

## GEORGE MONRO GRANT AND THE BOW OF ULYSSES: AN ECUMENICAL VISION IN VICTORIAN CANADA

The 1960's marked the decade at which Christian Canada, long on life support, finally expired.<sup>1</sup> George Parkin Grant's *Lament for a Nation* (1965) provided an eloquent, if slightly oblique, eulogy. No one had spoken more forcefully or acted more energetically on behalf of Christian Canada - in its English-speaking variant - than his grandfather, the Rev. George Monro Grant. His talents as a journalist and preacher of national righteousness, his organizational skills and fund-raising abilities made him a significant player on the political landscape. He had been on familiar terms with both Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and once urged the young Mackenzie King to consider a call to ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church.<sup>2</sup> (King would conclude, after the usual agonizing in his diary, that God's will was more conveniently aligned with his own political ambitions.) However unconvincing King would later become in his self-appointed role as a "Knight of the Holy Spirit"<sup>3</sup> and champion of Christian Canada, it had once produced individuals like Grant or the French Roman Catholic politician and journalist, Henri Bourassa, people who worked effectively and sacrificially for the public good as they understood it. Part of what gave the grandson's lament its poignancy was a gloomy sense of what had been lost and a foreboding about the 'liberal' future, in the absence of any shared and substantive account of the human good.

In no sphere was George Monro Grant's contribution to the public good more significant than his involvement in establishing two universities, Dalhousie in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Queen's in Kingston. Neither were sectarian institutions; both were intended to produce the Christian leadership that Grant assumed necessary for Canada to successfully exploit the possibilities opened up by the political fact of Confederation. The practical objective of a university education, as Grant explained every year in moving convocation addresses, was to be equipped for participation and leadership in the providential purposes of God, purposes for which the British Empire and a Christian Canada were means. In the case of Dalhousie, Grant assembled a coalition of badly

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<sup>1</sup> Mark A. Noll, *What Happened to Christian Canada?* (Vancouver, 2007); Catherine Anne Gidney, *A long eclipse: the liberal Protestant establishment and the Canadian University 1920- 1970* (Kingston, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> W.L.M. King diary, Jan 3, 4, 1897

<sup>3</sup> Joy E. Esbrey, *Knight of the Holy Spirit: A Study of William Lyon Mackenzie King* (Toronto, 1980).

divided Maritime Presbyterians in the 1860's and reached out, unsuccessfully, to sister denominations in order to resuscitate a provincial public university that had floundered for lack of church support. At Queen's in the 1880's and 90's he pushed a formally Presbyterian institution in an ecumenical direction so that it might become a generically Christian and national university. After his death in 1902 that ambition collapsed in the face of the secularizing impulses of the twentieth century and Jewish political protest. No one else possessed the requisite organizational skills and drive or the political influence to bend the bow of Ulysses.

In her official history of the university, Hilda Neatby writes that Grant's death, "came to the university not only as a grief and loss, but as a grave blow. The prayer of his dying hours, 'Give me a chance, Oh my God, give me a chance,' was not untypical of attitude to his work. Paraphrasing the young Pitt, he might have been saying, 'I know that I can save Queen's and no one else can.' It was now that the student's gay and affectionate references of 'Geordie our King' began to represent a real and tragic truth. The superb politician who could dominate the General Assembly, inspire respect if not awe in Ontario's politicians, and at Queen's make 'all the departments of the university administration...simply mouthpieces of his will' had died at a critical point in the history of the university."<sup>4</sup>

That much is certainly true. Unfortunately, her account of the ensuing debate that eventually resulted in severing the legal link between Queen's University and the Presbyterian Church a decade later loses the main thread of the story amidst the ensuing chaotic decision-making process and personality conflicts. Instead of an ecumenically Christian and national university, an objective that Grant formulated as a student in Glasgow fifty years earlier, the result, in 1912, was a secularized institution without a confessional identity that had lost its momentum. It would drift for the next several decades without effective leadership. The unraveling of Grant's plans for Queen's and its failure to become the university he hoped to create provides a useful marker in tracing the twentieth-century estrangement of Christian faith and the university. It also portended the death of the Christian Canada it was intended to serve. The Christian nation that Grant had championed from Confederation until his own death was a "dead man walking" - even before the massive social impact of World War One.

No issue polarized Canadian Presbyterians in nineteenth-century Canada more deeply than the question of Church and State. It had obvious implications for university education. The

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<sup>4</sup> Hilda Neatby, *Queen's University Vol I, 1841-1917* (Montreal, 1978), 245

Secessionist and Free Church strands of Scottish Presbyterianism were content to have the State take responsibility for general education and to focus on providing professional theological training for clergy. This was the model adopted by Knox College at the University of Toronto and Presbyterian College at McGill. The established Church of Scotland tradition, however, because it understood Christian faith to be at the centre of national culture, saw the necessity for a closer connection between a general education in Arts and Science and theology. Requiring prospective ministers to acquire an Arts degree before studying theology obviously made little sense if the education in question served mostly to unsettle, confuse and undermine Christian faith. The “Auld Kirk” cherished the traditional ideal of a university and the coherence of human knowledge. No less than in the High Middle Ages, Christian faith was assumed to provide the integrating element to all dimensions of life and the human personality. Rather than the fragmented, specialized and pluralist world of the modern multiversity, Christian faith was to provide the fundamental orientation for the university as a whole. From such a perspective, the importance of universities and the rational expression of Christian faith in all domains of human knowledge were obvious.

Unlike Scottish Secessionism or Free Church Presbyterianism, which stuck closely to the seventeenth-century theology of the Westminster Confession (1647), the established Church opened itself to the influence of the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment and sought to hold faith and reason together as two parts of a complimentary whole - with God as the author of all truth. In its openness to rational critique and intellectual debate within the culture as a whole, the Church of Scotland tradition reflected an optimistic faith in the self-authenticating nature of truth over the long term. Eventually, vindicated by vigorous intellectual challenge and the rough and tumble of history, God’s truth would prevail. The Secessionist tradition operated with a more typically Puritan suspicion of culture as part of the dark realm of fallen and unredeemed nature from which little but human perversity could be expected, and out of which individuals needed to be saved “as brands plucked from the burning.” This fundamental difference in understanding the theological relationship between nature and grace, creation and redemption had implications for education which are captured in the distinction between church and sect. The Secessionist strand of Scottish Presbyterianism represented the sectarian tendency within Christian faith. The focus lay on the gathered congregation of God’s elect rather than the nation at large.

George Monro Grant was unusual - perhaps unique - amongst nineteenth-century Canadian Presbyterians in the way in which his background and education enabled him to straddle and eventually forge alliances across this Presbyterian political and theological divide. Although he came from Church of Scotland stock, the strand of the Scottish Presbyterianism that voted Conservative and supported the possibility of an established church as a bulwark of the social order, he attended the Secessionist West River Seminary for two years before leaving for Glasgow between 1853 and 1860. He thus received an education and made friends with those on the other side of the divide. The influence of the Rev. Thomas McCulloch (1776 - 1843), a formidable educator of Secessionist conviction, was still strong at West River in the person of his student, the Rev. James Ross. From McCulloch's perspective there was little need for any theological dialogue with the larger culture since the truth had already found ultimate expression in the 1647 Westminster Confession, a document which McCulloch expounded thoroughly and pugnaciously against all comers in such works as *Popery Condemned* (1808) *Popery Again Condemned* (1810) and the posthumously published *Calvinism, the doctrine of the Scriptures*. (1847). Theological rigidity and an inability to see truth in any position but his own made him a poor dialogue partner and politician, though it certainly provided Grant with a good grounding in what was called the "Calvinist system." When political conflict eventually brought McCulloch's educational ambitions to an end in Pictou County, he was appointed the first President of the state-controlled Dalhousie University in Halifax where he taught moral philosophy, logic and rhetoric in the few remaining years of his life.

