which had already revealed its incompetence in allowing the Church Society's Secretary to default with over £1,000, the acceptance of "D.C.L."s suggestion might enable Strachan's successors as bishop to place "over parishes men of the orthodoxy of whose opinions the Church is not satisfied."<sup>117</sup> "D.C.L." replied to "A Well-Wisher of the Church Society" by warning against the dangers of according the laity a greater voice in church affairs,<sup>118</sup> a warning that was echoed by Adam Townley.<sup>119</sup> Other churchmen, however, were more sympathetic to the idea that the bishop's power in the area of rectory appointments should be shared with the clergy and laity. "A Presbyterian of the Diocese of Toronto" and "A Rector," insisting that parish clergymen were the individuals most intimately acquainted with religious conditions at the local level, proposed that the bishop make rectory appointments with the advice and consent of a majority of

<sup>115</sup> The Church, 19 Aug. 1852.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 2 Sept. 1852.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 16 Sept. 1852.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 23 Sept. 1852.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 21 Oct. 1852.

members on special church councils, bodies composed of the Rural Dean, and the two senior Presbyters of the area concerned, and the churchwardens of the vacant rectory.<sup>120</sup>

It was not long before the controversy over rectory patronage developed into a serious confrontation between Strachan and the low church party. At a meeting of the Church Society in November 1852 Strachan attacked the rectory bill as another instance of state oppression and emphasized that "it shall never be said that the first Bishop of Toronto permitted, without decided remonstrance, the curtailment of privileges which our Prelates in Canada have always exercised, because from a false delicacy he was ashamed to defend them."<sup>121</sup> This declaration, together with certain resolutions stating that rectory patronage should be administered by Strachan and his successors as bishop, aroused the hostility of four evangelical clergymen, namely Benjamin Cronyn, S. B. Ardagh, C. C. Brough, and Dominick Blake, all of whom took the position that the church could hardly expect to prosper if the laity were to be forever excluded from the management of ecclesiastical affairs. Eventually, after a long and often stormy debate, a compromise resolution was passed stating that rectory patronage was to be merely vested in Strachan for the remainder of his incumbency, and a committee was formed to draft the necessary amendments to the Society's

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 4 Nov. 1852.

<sup>121</sup> Report of the Special General Meeting of the Church Society,  
pp. 11-12.

constitution.<sup>122</sup>

Strachan was quite satisfied with the results of this meeting, and in a letter written to the SPG in late November he claimed sole credit for suppressing a revolt against his authority and expressed the opinion that the committee established by the Church Society would recommend that rectory patronage be ceded in perpetuity to the episcopacy.<sup>123</sup> As it turned out, however, his optimism was premature. In the first week of December the Church Society committee, ignoring the terms of the resolution already agreed upon, published a report which echoed Strachan's argument that rectory appointments should always come under episcopal jurisdiction, but which also stated that all such appointments should be subject to the veto of the Society's lay and clerical members.<sup>124</sup> These controversial proposals would undoubtedly have sparked another bout of internal feuding if Strachan had not decided to assume the role of conciliator. When the Church Society assembled for its annual meeting in June 1853 Strachan was able to

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., passim. The above account has been simplified somewhat in the interests of brevity and clarity. F. L. Osler broke from his fellow evangelicals and supported Strachan's position; Dominick Blake has been classified as a low churchman because of his support of the Echo; and Thomas Fuller and William Bettridge, two moderate high churchmen who often found themselves on the evangelical side in religious controversies (the former was elected Bishop of Niagara in 1875 with evangelical support, and the latter voted for Gronyn in the 1857 episcopal election in the diocese of Huron), echoed the low church demand for a lay voice in rectory appointments.

<sup>123</sup> SPG Letters, "D" 14, vols. 8-9, Strachan, 23 Nov. 1852.

<sup>124</sup> The Church, 2 Dec. 1852. See also letter from "An Incorporated Member of the Church Society" in ibid., 26 May 1853.

avoid a confrontation by suggesting that further debate on the rectory question be postponed pending the outcome of current discussions regarding the division of the diocese of Toronto. Although this cautious approach was criticized by E. J. Boswell, a high churchman, Strachan's influence proved decisive, and a resolution was passed stating that the debate on the rectory question was to be temporarily halted.<sup>125</sup>

Two points have to be made about the rectory dispute. In the first place, it is clear that the low church position in this controversy was not based on any philosophical commitment to the rights of the laity: when the diocese of Huron was created in 1857, one of the first acts of the new synod was to give Benjamin Cronyn exclusive control over rectory patronage.<sup>126</sup> Secondly, it should be stressed that the entire dispute was closely intertwined with the approach of the low church party to the question of church government. While low churchmen shared the view that a more broadly based church structure would place the Anglican cause on a firmer financial footing, they also operated on the conviction that a stronger lay presence in ecclesiastical government would safeguard the theological orthodoxy of Upper Canadian Anglicanism. Consequently, when they demanded that the Church Society be given a role in the administration of rectory

<sup>125</sup> The proceedings of the meeting were reported in the Church, 16 June 1853.