After two years at the West River Seminary, in Durham, Pictou County, Grant was sent by the Church of Scotland to Glasgow, where he absorbed the "Broad Church" vision of national Christianity associated with Victorian worthies like Thomas Arnold, the Rev. Charles Kingsley and Grant's mentor, the Rev. Norman McLeod, minister of the Barony church in Glasgow and a favorite preacher of Queen Victoria's. There his theology would be reshaped under the impact of nineteenth-century Scotland's greatest theologian, the Rev. John McLeod Campbell<sup>5</sup> and the writings of Thomas Carlyle. He would return to Nova Scotia in 1860 certain of the unity of all

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh, 1996).

truth, that theology was “the Queen of the sciences,”<sup>6</sup> a great believer in Christendom and convinced of the need to establish Christian institutions in the land of his birth if the country was to escape the hedonistic, utilitarian “Profit-and-Loss philosophy” that Carlyle railed against, the philosophy that made “Soul synonymous with Stomach and grinds out Virtue from the husks of Pleasure.” Carlyle’s admonition from *Sartor Resartus* (1836) lay constantly on his lips: “There is a Higher in man than love of happiness; he can do without happiness, and instead find blessedness. Love not pleasure, love God. This is the Everlasting Yea, wherein all contradictories are solved; therein whoso works and walks it is well with him.”<sup>7</sup> Students needed to be saved from the godless politics of rational self-interest, hedonism, possessive individualism and contract, and pointed instead to the blessedness of participation in divine love and God’s project of mending the world. It was a powerful vision and one that would sustain him as a culture warrior for the next forty years.

Soon after his return to Nova Scotia in 1860, Grant spearheaded a campaign to re-establish Dalhousie University, moribund since McCulloch’s death in 1843. Making good use of his contacts on both sides of the Secessionist/ established Church of Scotland divide and working with both the Conservative leader Charles Tupper and Liberal Premier Joseph Howe in the Nova Scotia Assembly, Grant brokered a deal which saw the Assembly reorganize and refinance Dalhousie, in partnership with a united Presbyterian front that brought both financial and political support to the table.<sup>8</sup> Existing endowments covered the cost of three professors, to which combined Presbyterian efforts would add three more. James Ross, as professor of ethics and political economy, was named President of the revived college in 1864, and soon received an honorary degree from the established Church of Scotland institution in Kingston, Ontario: Queen’s College. Thomas McCulloch Jr. assumed the position of professor of natural philosophy. Grant more or less singlehandedly raised the 4000 pounds required to endow the chair of mathematics, to which his Glasgow friend, the Rev. Charles Macdonald, was soon appointed. Macdonald would become the most popular teacher on faculty and eventually its *de facto* President. Macdonald also served as Clerk of Session at Grant’s church, St. Matthew’s, the largest and wealthiest Presbyterian

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<sup>6</sup> G. M. Grant, “The Outlook of the Twentieth Century in Theology” *The American Journal of Theology* 6 (Jan 1902), 16.

<sup>7</sup> W. L. Grant and Frederick Hamilton, *Principal Grant* (Toronto, 1904), 505.

<sup>8</sup> *Principal Grant*, 62. citing article in the *Monthly Record*, June 1862.

congregation in the Maritimes. Dalhousie's existing endowments were used to employ the Rev. William Lyall, professor of logic and metaphysics, who came from a Free Church background, and George Lawson, professor of chemistry and mineralogy who moved to Halifax from Queen's to take up the position. The only non-Presbyterian member of the faculty, Irish Anglican John Johnson, was appointed to teach classics when the Rev. Dr. John Prior, former President of Acadia and minister of the Granville Street Baptist church refused to resign his pastoral charge as a condition for the appointment. Five of the six faculty members were thus Presbyterian, three of them clergy.

This heavy Presbyterian influence over what was legally a non-denominational, provincial institution would continue well into the twentieth century, despite Grant's best efforts to broaden the base of support. Other denominations were invited to join in an ecumenical partnership, with seats on the governing board allocated in proportion to the number of chairs endowed. But there were no takers. Baptists were not inclined to uproot Acadia College from Wolfville, founded in protest a quarter century earlier when their candidate, Dr. Edmund Crawley, had been rejected as professor of Classics at Dalhousie by the governing board of the day. Denominational loyalty and the distance from Sackville, New Brunswick to Halifax similarly precluded Methodist cooperation. Although Grant pushed hard for a union with the Anglican King's College, established in Windsor since 1789, those efforts were similarly unsuccessful.<sup>9</sup> It would only finally relocate to Halifax in 1923 in response to a financial crisis and enticed with money from the Carnegie foundation. Roman Catholics already had St. Mary's in Halifax and St. Francis Xavier's in Antigonish. Moreover Presbyterian animosity against "the Church of the anti-Christ", which Thomas McCulloch had helped stoke early in nineteenth-century Nova Scotia, was still not unknown in later years. Grant was unique amongst Presbyterian clergy in the way he joined boisterously in St. Patrick's banquets<sup>10</sup> and established a close friendship with the Irish Archbishop of Halifax, Thomas Conolly. He sat for hours at Conolly's death bed and wrote a moving eulogy in the *Halifax Morning Herald*.<sup>11</sup> One of Conolly's accomplishments involved the establishment of a school for girls by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. In 1914, Mount St. Vincent would begin granting university degrees though affiliation with Dalhousie. But in the 1860's and 70's,

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<sup>9</sup> *Principal Grant*, 66.

<sup>10</sup> *Principal Grant*, 116.

<sup>11</sup> *Principal Grant*, 175-77.

Grant's openness to Roman Catholics was very much a minority position - as the rabble-rousing, ex-priest the Rev. Charles Chiniquy would take pleasure in publicly demonstrating from Grant's own pulpit.<sup>12</sup> Thus Dalhousie would be carried into the twentieth century as a public university on Presbyterian energy, financial support, leadership and commitment to education.

In the judgment of Dalhousie's official historian, P. B. Waite, Presbyterians were galvanized into concerted action for the public good by Joseph Howe, then Liberal Premier. Waite points to Howe's longstanding friendship with the Rev. Peter MacGregor, minister of the Poplar Grove congregation in Halifax and a confidential letter to him in June of 1862 that included "some frank suggestions" that he could show to "his Presbyterian friends."<sup>13</sup> Rather than being the catalyst, however, it is just as likely that the letter represented a formal indication of government support for an arrangement Presbyterians had already arrived at amongst themselves. The fact that the two rival Presbyterian Synods (the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces and the Synod of the Maritime Provinces of British North America in connection with the Church of Scotland) just happened to be meeting simultaneously in New Glasgow a few days later suggests as much, as does the speed with which an understanding between the hostile parties was arrived at. If Peter MacGregor was an old friend of Howe's, it was Grant who wrote publicly about the need to re-establish Dalhousie and who reached out to the rising star of the Conservative Party, Charles Tupper, to assure him of Auld Kirk support for the arrangement.<sup>14</sup> By combining forces across customary political lines, Presbyterians effectively de-politicized the university question by breaking the association in the public mind of Dalhousie with Howe and the Liberals. The new religious and political coalition held. When the Liberals fell from office not long after passing the legislation, Tupper repelled attempts by Anglicans, Methodists and his fellow Baptists for its repeal. In later years, Presbyterians on both sides pointed to Grant's key role in brokering and financing the deal that was struck.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The Rev. Charles Chiniquy, *Forty Years in the Church of Christ* (Toronto, 1899), 301.