<sup>126</sup> Turner, "The Evangelical Movement in the Church of England in the Diocese of Toronto," pp. 194-95.

patronage, they were essentially doing two things: they were proposing a system by which clergymen and laymen of "sound" theological views could oversee many of the clerical appointments of Strachan and his successors; and they were publicizing their own belief that the Anglican communion in Upper Canada would no longer be plagued by tractarianism if the laity, with its strong commitment to an evangelical doctrinal position, was able to exert its rightful influence in the church.

The belief of Anglican evangelicals that a greater lay voice in church affairs would combat the influence of tractarianism was expressed in a couple of Echo editorials. In October 1852 the Echo, declaring that "no Convocation can do the work assigned to it, or be otherwise than injurious to the Church, unless each order in the Church be fully and fairly represented," quoted an article recently published in an English journal, the St. James Chronicle, which asserted that lay representation in an Anglican synod would check the spread of "semi-Romanism."<sup>127</sup> Later in the same month an Echo editorial dealing with the rectory dispute argued that since Strachan's authority as bishop was already excessive, the patronage in question should be vested in the parochial committees of the Church Society. It then quoted the claim of the Church Witness that "Colonial Bishops now have in their hands the power which enables them to repress independent thought, and to mould the opinion of their dependents to their own views."<sup>128</sup> Con-

<sup>127</sup> The Echo, 13 Oct. 1852.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 27 Oct. 1852. See also ibid., 3 Nov. 1852.

sidering the Echo's anxiety about the influence of tractarianism in Upper Canada, it seems safe to say that the implication of this second editorial was that the presence of the laity in a more democratic form of church government would serve as an effective counterweight to the ability of a high church bishop such as Strachan to impose his doctrinal principles on his clerical subordinates.

Before examining the most serious disputes between the church's opposing factions, disputes that were intertwined with the embattled position of the Anglican cause in the era of disestablishment, a few comments have to be made concerning the evangelical view of the Church of England's status in Upper Canadian society. From the time of the union of 1841 to the secularization of the clergy reserves, only one evangelical clergyman, C. B. Gribble of Dunnville, came out in opposition to the policy of church establishment.<sup>129</sup> All other members of the low church party stood side by side with their high church colleagues in defending the Church of England's share of the clergy reserves and in opposing the voluntarist crusade for the complete separation of church and state. Their loyalty to the Anglican "party

<sup>129</sup> SPG Letters, Series C, Box V/45, C. B. Gribble, 1 April 1841. The case of C. B. Gribble is interesting in more ways than one. While Gribble expressed low church views on a number of subjects, he also took the unorthodox step of refusing to administer the Eucharist to any individual who had violated church discipline. When this action led to Gribble's dismissal, his congregation sent a memorial of protest to Strachan, and Gribble himself published an apologia in the Niagara Chronicle and attacked Bethune in the London Record. See SPG Letters, Series C, Box V/45, C. B. Gribble, 6 July and 3 Dec. 1841; and Strachan's reply to Gribble's congregation, April 1843. Also: the Church, 2 June, 14 July, and 22 Dec. 1843; and Strachan Papers, February 1843.

line" was revealed at the synods held in 1851, 1853, and 1854, when resolutions protesting against the clergy reserves agitation were passed with the unanimous consent of all present.<sup>130</sup> It was also revealed in a number of statements, made by such evangelicals as Benjamin Cronyn, C. C. Brough, William Herchmer, William Bleasdel, and S. B. Ardagh, on the issue of church-state relations.<sup>131</sup> Typical of these statements were the ones made by Cronyn and Bleasdel. At the 1851 visitation Cronyn supported the policy of church establishment by insisting that in countries entirely dependent upon the voluntary system, religion "is uniformly found, among the great mass of people, to degenerate and decline . . . religious division and animosity increase--erroneous tenets gain strength and prevalence--and infidelity itself spreads to an unwanted extent."<sup>132</sup> Even stronger language was used by Bleasdel in an 1850 speech at a parish meeting in Port Trent, in which he declared that the Price Resolutions were "a factious pandering to that insatiable spirit of democracy which will never be contented until every Institution essentially British is swept from our Land."<sup>133</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Proceedings of Synod, 1851, pp. 10-11; Proceedings of Synod, 1853, pp. 9-11 and 13-14; and Proceedings of Synod, 1854, p. 27.

<sup>131</sup> Proceedings of Synod, 1851, speech of Benjamin Cronyn, p. 11; Strachan Papers, C. C. Brough to Strachan, 24 March 1841; SPG Letters, Series C, Box V/46, no. 544, William Herchmer, 3 March 1845; the Church, 1 Aug. 1850 (letter from William Bleasdel), 8 March 1849 (speech by Ardagh at meeting of local branch of Church Society).

<sup>132</sup> Proceedings of Synod, 1851, p. 11.

<sup>133</sup> The Church, 1 Aug. 1850.



Yet, if evangelicals and high churchmen shared a common perspective on church-state relations, they also had serious differences over the tactics to be adopted in defending the church's interests and privileges. A good case in point was the church's response to the clergy reserves agitation of the early 1850s. In the charge delivered at the visitation of 1853, Strachan suggested that Anglican representatives in the assembly should cooperate with their Roman Catholic counterparts from Lower Canada in protecting the endowments of their respective churches.<sup>134</sup> Barely one month had passed after the delivery of this charge before a correspondent of the Echo, "A Frontier Synodical Layman," made it known that Strachan's suggestion had "given rise to much excitement among all those who, strong in the faith and in determined Protestant abhorrence of Popery in every shape, repudiate all idea of union . . . with their bitterest and most malignant foe, even to save their own property from the common spoliator!"<sup>135</sup> The Echo commended these remarks and also gave its approval to an article published in the Chatham Planet, which asked pointedly if Upper Canadian Anglicans were not appalled to see their church "crouching at the feet of Catholicism, and imploring, through her highest dignitaries, the aid of her oldest and greatest enemy, to guard her in the continued enjoyment of her temporalities."<sup>136</sup>

The divergent positions of the two factions on the issue of the

<sup>134</sup> A Charge Delivered on Wednesday, Oct. 12, 1853, pp. 48-49.

<sup>135</sup> The Echo, 24 Nov. 1853.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

reserves again became apparent in early 1854, when the Echo coupled an attack on the plans of the "secularizationists" with the suggestion that the reserves be shared amongst all denominations in proportion to their numerical strength.<sup>137</sup> These differences became even sharper when on the eve of the 1854 election the Echo declared that Anglicans should rely not "on men or measures, but on Him to whom the earth belongs," and that the clergy reserves question was far less important than the task of spreading the Christian message and maintaining inter-denomination harmony.<sup>138</sup> The Church responded to this pronouncement by criticizing the Echo's "lukewarmness," by emphasizing that "the Almighty requires vigorous action on our part,—a making use of all the legitimate means placed at our disposal in order to secure a successful issue to our petition," and by asserting that Anglicans who failed to do their "utmost to avert the curse which inevitably attends the crime of sacrilege, from blighting this flourishing land" was neither a true churchman nor an Upper Canadian patriot.<sup>139</sup>

Another controversy over the church's strategy in the era of dis-establishment was directly related to developments in the field of education. In the post-rebellion period the low church and high church parties acted as a united phalanx in their opposition to the separation of church and state in the educational sphere: not a single anglo-catholic or evangelical raised a dissenting voice when the passage of

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 30 March 1854.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 30 June 1854.

<sup>139</sup> The Church, 20 July 1854.

the Baldwin university bill of 1849 was greeted by a chorus of denunciation in Anglican circles; and resolutions attacking the non-sectarian common school system and demanding the right to establish Anglican separate schools were passed unanimously at the visitations of 1851, 1853, and 1854.<sup>140</sup> At the same time, however, the fragmentation of the clergy along theological lines was a serious hindrance to the church's efforts to respond in an aggressive and effective fashion to the "godless" nature of the new educational order. Proof of this fact was provided in the early 1850s, when the loss of King's College prompted Strachan to establish the exclusively Anglican institution of Trinity College. As early as October 1850 "A Clergyman of the Church of England" wrote a letter to the Church declaring that "as I fear Oxford and her influences in England, so do I fear the new (to be) Episcopal University in Canada."<sup>141</sup>

This conviction that Trinity College would be a bastion of high Anglicanism imperilled the future of the new "church university" and even led some evangelicals to give their support to the completely secular University of Toronto. At the visitation of 1851 ten clergymen refused to sign a petition on behalf of Trinity College,<sup>142</sup> and according to P. D. De Blaquièrre, the lay evangelical who had been appointed

<sup>140</sup> Proceedings of Synod, 1851, p. 12; Proceedings of Synod, 1853, pp. 14-15; Proceedings of Synod, 1854, p. 28.

<sup>141</sup> The Church, 3 Oct. 1850.

<sup>142</sup> This fact was disclosed by the Church itself on 10 July 1851 in the course of an attack on De Blaquièrre.

first chancellor of the University of Toronto, several other clergymen would have joined their rebellious colleagues if they had not been afraid of incurring episcopal displeasure.<sup>143</sup> Later in the same year the publication of a list of subscribers to the endowment fund of Trinity College made it clear that while the new institution enjoyed the support of nine evangelicals, including H. J. Grasett, Alexander Sanson, S. B. Ardagh, and William Bleasdel, it was conspicuously weak in western Upper Canada, where the low church party was strongest; indeed the list of subscribers, besides disclosing that Benjamin Cronyn's parish of London had contributed nothing to the endowment fund, made no mention either of Cronyn himself or of seven of his fellow evangelicals in the western region, namely Francis Evans, Richard Flood, Thomas Green, A. St. George Caulfield, Michael Boomer, F. A. O'Meara, and B. C. Hill.<sup>144</sup> Even more revealing of the opposition of western evangelicals to Trinity College was a statement made by Strachan in a letter of June 1851 to Ernest Hawkins of the SPG. In this letter Strachan attacked "the restless faction of the west" for "plotting to get the Revd. Mr. Cronyn appointed Bishop for their division," and accused Cronyn himself, a "very low Churchman" who was "better calculated for a political agitator than a Bishop," of being "the focus of all the agitations against the Society's plans & me for supporting

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* De Blaquière also made a charge which appears groundless: he asserted that a majority of the clergy and laity were opposed to Strachan's efforts to gain a charter for Trinity College.