<sup>13</sup> P.B. Waite, *Lives of Dalhousie University: 1818-1925, Lord Dalhousie's College* (MQUP, 1994), 82-94.

<sup>14</sup> In August 1862, Grant had written in *The Monthly Record* deploring "Pharisaic sectarianism in our religion" and warning the same readership that "if Dalhousie were not revived the last hope for higher education of the country on a liberal basis would be lost forever....The college had never had a fair trial; let us give it one." *Principal Grant*, 62

<sup>15</sup> The Rev. George Patterson, *The History of Dalhousie College and University* (Halifax, 1887), 64-67; St. Matthew's United Church Congregational Archives, St Matthew's Scrapbook Vol 1 by R.H. Williams, clipping dated Oct. 24, 1917, 'St. Matthew's Do Honour to Former Pastor; Tribute to G.M. Grant by Dr. Pollok'. "But few know how much of the success [of the revival of Dalhousie College] was due to him. But for him the plan

The union of all the branches of Canadian Presbyterianism in 1875, (a project in which Grant also took a leading part) made possible the re-founding of Pine Hill theological college, now the ecumenical Atlantic School of Theology. As usual, Grant took the lead in raising most of the \$100,000 required for staff and the construction of the buildings on the Northwest Arm.<sup>16</sup> Although he continued as an active member of the Board of Governors of Dalhousie until 1886, Grant had already done the best that could be done at the time to establish a strong generically-Christian university in Nova Scotia.<sup>17</sup> He had shown himself to be without equal in playing the angles and rolling with the politics of such a project at a provincial level. It was time to try his arm on a national scale.

In 1874, in an address to the Evangelical Alliance in Montreal he set out his vision of a national and Christian university. "In our organization as a Dominion, education was left to the different provinces. As far as universities are concerned, a greater mistake could not have been made. There should be common intellectual centres where the young men of the Dominion could form friendships. Ideally, they would be funded by "the liberality of the whole country" rather than being left to "the fostering care of individuals and sects." Grant's Broad Church vision of university education in a Christian Canada implied ecumenical cooperation in a country badly divided along linguistic and religious lines. It was a vision he would continue to pursue, and to which he would inspire others during the quarter century (1877 – 1902) in which he was the Principal of Queen's College in Kingston. Spelling out this vision, he declared that,

"God will give us the church of the future. It shall arise in the midst of us, with no sound of hammer heard upon it, comprehensive of all the good and beauty that He has ever evolved in history. To this church, Episcopacy shall contribute her comely order, her faithful and loving conservatism; and Methodism impart her enthusiasm, her zeal for missions, and her ready adaptiveness to the necessities of the country; the Baptist shall give full testimony to the sacred

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would not have gone into operation. At the same time he had the co-operation of others such as Howe and Tupper and above all the United Presbyterian Church and Principal Ross." James Ross and faculty of Dalhousie College to Grant 20 Nov. 1877 thanking Grant for his work in establishing the College in 1863 and for the energy with which he had pursued its interests on his years on the Board of Governors. ...success of the College thus far due, in no small measure to your labours."

<sup>16</sup> John Thomas McNeil, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada 1875-1925* (Toronto, 1925), 73.

<sup>17</sup> For evidence of Grant's continuing involvement in ecumenical politics as a member of the Board, cf. Robert Murray to Grant Feb 27, 1885. "The Bishop is in the strongest way opposed to [union between Dalhousie and Kings]. But it will be the wisdom of Dalhousie to act as that no part of the fault shall be hers when negotiations cease."



rights of the individual; the Congregationalist his to the freedom and independency of the congregation; and Presbytery shall come with her massive, well-knit strength, holding high the Word of God; and when, or even before, all this comes to pass, that is, when we have proved our Christian charity, as well as our faithfulness, proved it by deeds, not words, who shall say that our Roman Catholic brethren, also shall not see eye to eye with us, and seal with their consent that true unity, the image of which they so fondly love? Why not? God can do greater things even than this. And who of us shall say, God forbid?"<sup>18</sup>

Queen's presented Grant with a different starting point than Dalhousie from which to realize the ambition of a national university. Rather than being the creation of the provincial government, it had been founded by the Church of Scotland in reaction to Presbyterian exclusion from the Anglican King's College in Toronto. As a student in Glasgow, Grant had once shared a meal with Alexander Morris (who would later negotiate the numbered treaties with natives in the Canadian Northwest). Morris was in Scotland in 1859, as part of the delegation in 1859 that recruited the Rev. William Leitch as Principal of Queen's. Over dinner, the conversation turned to the future of the Presbyterian Church, Queen's and their hopes for Canada. They agreed that "that the first steps to be taken were the political union of the different Provinces of British North America into one Confederacy and the Ecclesiastical Union of the different Presbyterian Churches into one, with Queen's as their central seat of learning."<sup>19</sup> Twenty years later, the first two objectives had been achieved and Grant had played a significant role in both. Their third goal proved unrealistic. The newly-formed Presbyterian Church in Canada was still too divided on the subject of university education to be interested in consolidating its efforts in Kingston or in sponsoring the project of a national university. The Church of Scotland wing of the new church, with its ideal of a unified education that tied Arts, Science and Theology together, was a minority partner in the union. The majority viewed Queen's as an expendable encumbrance, a drain on denominational resources more properly devoted to the specialized task of providing professional training for theological students at Knox College in Toronto and Presbyterian College in Montreal. Rather than viewing the Church as a culture-shaping institution with responsibilities for the guidance, preservation and moral leadership of the nation, what Grant characterized as the "sectarian" view relinquished responsibility for post-secondary education to government-funded and controlled institutions like the University of Toronto in all fields but theology. Rather than seeking to sponsor a university at

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<sup>18</sup> Rev. G.M. Grant "The Church in Canada: is such a thing possible?" (Montreal, 1874).

<sup>19</sup> G. M. Grant Papers, Correspondence, 4426.

which students came together to think about and enter into dialogue about “the whole” of human knowledge from the perspective of Christian faith, it restricted its focus and ambition to the specialized training of its own clergy and the perpetuation of denominational distinctiveness.

Grant caught the imagination of the Ontario public when his inaugural address was printed in the *Toronto Globe*. In it he spelled out the broad outlines of his educational policy at Queen’s and pointed to his guiding conviction of the ultimate unity of truth in all spheres of human knowledge, particularly science and Christian faith. Grant insisted that piety and learning, reason and revelation, faith and science could not ultimately contradict each other. The harmony between reason and revelation were taken as axiomatic. “The truth is one even as God is one; that though His revelations are sporadic, multiform and often dark, the glorious beauty of the All shall yet be seen.”<sup>20</sup> To assume otherwise, was to sink into the rank agnosticism of the modern multi-versity. Protestantism, Grant insisted, had nothing to fear from honest inquiry. The Church needed to courageously open itself to the scientific questions of a new age in the faith that it would not be confounded. “There are four Testaments, an oldest and an old, a new and a newest. The oldest Testament is the Nature of Things; the newest is Christ's continued life in the present influence of the Holy Spirit. The oldest and the newest are unwritten; the old and the new are written; but the voices of the four are as one....God cannot be inconsistent with himself. Partial views come not from him, but from us, from our narrowness and intolerance, and such views are dishonourable to Him.”

Because God was Truth, all four Testaments could be investigated and interpreted fearlessly. To those who argued that scientific investigation unsettled faith and was pursued in a spirit antagonistic to religion, Grant urged a deeper reliance on the God of Truth. The antidote to bad science was more science. Science itself would ultimately humble the irreligious prejudices of some scientists. “Collect all the facts and rightly interpret them, and you will find that they prove subversive of all anti-Christian theories.” Old theology and new science needed to be reconciled in

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<sup>20</sup> *The Globe*, Dec. 8, 1877, 2 ; cf. Grant Papers, Vol 13, notebook beginning Lecture I (To be delivered Div Student's Queen's Dec 10th, 1877) p. 90. “God of nature and God of grace are not two Gods but one. Look with suspicion on every philosophy which implies “truth” is not One. Such a position leads inevitably to Pyrrhonism ....In almost every department of thought there are men and leading men nowadays who take up this radically wrong position.”

faith - and the university was the natural place for that to happen. Darwinism was sometimes feared and thought to constitute a fundamental challenge to Christian faith. But even if the Darwinian hypothesis were established, Grant wondered aloud, "what possible harm can result to theology?" He quoted Dr. Asa Gray, the Christian Darwinist, to the effect that "it would only mean that what you may have thought was done directly and at once, was done indirectly and successively."<sup>21</sup> "What then is the conclusion of the whole matter? This, that truth is one; that however many sided truth may be, all sides should be considered and though none is able to see the whole in all its glowing full-orbed beauty, we and our children will see it hereafter. Now we see in part, and part satisfies us and even now is the marrow and fatness of the soul."

The ultimate triumph of truth was assured, even if present perspectives were incomplete and provisional. Human beings could lay claim to real knowledge which was significant and for which they were to give thanks. But it was a partial knowledge. Only in the age to come would the truth be revealed completely and God be seen face to face. In the meantime, claims to comprehensive or infallible knowledge by either scientists or clergy were to be resisted. Grant thoroughly believed in the "scientific spirit and method of the age" even while he understood its limitations and resisted Positivistic pretensions to define all truth in scientific terms. John Watson, who was in the audience that night, was impressed by Grant's "abounding energy, insight, largeness of vision, and mastery of men that he produced, as he drew the broad outlines of his policy."<sup>22</sup> These included a fund-raising campaign for a new arts building and the endowment of two new chairs, one in Christian apologetics and the other in Physics. In the event, Grant delivered more than he promised. In addition to the new chair in Christian apologetics, James Fowler was appointed to teach botany, W.L. Goodwin chemistry and D.H. Marshall physics. Grant had himself won prizes as a student in Glasgow in chemistry and studied physics under Lord Kelvin. The split between the arts and the sciences, which would become such a prominent feature of the modern university, did not exist for him. The ideal to which Queen's aspired was the ultimate unity of all human knowledge.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.2. cf. James R. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle to Come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America. 1870 - 1900* (Cambridge, 1979). Moore argues in fact that Calvinists like Gray had little trouble accepting Darwinian notions of natural selection. It fit rather well with Calvinist notions of election. He thinks that the supposed conflict between science and Christian "orthodoxy" has been greatly exaggerated.

<sup>22</sup> John Watson, "Thirty Years in the History of Queen's University" *Queen's Quarterly* 10 (1902), 194.

The arrangements negotiated in preparation for the 1875 Presbyterian union cut Queen's loose from church control. Though still nominally Presbyterian, it effectively became a private institution. Previously its governing body, the Board of Trustees, had been elected by the Synod of the Church of Scotland from a list of persons nominated by individual congregations. After the union, the Board became a self-perpetuating body. Theoretically, the corporation of the university remained the communicants of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and Trustees were required to be Presbyterian, but practically, the church both relinquished control and disclaimed financial responsibility for the university. The four thousand dollars a year promised by the Assembly in 1875, directed solely towards the cost of theological instruction, were a perennial source of grievance since they were always in arrears; about \$9,000 at the time of Grant's death. The only change in the funding pattern occurred in the midst of Grant's plans to amend the Queen's charter so as to separate the Presbyterian theological college from what was to become a broadly ecumenical university. In 1901, the church helped to endow a chair of Church History and the History of Christian Dogma.

Queen's only survived its ecclesiastical neglect during the quarter century of Grant's tenure as Principal because of his skill at tapping the old Church of Scotland constituency in Ontario. The 1878 fundraising campaign raised \$150,000 to establish new chairs in theology and physics and to build the New Arts building. But if Queen's was to become the Christian and national university that Grant envisioned, it obviously required other partners than the newly-formed Presbyterian Church in Canada. Grant cultivated a new and ecumenical funding base in the city of Kingston and the region of Eastern Ontario as he considered ways to draw on the resources of the Provincial government. The two objectives were obviously inter-related. The reason that the secular University College at the University of Toronto had been created in the first place was incessant denominational rivalry and wrangling: Baptist against Presbyterian, Methodist against Anglican, and Protestant against Catholic. It was an exasperated government's response to the ecclesiastical equivalent of Hobbes' "war of all against all." But if Queen's could be transformed into a truly non-sectarian and generically Christian institution, then it might successfully bid for public funding from the provincial government. Instead of being taxed with the unfairness of supporting one denomination over its rivals and paying a political price that no wise government would ever pay, financial support for an institution in which all denominations felt they had a stake might even

yield political dividends. Grant knew from his Nova Scotian experience that the project of university building in Canada was highly political. But he was willing to play a long game.

During the 1880's Grant fought off political pressure to merge Queen's with the government-controlled University of Toronto. Methodists were persuaded to relocate their college from Cobourg and to join with Anglican Evangelicals at Wycliffe and the secular University College in the new federation. St. Michael's (Roman Catholic) and Trinity (High Church Anglican) soon followed. Although offered both the position of Minister of Education by the provincial liberal government of Oliver Mowat and the Presidency of the reconstituted University of Toronto, Grant opted to stay put at Queen's in Kingston. As he explained to J.S Willison, editor of the *Toronto Globe*, the latter offer had little appeal for him. "Here [at Queen's] I have a free hand, and can work towards my ideal. I prefer that, united with poverty, to a nominal presidency, and a struggle against those ecclesiastical and political wire-pullings from which a university must be free, if it is to breed either men or thinkers."<sup>23</sup> Grant cherished the ethos and practice of self-government and fought to preserve the freedom and independence of the institution over which he presided from government control as he would in the next decade resist attempts by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to appoint faculty it was not willing to pay for. Those who would not pay the piper were certainly not going to call the tune.

The combined resources and improved competitive position of the expanded University of Toronto after 1885 provoked an energetic response from Queen's. The \$250,000 raised in the 1887 Jubilee campaign was mostly used to expand the Arts Faculty. Professor James Cappon was called to the new chair of English language and literature, the Rev. John Mcnaughton became professor of Greek, Professor McGillivray assumed responsibility for the teaching of modern languages and two of Professor John Watson's students were engaged: the Rev. Samuel Dyde to teach mental philosophy and the erstwhile theological student, Adam Shortt, began what would become the first department of political economy in Canada.