<sup>144</sup> The list was published as an appendix to Strachan's pastoral letter, Church University of Upper Canada (pp. 52-64).

peace & order among the Clergy of that Section." He then declared that Cronyn "did all he could to oppose Trinity College and to bolster up Toronto University & prevented those over whom he had any influence from subscribing to its Funds."<sup>145</sup>

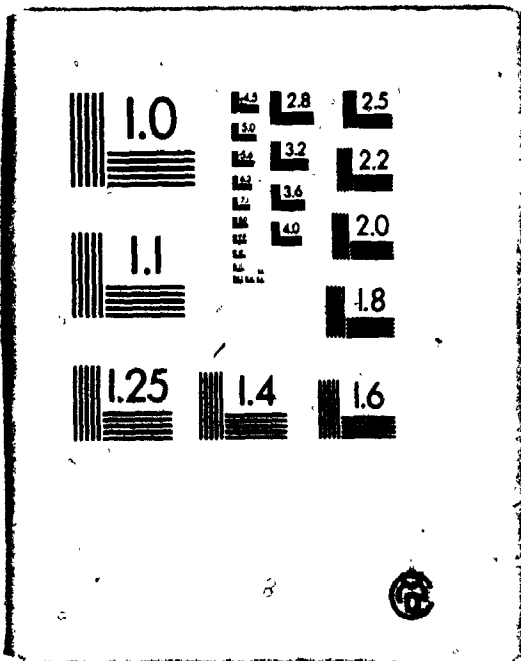
When all of the above disputes between high churchmen and evangelicals are taken together, it becomes easy to understand why both the Church and individual clergymen called for greater unity within the Anglican fold. In June 1853 the Church argued, in one of the many editorials of the late 1840s and early 1850s addressed to the problem of Anglican factionalism, that since, "the spirit of party is utterly at variance with, nay most injurious to, the best interests of religion," members of the Church of England should "rest in agreement . . . upon the many and great principles in which we are all one, rather than array ourselves against each other on the few points of which our minds take different views."<sup>146</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by two high churchmen. In a letter to the Church in 1848, W. S. Darling emphasized that theological differences should never be allowed to "lead those who are bound by the same vows . . . to regard

<sup>145</sup> Strachan Letter Book, 1839-66, Strachan to Hawkins, 6 June 1851. The only high churchman who opposed Trinity College was William Bettridge; in letters to the Church on 25 July 1850 and 23 Jan. 1851 Bettridge came out in favour of an inter-denominational University of Toronto, and expressed the opinion that the proposed charter for Trinity College would vest despotic power in the bishop. Another high churchman, William Macaulay, criticized Strachan for the manner in which he solicited funds for Trinity College (Macaulay Papers, William Macaulay to John Macaulay, 2 Dec. 1851).

<sup>146</sup> The Church, 16 June 1853.

# 55

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each other with feelings of unkindliness, or sentiments of ungenerous suspicion," and that such differences could be submerged if clergymen concentrated on the performance of their pastoral duties.<sup>147</sup> A few years later, in a sermon delivered at the 1853 visitation, Henry Patton declared that

if differences of opinion there must be, let us at least exercise mutual charity, and forbearance. If we cannot agree on all other points, we may at least agree to love one another, and to respect each other's conscientious opinions or convictions. Let us, then, eschew all unseemly strife and contention. Let us avoid all reviling and bitterness, all bandying of names and titles of reproach. Let us shun the shibboleths of mere party. . . . Let us carefully avoid every thing that may tend to exasperate existing differences, and let us gladly embrace every opportunity of drawing more closely the bonds of brotherly affection.<sup>148</sup>

### III

Of course, even Henry Patton must have been pessimistic about the ability of Anglican clergymen to live in "brotherly affection." After the rebellion high churchmen and evangelicals, in addition to waging debates on a variety of theological subjects, clashed openly on such important issues as the involvement of Anglicans in inter-denominational organizations, the teaching provided at the Cobourg Institute, the administration of rectory patronage, and the church's response to reverses in the world of politics. One result of this constant bickering

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 17 March 1848.