The new constituency to which Grant increasingly turned his attention and in which he rested his hopes for Queen's future were its alumni and the baptized public of eastern Ontario. At the

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<sup>23</sup> Grant to Willison, March 27, 1895.

convocation in 1886, when Sandford Fleming was re-appointed for the third term to the post of University Chancellor, several honorary degrees were also conferred. One of them went to Father Aeneas McDonell Dawson, Roman Catholic priest at Saint Andrew's Ottawa, author and military chaplain, who had collaborated with Fleming on preparing an ecumenical service for Sunday worship by C.P.R. surveying teams, used "by white men and red men, engineers, voyageurs and explorers, from the upper Ottawa to the Pacific."<sup>24</sup> In 1889, Grant had the university constitution modified so that not all trustees were required to be members of the Presbyterian Church. The constitution of 1874 had already empowered the alumni to elect a chancellor. That document had also established a body elected by graduates, called the university council, which served mostly in an advisory capacity to link the governing body of trustees with the broader base of university supporters. After 1889, this group was empowered to elect five members of the Board of Trustees. They soon included two Anglicans, a Methodist and a Baptist. What provoked commissioners to the 1892 Presbyterian General Assembly, however, were media rumours about two Roman Catholic candidates. Grant successfully repulsed efforts led by William Mortimer Clark, Q.C., later Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, to reassert Assembly's control over the institution it had abandoned in 1874 and which it still refused to adequately fund.

Decision-making power, Grant insisted, needed to be tied to demonstrated willingness to shoulder financial responsibility, which the Presbyterian Church had declined to assume. Clark was hardly a disinterested player at the Assembly. From 1880 until his death in 1915, he was Chairman of the Board of Knox College. His view of Roman Catholics can be gauged from the fact that, in 1888, he served as vice-president of the Equal Rights Association that formed in the backwash of the Jesuit Estates controversy, and was a close political ally of D'Alton McCarthy. His minister, the Rev. Dr. Henry Martyn Parsons, of Knox Church Toronto, enthusiastically expounded the pre-millennial dispensationalist theology of John Nelson Darby, which also explains Clark's active leadership in the Toronto Mission to Israel.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Queen's College Journal*, Vol 13, no 12, May 14, 1886, 168. *Journal*, Oct 30, 1880 cited in Neatby, Queen's, 174.

<sup>25</sup> John Dunlop, *Memories of Gospel Triumphs among the Jews during the Victorian Era* (London, 1894), 469, 470 Dunlop mentions specifically "the lovely city Toronto, where our success reached its climax by a crowded meeting held in Knox Church, and an overflow meeting, also crowded, in the adjoining Hall; at the close of which a collection on behalf of the British Society was taken up amounting to 237 dollars"; Brian J. Fraser, *Church, College and Clergy: a History of Theological Education at Knox College, Toronto, 1844-1994* (McGill-Queens, 1995), 99

Grant represented a very different strand of Presbyterianism in several respects. He had no interest in apocalyptic “End Times” speculation and as little enthusiasm for mission targeted specifically at Jews as he did for Protestant missions targeted at Roman Catholics in Quebec. He believed that such missions only generated a handful of individual proselytes who were then alienated from their community of origin. The alternative they inevitably faced was then emigration or assimilation. Scarce mission resources were far better targeted on missions in India and China where Grant saw a prospect of converting whole societies to their own particular cultural expressions of Christian faith. Grant’s focus was on what God was doing in Canada rather than on what God might be up to in the Middle East; he was not to be bullied or deterred from his ecumenical and national agenda by Clark or anyone else. It was the fixed policy and objective of a lifetime.

Grant enjoyed a close relationship with the Irish-born Conservative and Roman Catholic senator from Kingston, Michael Sullivan, who lectured in surgery in the Queen’s Medical Faculty and operated at Kingston’s Hotel Dieu hospital. Grant also made heroic efforts to get along with Kingston’s irascible Roman Catholic Archbishop Vincent Cleary, although there would be no eloquent tribute to his skills as either a churchman or statesman upon his death as there had been for Grant’s friend, Archbishop Thomas Conolly, in Halifax.<sup>26</sup> Conolly was the only Canadian archbishop who had voted against the promulgation of the dogma of Papal Infallibility at the First Vatican Council, and a Canadian nationalist; Cleary was a staunch Ultramontanist and Irish nationalist. As a leading advocate for Imperial Federation in Canada, Grant exercised enormous restraint in blandly ignoring Cleary’s comprehensive Irish loathing for all things British, but there was little Grant was not prepared to do for the greater good of Queen’s.

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<sup>26</sup> Archbishop Cleary held strong views, among which was that Protestant marriage was “no more than legalized concubinage.” In contributing a marble angel to mark the mass grave of Irish immigrants beside the hospital on the Queen’s campus, he wanted the accompanying plaque was to record both the sufferings of the Irish and the wickedness of their English oppressors. Grant persuaded him to modify the emphasis on the latter point and a witness recalled Grant’s public address in accepting the angel on behalf of Queen’s as a “masterpiece in the art of changing the subject.” T.R. Glover and D.D. Calvin, *A Corner of Empire*, (Cambridge, 1937), 40.



**Fig 1.** *J.W. Bengough's celebration of ecumenical concord in Kingston between Grant and Archbishop Cleary*

The man eventually appointed as the Roman Catholic trustee on the Queen's Board, however, was William Harty, a local businessman and municipal politician who had helped Grant establish the Queen's Women's Medical School in the 1880's.<sup>27</sup> In 1892, Harty had also been elected to the Ontario legislature and soon became the Roman Catholic representative in the Liberal cabinet.

<sup>27</sup> Harty, later M.P. for Kingston, contributed \$1,000 to the construction of Grant Hall. Glover and Calvin, *Corner of Empire*, 157.



Grant's relations with the local Anglican bishop were also good and during the 1890's, new additions to the faculty had an ecumenical flavour. Grant recruited the young English Baptist, T.R. Glover, in 1895 as Latin Professor. William George Jordan, who replaced "Rabbi" John Mowat (the Premier's brother) as the Old Testament professor came from an English Methodist background. A northern Irish Presbyterian, the Rev. Samuel McComb, the first occupant of the Chair of Church History and the History of Christian Dogma would move to Boston after Grant's death. There, as an Episcopalian priest, McComb would become a major figure in the Emmanuel Movement, which combined Christian faith and psychotherapy in spiritual healing. In making these appointments Grant sought to bridge theological instruction and the Arts faculty. Both Glover and the Rev. John Macnaughton, who taught Greek to arts students, were also recruited to help train theological students. Their scholarly expertise helped to flesh out the historical context in which the early church preached the gospel to the classical world. James Cappon from the English department also taught the theological students, as did the Rev. Samuel Dyde whose specialty was explaining John Watson's idealism to students bewildered by "the secret of Hegel."

This overlap between Arts and Theology on the university campus, so prized by Grant, obviously reflected the Church of Scotland ideal of what a proper theological education involved. For a theological college to be more than a Bible School required relating Christian revelation to the culture which had developed around it. Before the European suicide of the First World War, it was a plausible strategy. The well-known Alumni Lecture series at Queen's through the 1890's were a reflection and an extension to the general public of the intellectual ferment on campus. The Methodist preacher, Salem Bland, was not mistaken in identifying Queen's as the hub of stimulating theological discussion in Canadian during that decade. It is a judgment in that Canadian historians have subsequently shared.<sup>28</sup> Grant's importance in fostering such an environment is suggested by the fact that it did not long survive his death. Queen's became a less

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<sup>28</sup> John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Burlington, 1988), 80ff "The liveliest academic centre of the period was Queen's university in Kingston, where, as principal, George M Grant cultivated an atmosphere of hospitality to new ideas. The completion of a successful financial campaign in 1887, enabled him to assemble a staff of extremely able teachers, and the foundation of the *Queen's Quarterly* in 1893 was an important milestone in Canadian intellectual history."

interesting place, something of a backwater from where talented people would move on.<sup>29</sup> The intellectual and spiritual energy, so obvious on the campus during the 1890's, dissipated.

Hilda Neatby's history of Queen's devotes a whole chapter to the "unique freedom" that characterized the university over which Grant presided. Looking back on his experience at Queens in the 1890's, Adam Shortt marvelled that the "the social and academic atmosphere at Queen's was so free, self-adjustable and liberal that men of the most varied types found themselves equally at home in it."<sup>30</sup> John Macnaughton noticed upon his arrival that his colleagues were "distinguished for harmony in their mutual relations to an extent which, I fear, is rather rare among the learned." Contemporary observers contrasted Queen's favourably with the more repressive atmosphere that prevailed on the campuses in Toronto and Montreal. When the editor of "The Varsity" was suspended over the student strike at the University of Toronto in 1895 (in which Mackenzie King played a prominent role), he applied to Grant for admission into the Political Science program at Queen's.<sup>31</sup> A McGill student admired the intimate relations between the professors and the students, the fruitful influence of the graduate students in theology and other studies, and the freedom of all to express and defend any new idea, with no censorship of the *Queen's Journal* and the self-regulation of student activities. Such freedom and good feeling were, claimed the *Queen's Journal*, the foundation of 'the Queen's Spirit.' "[Grant] has always treated the students not as boys, but as gentlemen, seeking to lead rather than to coerce, and under his sway there has been no need for normal discipline....It is the *esprit de corps* among the Professors that develops it among the students."<sup>32</sup>

Grant's objective of an ecumenically Christian and national university had in large measure been achieved informally at Queen's by the time of his death in 1902. Besides 384 Presbyterians, the student body included 123 Anglicans, 236 Methodists, 67 Roman Catholics, 16 Baptists 14 Congregationalists and 13 (presumably Jewish) "Others". Jewish students won scholarships on the

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<sup>29</sup> George Rawlyk and Kevin Quinn, *The Redeemed of the Lord Say So: The History of Queen's Theological College 1912-1972* (Kingston, 1980). Professor E.F. Scott moved to Union Theological Seminary, New York. Nathaniel Micklem returned to Mansfield College, Oxford to be its Principal.

<sup>30</sup> Neatby, *Queen's*, 180,182,193-210.

<sup>31</sup> James A. Tucker to Grant. 11 March 1895.

<sup>32</sup> *Queen's Journal*, March 2, 1895.

same basis as those from the various Christian denominations.<sup>33</sup> Amidst the chronic sectarian strife of late nineteenth-century Canada, Queen's was an unusual place. Despite the much more substantial financial resources available to the government-funded University of Toronto and the University of McGill (generously endowed with the proceeds of the Redpath sugar refineries and the Macdonald tobacco factories) it was chronically under-funded Queen's that transformed the sons and daughters of eastern Ontario farms into committed nation builders like Adam Shortt, O.D. Skelton, Charlotte Whitton and the many others who moved from Kingston to the other end of the Rideau Canal to establish the civil service in Ottawa. Grant inspired a generation of robust Christian nationalism on the Queen's campus; its graduates left for Ottawa or for the Canadian West imbued with a strong sense of what Canada could become and a willingness to make personal sacrifices on its behalf. For Grant, that is what justified Queen's claim to be a "national University." A tree was to be known and judged by its fruits.

The annual report submitted by the Queen's Trustees to the General Assembly was for information and as a matter of courtesy rather than because the Assembly actually made decisions about how the university was run. Because of the tumultuous history of sectarian warfare and university funding in Ontario, however, even the mostly formal denominational link with the Presbyterian Church was politically embarrassing for the Liberal government in Toronto. Grant eventually came to the conclusion that the structures of legal governance at Queen's needed to be brought into alignment with the reality he had created on the ground. Grant's strategy at Queen's, as at Dalhousie, involved forging an inter-denominational coalition of church partners such that funding his university became a politically attractive option for the provincial government. Unlike the United States, there was no legal impediment to the state providing funds for confessionally-based educational institutions. It was, in fact, the norm in Quebec. The constraint was political rather than legal. When the electorate, like in Ontario, was divided along denominational lines which easily generated rivalry, jealousy, antagonism, the downside risk was considerable. The inducements required to interest politicians in making such a commitment needed to

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<sup>33</sup> In 1905, Archie Bennett secured a McLeod scholarship. *Canadian Jewish Times*, 26 July 1905; See his "Queen's University Bill" *CJT*, June 7, 1912 written partially in response to Marcus M. Sperber, "The Queen's University Bill" *CJT*, 22 March 1912 and "Protest against the Queen's College Bill" *CJT*, 29 March, 1912. According to Bennett, the Jewish press was woefully incorrect and unfair in the treatment of the matter. Their accounts were for the most part inflammatory rather than instructive. . . . No institution is a truer reflection of the spirit of the Canadian nation, of its civilization at its best and noblest than Queen's".

correspondingly great. Grant understood the game and practiced it masterfully. Until the death of Sir John A. Macdonald in 1891, Grant had mostly supported the Conservative government in Ottawa in its nation-building agenda. During the 1890's he would throw his considerable influence behind the Liberals both at a federal level under Wilfrid Laurier, and provincially. No doubt this shift was driven by sincere conviction about the public good, but it cannot have escaped his notice that it was also a good means to loosen the provincial purse strings in relation to Queen's - still officially a Presbyterian institution.

Grant's contacts with Conservative politicians were direct and personal, as were his relations with provincial Liberals in Ontario. Oliver Mowat, like Sir John A. MacDonald, hailed from Kingston. Oliver was the younger brother of "rabbi" John Mowat, the Hebrew Professor at Queen's, as Sir John's A. was the brother-in-law of Professor Williamson. Grant's relationship with Laurier was brokered by John Williamson, editor of the *Toronto Globe*, and effectively Laurier's lieutenant in Ontario (as it would later be by the Scottish Presbyterian vice-regal couple, Lord and Lady Aberdeen). Williamson, a very early supporter of Laurier, emphasized to the Liberal Leader the extent of Grant's understanding and influence over the Ontario electorate.<sup>34</sup> In 1893, Grant made his public break from the Conservatives. Instead of offering critical support for the Conservatives, he became openly critical of the corruption that had overtaken the government. In 1893, Willison's *Globe* published four "Letters critical of Conservative Government" by Grant.<sup>35</sup> Two Federal cabinet ministers, Sir Adophe Caron, the Postmaster general and John Haggart, the Federal minister of railways and canals replied by accusing Grant of flippancy and ignorance. Haggart, the Conservative M.P. from Perth (who had replaced Alexander Morris when the later moved to Manitoba) was so incensed that he sent investigators to Pictou County to try to uncover family scandal that could be used against Grant.<sup>36</sup> They were unsuccessful. Grant was a dangerous man to tangle with in public debate because his sources of information were very good. Grant met the challenge to his initial statements about contracts for deepening the Galops Canal with more detailed charges and a rebuke that "our chief servants do not think it their first duty to tell the people 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth' with regard to the public works

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<sup>34</sup> Richard Cliippingdale, *The Power of the Pen: the Politics, Nationalism, and Influence of Sir John Willison* (Toronto, 2012), 70, 77, 78.

<sup>35</sup> *The Globe*, Nov. 4, 7, 11, 21, 1893.

<sup>36</sup> George Geddie Patterson, "University Builder and Canadian Imperialist," *The Pictou Advocate*, January 23, 1936.

with which they have been entrusted.” There was no further public correspondence. When Sir John Thompson died in 1894, Haggart’s Prime Ministerial ambitions fell victim to rumours about his womanizing habits and to the self-interested ways in which he had exploited his position as Minister of Canals.<sup>37</sup> That year Grant also publicly endorsed the provincial Liberals - explaining to voters that the honesty and administrative skill of the Premier warranted another term of office.<sup>38</sup> “Ontario cannot afford to dismiss Sir Oliver Mowat” was the way he put it, and it became the Liberal campaign slogan.