<sup>148</sup> Patton, Attachment to the Church of God, p. 20.

was that the Church of England was threatened with internal disintegration at the very moment when it was struggling to ward off the attacks of rival denominations and reform politicians. Another, and equally important, result was that the church's efforts to defend its interests in a politically difficult period were seriously jeopardized. A church that was bitterly divided over Trinity College and the strategy to be employed in protecting the clergy reserves was hardly in a strong position either to defend itself against its opponents or to cope effectively with the problems posed by disestablishment. What is more, internal feuding over Trinity College and the clergy reserves left the impression that the movement for the separation of church and state had the support of some segments of the Anglican community, an impression that could only serve to encourage the voluntarist forces in their campaign of aggression against the Upper Canadian church. Strachan declared in an 1851 address on the subject of Trinity College that "it is indeed to be lamented that we should have any among ourselves indifferent or hostile to our attainment of justice, for though insignificant in number, they are seized upon by our enemies as a pretence for continuing their oppressions, under the assumption that we are not unanimous," a statement which was coupled with the warning that the church would soon take action "so that such rotten branches may be cut off and banished from her fold."<sup>149</sup>

Anglican infighting also highlighted one of the most ironical aspects of the Church of England's experience in Upper Canada. By the

<sup>149</sup> The Church, 16 Oct. 1851.



time Patton issued his appeal for Anglican unity in 1853, it was quite apparent that tractarian theology had provided some clergymen with a strong sense of self-identity while at the same time playing an important part in the church's evolution into a "spiritual society." But it was also obvious, paradoxically enough, that tractarianism had weakened the Anglican cause by depriving the church as a whole of a clear view of its religious character, the very thing it most needed if it was to withdraw from its alliance with the state and confine its energies to the salvation of souls. Seen in this light, the situation of the Church of England in the era of disestablishment takes on near-tragic proportions. Deprived of its political mission in Upper Canadian society, the church could only turn inwards, shunning the entanglements of the temporal world and devoting itself exclusively to its pastoral duties. In so doing, however, it came face to face with the painful fact that while the attacks of its opponents had undermined its sense of purpose in the political sphere, the factionalism of its own clergy and laity had left it hopelessly confused about its role as a religious organization.

## CONCLUSION

In reviewing the Anglican experience in Upper Canada, it seems appropriate to begin by summarizing what has already been said concerning the Church of England's record as a religious organization. S. D. Clark argued in his Church and Sect in Canada that the Church of England's character as an old world "church type," a primarily upper-class institution noted, among other things, for its inflexible organizational structure and its formal religious "style," blinded it to the needs and spirit of a frontier society, and, as a necessary result, prevented it from keeping pace with its sectarian rivals. But, as has already been shown at some length, there are several objections to this application of Turnerian frontierism and the church-sect typology of Troeltsch and Niebuhr to the religious development of Upper Canada. First, by the 1840s the Church of England was the largest single denomination in Upper Canada, a fact which in itself totally demolishes the argument that the Anglican "church type" was a dismal failure on the Upper Canadian frontier. Secondly, the expansion in the sphere of parochial labours in the years after the War of 1812, the appointment of travelling missionaries throughout the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, and the foundation of two missionary bodies, the SCCIPGDS and the Church Society, make it obvious that Clark greatly underestimated the flexibility of the Church of England's organizational structure. Thirdly, there is little evidence to substantiate the claim that the

Church of England's emotionally sterile religious style was of crucial importance in limiting its popular appeal, and indeed it is even possible to argue that the formalism of Anglican church services was a positive advantage in the more urbanized, commercialized, and culturally sophisticated society of the post-1830 period. Finally, while Anglican clergymen had an élitist perception of their own position in Upper Canadian society, the church itself, contrary to Clark's assertions, was a socially inclusive institution, drawing its members not only from the ranks of the "gentility" in the well-established "rural communities" and larger towns, but from every group and class in the colony.

Of course, the Church of England was not nearly as successful in the world of politics. Under the Constitutional Act of 1791, one-seventh of the public lands in the new colony of Upper Canada were set aside for the maintenance of a "Protestant Clergy," a phrase which was clearly intended to apply to the Church of England alone. This policy of church establishment, however, was in striking contrast to the Church of England's position in the pre-1820 period: during these years the clergy reserves proved almost totally useless as a source of revenue, and the church itself, far from resembling the "national church" envisioned by the imperial planners of 1791, remained pathetically weak in terms both of clerical manpower and popular support. To improve the fortunes of the established church, Strachan took steps in the 1820s and 1830s to increase the profitability of the clergy reserves and to lay the foundations of an Anglican-controlled educational system. But as it turned out, these efforts on Strachan's part only succeeded in igniting demands for the separation of church and state. Year by year

this voluntarist campaign gained steadily in momentum, and by the early 1850s it had achieved all of its objectives. During the course of the 1840s a non-sectarian common school system was erected, replacing the denominational system whose foundations had been laid under the Common School Act of 1816; in 1849 King's College, an institution which Strachan had established single-handed, was transformed into the secular University of Toronto; and as the crowning touch, in 1854 the MacNab-Morin ministry secularized the clergy reserves, lands which had always been the cornerstone of Strachan's design for the religious development of Upper Canada.

Given the religiously pluralistic nature of Upper Canadian society, it was hardly surprising that the Church of England's privileged position should have become the focus of a concerted attack by rival denominations and reform politicians. What was surprising, however, was the obstinacy of Anglican clergyman in clinging to policies which were totally unacceptable to the majority of Upper Canadians. From the 1820s to the early 1850s Anglican clergymen did not show the slightest inclination to reach an accommodation with the Church of England's opponents. On the contrary, they remained firm in their commitment to the principle of church establishment and rejected out of hand any measure which would undermine their church's favoured status. Thus, when the policy of church establishment first came under attack in the 1820s and 1830s, Strachan responded by denouncing the proponents of religious equality and by stoutly defending Anglican privileges in the educational sphere and the Church of England's monopoly of the clergy reserves. Later, in the post-union period, the clergy as a whole

took an equally uncompromising stance on all issues of church-state relations. The common schools erected under the aegis of Egerton Ryerson were repeatedly described as a "godless" creation that threatened to undermine the foundations of the social order; fierce opposition was offered to successive pieces of legislation on the thorny university question, and when the "infidel" Baldwin bill of 1849 became law steps were immediately taken to establish a university that would be under exclusive Church of England control; and finally, all attempts to deal with the clergy reserves controversy, whether by dividing the proceeds amongst all denominations or by adopting the principle of complete secularization, were attacked as sacrilegious assaults on the divinely sanctioned principle of church establishment.

To some extent, the Church of England's inflexibility on church-state issues reflected the strengths and weaknesses of one clergyman in particular--John Strachan. In terms of sheer ability, force of character, and almost demonic energy, Strachan was without question one of the leading Upper Canadians of his generation. Besides being at the centre of virtually all the political controversies that rocked the colony, Strachan was without equal amongst Anglican clergymen, and throughout the first half of the nineteenth century he played a crucial role in directing the course of the church's evolution in Upper Canadian society. Yet, when all is said and done, the fact remains that certain elements of Strachan's character proved extremely damaging to the Anglican cause. Driven by an unflinching sense of the validity of his own views, Strachan had little patience with those who dared to criticize his plans for the religious and political development of the

colony. Whenever his vision of the good society came under attack, he instinctively rushed headlong into the fray, intent not on reasoning with his opponents but on bludgeoning them into submission. In adopting such a combative stance, of course, he was merely displaying one of his most distinguishing, and in some ways most admirable, characteristics: his fervent determination to remain unyielding on matters of principle. But it is also clear that his refusal to consider the need for some sort of accommodation with the forces of voluntarism contributed significantly to the acrimony and polarization of Upper Canadian political life, and at the same time reinforced the Church of England's sense of isolation from the society in which it functioned.

It is tempting to conclude on the basis of Strachan's record in defending Anglican privileges that the most influential churchman in Upper Canada was little more than a mulish political brawler. To be sure, such a conclusion would not be totally unfounded, for Strachan often gave the impression that he would have been somewhat at sea if life had not offered him an abundant supply of battles to fight and enemies to subdue. At a deeper level, however, the intransigence not only of Strachan but of all Anglican clergymen was due less to an unquenchable thirst for political controversy than to a strong belief in the value of Upper Canada's church establishment. As members of a church that had been legally established in England since the sixteenth century, Strachan and his fellow Anglican clergymen inherited the idea that the policy of church establishment enabled the Church of England to disseminate sound religious principles and to act as a guardian of social and political stability. This perspective on the principle of

church establishment undoubtedly provided them with an emotionally compelling, even inspiring, view of their church's importance in the Upper Canadian community. But it also locked them into an ideological strait jacket which blinded them to the realities of the colony's religious life. Although complete religious equality was the only practical policy in a society as religiously pluralistic as Upper Canada, Anglican clergymen remained convinced that a close connection existed between the favoured status of the Church of England and their society's survival as a bastion of stability and British patriotism. Consequently, even when it became apparent that disestablishment was inevitable, Strachan and every other Anglican clergyman saw no choice but to continue clinging to privileges which were the foundation stone of the Church of England's mission in Upper Canada.

This commitment to the policy of church establishment not only explains why Anglican clergymen resisted, right to the bitter end, all attempts to sever the union of church and state; it also accounts for some of the more curious features of Anglican political discourse in the pre-Confederation era. In the case of the leading Anglican clergyman in the colony, Professor S. F. Wise has written that "Strachan's mind was rather like a megalithic monument: strong, crude and simple. It moved in straight lines, was impatient of subtleties and qualifications . . . and was unleavened by what might be variously described as realism, a sense of proportion or merely as a sense of the absurd."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wise, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History," p. 14.

The same might be said of the Anglican mind generally. From the 1790s onwards Anglican clergymen inhabited a world that was closed to people of other faiths and political persuasions. Convinced that the policy of church establishment had been sanctioned by God himself, they tended to see the Church of England as an institution which, as a witness to the divine will, was engaged in an endless struggle with the forces of darkness. At no time did they stand back and critically examine the underlying assumptions of their own position on the issue of church establishment; nor did they pay much attention to the things being said by their opponents. When the point was made that no church should receive preferential treatment in a religiously diverse society, Anglican clergymen responded either by dwelling upon the role of the established church as a mainstay of the social order and the imperial tie, or by insisting with tiresome repetitiveness that the Church of England was legally established under the Constitutional Act. These arguments, admittedly, certainly possessed an internal logic of their own, but they hardly came to terms with the fundamental issue of the debate—the impracticality of the policy of church establishment in a society where the Church of England was only one denomination amongst many.