**Fig 2:** J.W. Bengough’s cartoon summary of the 1893 Ontario election

<sup>37</sup> *The Globe*, Nov. 21, 1893; Larry Turner, *Haggart, John Graham*, DCB vol. XIV

<sup>38</sup> G.M. Grant, “Rev. Principal Grant on the Mowat Government: Three Strong Reasons Why Every Elector Should Support It” (1894) reprinted from *The Globe*, May 23, 1894.

Grant was a power for Canadian politicians to reckon with, both as an ally and as an adversary and there can be little doubt of the link between Grant's valuable political support in Eastern Ontario and the funding for Queen's which soon started to flow from a grateful provincial Liberal government in Toronto.<sup>39</sup> Irish Roman Catholics and Church of Scotland Presbyterians (both traditionally Conservative supporters) were important in a swing riding like Kingston. The Mowat Liberals had successfully wooed the Catholic vote by working with Archbishop Lynch of Toronto to address grievances in relation to the separate school system. Besides funding issues, controversy had been aroused when Ross and the Ministry of Education had produced an edited version of the Bible to for use in schools which was acceptable to Catholics. This aroused Protestant ire; as one zealous trustee exclaimed "We want the Bible, the whole damn Bible and nothing but the Bible". The Conservatives then fought the elections of 1886, 1890 and 1894 on the cry of "no popery".<sup>40</sup> In such a context, Grant was a steadying influence against Protestant bigotry and a helpful political ally for the provincial Liberals. Federally, Hiram Augustus Calvin, the Baptist trustee on the Queen's Board, represented the riding of Frontenac County as an independent Conservative. (His independence is reflected in his stand against the party on the subject of tariffs and in following Grant's lead in supporting Laurier on the Manitoba Schools question.) In the 1896 Federal election, which brought the Laurier Liberals to power, Calvin stepped aside so that David Dickson Rogers could be elected by acclamation for the Patrons of Industry, which represented the farming interest in Ontario and had sent seventeen MPP's to Queen's Park in the 1894 provincial election.<sup>41</sup> Rogers, as a Director and President of the Farmers' Institute and Agricultural Association, was part of Grant (and Calvin's) plans for the projected School of Mining and Agriculture.<sup>42</sup> The 1896 election also saw the conservative Federal M.P. for Kingston, James Henry Metcalfe, loose to Liberal Byron Moffatt Britton in what had been Sir John A. Macdonald's old riding! In and around Kingston, Grant harnessed the dynamics of both federal and provincial partisan politics to his ambitions for Queen's. Strange things happened in and around the Queen's campus. An ethos of freedom and good comradeship added up to a happy family in which Latin

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<sup>39</sup> *Principal Grant*, 341.

<sup>40</sup> John Webster Grant, *The Church*, 84.

<sup>41</sup> Russell Hann, *Farmers Confront Industrialism* (Toronto, 1975).

<sup>42</sup> D.D. Calvin, *Queen's University at Kingston: The first Century of a Scottish Canadian Foundation 1841-1941* (Kingston, 1941), 206.

professor, T.R. Glover, son of an English Baptist pastor, voted for an Irish, Roman Catholic Conservative as mayor.<sup>43</sup>

Although nominally independent, the School of Mining and Agriculture established in 1893 functioned as a “milch cow” for the parallel but legally separate Faculty of Applied Science - as its director later admitted.<sup>44</sup> The teaching was done and paid for by the School of Mining, but the degrees were granted by the College, which had the authority to do so. The School of Mining, financed by the Ontario government, would eventually blossom into Queen’s Faculty of Applied Science. Like many of Grant’s arrangements, it was an arrangement which required nimble management techniques. But, however necessary for Queen’s expansion in the short term, such expedients did not amount to a good long-term solution in relation to Queen’s need for stable long-term funding. The conditions that permitted it were not to be counted on permanently. The legal and institutional structure of Queen’s needed to be regularized, so that it more accurately reflected the reality Grant had achieved on the ground.

In order for the provincial government to fund Queen’s openly, the legal connection between Queen’s and the Presbyterian Church needed to be severed. This was the task to which Grant set himself in the last couple of years of his life. On the provincial front, Grant’s negotiating partner was the Liberal premier, George Ross, who had accepted the job of Minister of Education Grant had declined in 1883. Grant’s negotiating position was strengthened by the fact that William Harty, the Roman Catholic trustee, was also the sole Roman Catholic representative in Ross’s cabinet. Ross had good reason to be cooperative. The funding spigot had already been opened wide and would soon pay for the construction of both Ontario and Fleming Halls. Grant played his cards close to his chest and ran a one-man administration so there are not many written reports of the negotiations. A student song, however, captured the common perception and expressed confidence in Grant’s ability to make the appropriate arrangements. Set to the tune of the standard Presbyterian doxology, the words were:

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<sup>43</sup> During his five years in Kingston, Glover’s politics shifted from those of a little Englander to a liberal Imperialist. Writing to his mother in 1899, he mentions voting for Dr. Edward Ryan, who taught anatomy in the Medical College as Mayor of Kingston,. “So when you find me voting for Celt, Catholic, and Conservative, you won’t call me hidebound, prejudiced and narrow-minded anymore.” H. G. Wood, *Terrot Reaveley Glover: A Biography* (Cambridge, 1953), 47.

<sup>44</sup> George Richardson, *Queen’s Engineers: A Century of Applied Science (1893-1993)*, 18; Richardson cites a letter from Dr. Goodwin to Hamilton, March 28, 1903.

Praise Ross, from whom these blessings flow,  
 Praise him Queen's students here below,  
 Praise both of them, ye joyful host –  
 Both Grant and Ross – but Grant the most.<sup>45</sup>

On the ecclesiastical side of things, Grant worked on two fronts. The Presbyterian General Assembly (which would give his successor, Principal Gordon, such headaches for the decade after Grant's death) needed to be brought onside and made to face facts. The key to winning the vote at Assembly lay in working closely with its leading voices. If the acknowledged leaders indicated agreement, the approval of Assembly would quickly follow. Besides his own, such voices included Principal Caven of Knox College, Toronto and Principal MacVicar at Presbyterian College. Both already had sufficient reason for blessing Grant's proposal in self-interested institutional protection, but he, nevertheless, took care to cultivate their support and draw them into his plans. Caven was appointed by the Assembly in 1900 to convene the liason committee to work with the Queen's Trustees to prepare a detailed plan to alter the Queen's charter. He was a good choice, and well-acquainted with university politics, having served on the Senate of the University of Toronto since Knox College's affiliation with it in 1885. He was also active politically in a number of public moral campaigns like prohibition and the banning of Sunday Street cars, would soon give the eulogy at Oliver Mowat's funeral, and continued to serve as a trusted political advisor to Ross in keeping Scottish and Irish Presbyterians in Ontario within the Liberal camp. Coming from a Secessionist background, the separation between arts and theological education was a matter of conviction for him. But this difference of opinion on the relationship between the study of Arts and Theology hardly precluded Caven and Grant from working together.

Grant was clear that in his plans to alter the Queen's charter what he sought was not secularization, but what he called "nationalization". In his report to the 1901 Assembly, he reported that Kingston ratepayers had endorsed a by-law granting \$50,000 for an additional building on campus. The measure had been overwhelmingly supported by all denominations "including the highest representatives of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational churches, and of the Jewish community" as well as the Trades and Labour council.