Ironically, the inflexibility of the Anglican mind led Church of England clergymen to underestimate, if not totally ignore, the fundamental conservatism of their own society. It has long been recognized—thanks, once again, to the work of Professor Wise<sup>2</sup>--that Tories and

<sup>2</sup> See particularly Wise's article "Upper Canada and the Conserva-



reformers in Upper Canada shared a common body of assumptions and values, notably a deep-seated, passionate hostility to the United States, a commitment to the imperial connection and all the things which that connection symbolized, and a belief in the desirability of an ordered, class-structured society. This conservative consensus, needless to say, embraced the clergy of the Church of England; indeed, one of the most striking aspects of the Church of England's experience in Upper Canada was the Anglican clergy's profoundly conservative position on a wide range of social and political issues. Yet this having been said, it is also true that Anglican clergymen became increasingly alienated as they followed the course of political life in the pre-Confederation era, and that during these years they repeatedly accused other denominations and reform politicians of undermining the fabric of Upper Canadian society. In responding this way, however, they failed to realize that the Church of England and the forces of religious and political reform were divided not over basic values and ultimate goals, but only over the strategy to be adopted in moulding the colony along lines that were favoured by most Upper Canadians. Contrary to Anglican charges, for example, critics of Upper Canada's system of oligarchical rule, far from aiming at the creation of an independent republic, were inspired by the conviction that the introduction of responsible government would strengthen the colony's ties with the mother country. Similarly, the opponents of the Church of England's

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tive Tradition," in Profiles of a Province: Studies in the History of Ontario (Toronto, 1967), pp. 20-33.

privileged position agreed with the basic tenets of the Anglican vision of the good society; they differed from Anglican clergymen only in believing that the policy of church establishment was a blatant iniquity which should be repudiated in the best interests of the colony as a whole. Unfortunately, since Anglican clergymen saw their church's favoured status not as an impediment to the progress of Upper Canada but as an indispensable safeguard of social and political stability, they inevitably concluded that the voluntarist campaign for the separation of church and state threatened the colony's conservative character. They could not have been more mistaken,

Perhaps the most interesting facet of the Anglican experience in Upper Canada was the church's response to defeats in the political arena. When the Church of England lost its battle to preserve its favoured status in the field of education and to retain its share of the clergy reserves, it also lost privileges which were central to its sense of political purpose. As a result, although Anglican clergymen remained as committed as ever to the policy of church establishment, they gradually began to redefine their church's place in Upper Canadian society. Since it became clear in the course of the 1840s and 1850s that the church could no longer hope to play a central role in secular affairs, some clergymen and laymen argued that the Church of England should resign itself to the inevitability of disestablishment, free itself from the clutches of an evil state, and devote itself exclusively to its duties as a religious organization. This anti-erastian view of the church's role was in marked contrast to the Anglican clergy's earlier belief that the connection between the state and the

Church of England was the linchpin of the social and political order. It also signalled a sharp break from the idea, which had hitherto been unquestioned in Anglican circles, that the Church of England's social and religious responsibilities embraced the entire colony. Apart from being an explicit rejection of the old notion that the Church of England was a key force in the maintenance of the colony's stability, the new vision of an Anglican "spiritual society" rested on the conviction that even in the religious sphere the time had come for the church to turn its back on a community which had grown morally corrupt. More often than not, when Anglican clergymen in the post-union period spoke grandiloquently of their church's mission as a witness to the true faith, the implication was that the Church of England would henceforth concentrate on tending the spiritual welfare of its own members rather than on saving the souls of those unfortunates outside the fold.

The Anglican clergy's introverted frame of mind was even evident in one of the church's greatest accomplishments--its gradual evolution into a self-governing and self-supporting institution. During the politically turbulent 1830s Anglican clergymen became convinced of the need to strengthen the church's institutional foundations, and in subsequent years this conviction led to the founding of the Church Society, a body designed to enhance the church's financial independence, and to the holding of visitations in 1851, 1853, and 1854 which were the precursors of the Anglican synod established in 1857. Taken together, these twin developments in the church's institutional evolution provided concrete proof that reverses in the world of politics had produced a growing spirit of self-reliance in the Anglican community, a

quality that the church needed in abundance if it was to survive the crisis of disestablishment and come to terms with the changing conditions of Upper Canadian religious life. However, it is also clear that the Church Society and the synodical movement were inspired by a paradoxical view of the church's place in the wider community. Again and again Anglican clergymen and laymen argued that only a self-supporting and self-governing church would be able to act as a united body in fending off the attacks of its enemies. Yet, strangely enough, they let it be known at the same time that the Church Society and an Anglican synod should be seen as symbols of the church's independence from a sinful state. These conflicting views co-existed in the Anglican mind throughout the period under study, but when disestablishment became a reality in the late 1840s and early 1850s the tendency to regard the Church Society and an Anglican synod as symbols of the church's independence became more pronounced. By the time the clergy reserves were secularized in 1854, it almost seemed that calls for a self-governing and self-supporting Church of England were based on a vision of the day when the church would stand totally alone, isolated not only from the influence of an oppressive state but also from the moral rot afflicting the entire Upper Canadian community.

Having rejected the world, Anglican clergymen had little interest in changing it. In the first half of the nineteenth century the Church of England, compared with other Protestant denominations in Upper Canada, played an insignificant part in movements of social reform, particularly those movements pledged to temperance and the abolition of American slavery. This apathy on matters of broad social concern

was due partly to the Church of England's innate conservatism, and partly to the belief of high churchmen that the church would sully its catholic and apostolic character by cooperating with other religious groups in non-sectarian organizations. But it is also possible that there were more intangible factors at work. During these years the Anglican clergy's increasingly introverted view of their church's place in Upper Canadian society had the effect of inhibiting the growth of a social conscience in the Anglican community. Regarding the Church of England more and more as an institution that was concerned exclusively with the spiritual welfare of its own members, Anglican clergymen were oblivious to the social issues then engaging the attention of other Upper Canadians. At the same time, their belief that it was necessary to isolate themselves from a sinful society meant that they were unwilling to involve themselves in ventures which would compromise their church's purity. In these circumstances, Anglican clergymen may well have shunned social reform movements because they felt that such movements, besides being outside the church's range of interests, were part of a morally corrupt society which the Church of England was obliged to spurn. Indeed, since there is no reason to believe that this cast of mind did not remain strong after the secularization of the clergy reserves, it even seems likely that the Anglican clergy's perception of their church as an institution apart was one of the major reasons why the Church of England played a relatively minor role in the social gospel movement of the late nineteenth century.

Shunning the society in which they lived did not solve all of the Anglican clergy's problems. On the contrary, when Anglican clergymen in

the post-union period began to turn inwards, they became painfully aware that the Church of England, largely because of the theological divisions spawned by the Oxford movement, lacked a clear sense of its nature as a religious institution. From the beginning, tractarianism provided many clergymen and laymen both with a sophisticated and compelling interpretation of the Anglican religious message, and with a no less inspiring view of the role the Church of England should play in its relationship with the state. Yet it also produced a rift between high churchmen and Evangelicals, a rift that was evident in bitter exchanges on points of theology and in disputes over a variety of issues touching upon the church's internal organization and political position. In addition to hindering the church in its struggle to defend the policy of church establishment, this conflict between high and low churchmen underlined the fact that the Church of England was becoming confused about its spiritual mission at precisely the moment when developments elsewhere were undermining its sense of purpose as a political force. What is more, the theological bickering of these years raised serious questions about the Church of England's future in Upper Canadian religious life. When Anglicans talked of their church's nature as a "spiritual society," they were assuming that all clergymen and laymen subscribed to the same interpretation of the meaning of the Anglican faith. In reality, however, feuding between high churchmen and evangelicals made it clear that a shared religious vision was exactly what the Church of England lacked. Other than a mutual commitment to social and political conservatism, the only thing low church and high church Anglicans had in common was an unwillingness to tolerate

rival definitions of the via media.

All in all, then, the record of the Upper Canadian church was rather mixed. In some respects the church was quite successful: it had far more popular support than is generally believed; it proved highly flexible, at least after the War of 1812, in meeting the religious needs of a rapidly growing society; and in the post-rebellion period it made significant strides in transforming itself into a self-supporting and self-governing institution. However, in other areas the church's failures were only too apparent. From the 1820s onwards the Church of England was engaged in a continuous battle to protect its privileged position in Upper Canadian society, but its efforts in this direction met with a series of crushing defeats in the years after the rebellion, defeats that culminated with the secularization of the clergy reserves in 1854. Furthermore, as if this situation was not serious enough, the Church of England in the 1840s and 1850s had to come to grips with the fact that its sense of mission as a religious and political force had become a thing of the past. With every victory for the voluntarist campaign, it became increasingly clear to Anglican clergymen that the Church of England could no longer hope to act as the bastion of the social and political order. Consequently, they gradually began to hope that a self-governing and self-supporting church, released from its dependence on the local government, would turn its back on Upper Canadian society and evolve into an institution that was primarily concerned not with inculcating conservative values and guiding the course of political life but with meeting the religious needs of its own members. Unfortunately, this vision of the church's future ignored

a basic problem--the division of the church itself along theological lines. By the early 1850s the endless wrangling between the high church and low church parties had made two things apparent--first, that the Anglican community would have to subdue its internal divisions if a self-governing Church of England was to manage its affairs in an effective and harmonious fashion; and second, that the Upper Canadian church would have to arrive at a clear view of its own religious character before it could expect to realize its destiny as a "spiritual society." On the latter score, when the clergy reserves bill became law in 1854, the Church of England's future looked bleak. At one level, it was obvious that the church had lost sight of its religious mission at the very time when it was losing that spirit of secular messianism which had inspired Anglican clergymen in earlier years. At another level, it was equally obvious that the church would have difficulty evolving into a primarily spiritual organization, an organization whose main goal was to spread its religious message throughout Upper Canadian society, as long as its own clergy and laity held radically different views of the Anglican doctrinal position. In sum, the only question that remained to be answered in 1854 was whether the Church of England could hope to prosper in Upper Canada when its sense of purpose in both the temporal and spiritual spheres had become nothing more than a distant memory.



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