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<sup>45</sup> H.C. Burleigh, *Forgotten Leaves of Local History* (Kingston, 1973), 161.



The time had come, he announced, “to nationalize by statute the university, as completely as it has been nationalized in practice for many years, and to give the faculty of Theology a separate and independent incorporation, seeing that there is a certain inconsistency in having a denominational Faculty of Theology as an integral part of an undenominational university.”<sup>46</sup> By undenominational” Grant meant generically Christian. What Grant asked of Assembly was to tidy up the legal paperwork for what had already been achieved in embryo, so that legal technicalities did not stand in the way of the ecumenical future. A change in law was required to remove a potential political impediment to open provincial funding for an institution that already clearly served the public good enjoyed broad support amongst the Christian public.

In the short term, an exclusively Presbyterian Board of trustees would exercise control over the theological college while the governing Board of the University would be opened to those of all denominations, including representatives from any theological college affiliated with the new ecumenically Christian university. So far as Grant was concerned, these legally distinct institutions would share the same buildings so that faculty and students continued to rub shoulders and engage in discussion about “the whole.” Divisions that might exist on paper would be smudged in the reality on the ground, as the university continued to evolve in the direction that Grant desired and anticipated. As he reported to Caven after a conversation with Ross, “nothing would compensate me for the weakening of religious life at Queen’s, and I see no practical guarantee for the maintenance of that so great as the close relations which have existed in the past between our arts and theological students.”<sup>47</sup> While certainly suspicious of Roman Catholics, especially Jesuit machinations in Quebec, Caven was open to ecumenical cooperation between evangelical Protestants. He had been a key speaker at the Toronto Conference on Christian Unity which brought Presbyterians, Methodists and some Anglicans together in 1889. In 1898, the Canadian Society of Christian Unity was founded under the presidency of the Rev. Herbert Symonds, a Broad Church Anglican; Grant served as its second president, Caven its third.

Grants efforts to draw Broad Church Anglican into his ecumenical and national project for theological education at Queen’s is reflected in the fact that Symonds, the Anglican champion of a

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<sup>46</sup> Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly (1901), 191.

<sup>47</sup> Grant to Caven, May 21, 1900.

ecumenical and national church received at D.D. from Queen's in 1901.<sup>48</sup> A similar honour was conferred the following year on Mackenzie King's mentor, the Broad Churchman and fellow Scot, Prof. William Clark. They were all men who shared what Clark said in his eulogy of Grant: "in regard to the fundamentals of Christianity he would not in the least give way, but that, outside that limit, he would allow great liberty. Indeed there are few men who represented more fully that he did the saying '*In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas*'"<sup>49</sup> (in necessary things unity; in uncertain things freedom; in everything compassion)." Such was the Broad Church ideal.

Grant's plans for the university he had saved from extinction were thrown into disarray by his death. He was, quite simply, irreplaceable. No one else could pull off what he was attempting. No one else wielded his influence in provincial politics, commanded his legendary fundraising skills or enjoyed his credibility as an ecumenical partner. Without Grant, there were no guarantees of further provincial funding. Premier Ross had made no commitments in writing and the Liberal grasp on power was becoming less secure. In office since shortly after Confederation, they would lose the 1905 election. No one else had travelled the world as Grant had, operated with such broad horizons or could rival his mastery of church politics and general *savoir-faire*. There was no one else in the Presbyterian church to champion the ecumenical option towards which Grant was clearly driving. His project of studying Christian theology historically, ecumenically and "scientifically" – the intention behind the new chair of Church History and History of Christian Doctrine – was stillborn. It was clearly a Broad Church project, but the Rev. Samuel McComb, whose academic qualifications for the position Grant glowingly described to the Assembly in 1900, left in 1902 to take over D.M. Gordon's teaching responsibilities in Halifax when Gordon was called as Grant's successor. He would leave Canada permanently in 1905 to graze in greener American Episcopalian pastures.

It is worth pointing out in passing that Hilda Neatby is mistaken in her contention that Grant was indifferent to matters of Christian doctrine. He was not. But he wanted to have it studied historically and to be focused on such essentials as the Incarnation and the Trinity rather than

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<sup>48</sup> Richard E. Ruggle, "Herbert Symonds and Christian Unity" *JCHS* 18, No. 2/3 (1976), 53-84.

<sup>49</sup> Grant Papers, Vol 25, p.607 Memorial tribute from Prof William Clark.

fruitless arguments about the exact relationship between divine determinism and human freedom that had so divided Presbyterians and Methodists, or dogmatic assertions about church polity. As far as Grant was concerned, the Church didn't stand or fall on whether it was governed by bishops or presbyteries.<sup>50</sup> Such matters were not of the *esse* of the Church, but of its *bene esse*. In this respect he was following in the footsteps of such Church of Scotland worthies as Charles Inglis, John Stuart and John Strachan, all of whom became founding bishops in Canadian Anglicanism. Grant's theological focus was clearly on the uniting essentials of Christian faith rather than denominational distinctives and difference.

Grant had expounded these goals most fully in his powerful response to the attempt at the 1892 General Assembly to assert authority over academic appointments at Queen's.

"Queen's is developing out of the rich and generous soil of Canadian Presbyterianism in which it originated, into the great Christian university – for Christianity is wider than Presbyterianism - that its founders contemplated, a Christian University that students of all churches are attracted to, that all denominations who know anything of its work are proud of, a university that was a protest for freedom to begin with, that has done good work since, and that every broad-minded educationist wishes to see prosper because he knows well that such a university may be even more needed in the not very distant future than it was needed in the past. These are days in which almost all Christians are longing and praying for a greater measure of unity than has yet been accomplished. We frankly acknowledge the members of others churches as brethren. We do so practically in many ways. Is it not one good way to give them the share in the management of our university to which they are entitled? Then, should union be accomplished, the other churches will find that in this particular we have anticipated the formal act of union, and feel that they enter into the possession of what they already had in earnest."<sup>51</sup>

Queen's was to be a sign and symbol of Canada's ecumenical future. When Grant said that he wanted theology to be studied scientifically, he meant with historical rigour and comprehensiveness rather than being caught up in denominational polemic. He used the adjective "scientific" in the same way as his friend, the Rev. Andrew Martin Fairbairn, the Scottish Congregationalist founder of Mansfield College, Oxford. As Fairbairn put it,

"From the strife of the sects we would return into the calm and gracious presence of Him who is at once the Head and the Heart of His Church. He has given us His peace, and it

<sup>50</sup> Symonds, who received a D.D. from Queen's in 1901, cites Grant in his *Lectures on Christian Unity* as an influential Presbyterian not hostile to the possibility of Episcopal government in the project of constructing a national church.

<sup>51</sup> G.M. Grant, *Speech by the Rev. Principal Grant to the General Assembly on the relation of Queen's University to the Church* (Toronto, 1892), 12.

abides with us even amid the collisions and contradictions of men. These are but of time, while He is of eternity. And in His presence we may not meet negations with negation, and affirm thereof those who say that there is no Church but theirs, that there is no Church of Christ; on the contrary, we shall draw no narrower limits than those traced by the hand of the Son of man: "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brothers, and sister, and mother."<sup>52</sup>

A scientific theology implied rigorous and comprehensive study of the whole Catholic Christian tradition tested for coherence with the rest of human knowledge. Because grounded in history rather than the vagaries of either personal experience or an arbitrary claim to authority, theology was an appropriate discipline for study in the academy rather than one properly relegated to the Bible College. Grant's ambition for Queen's is another instance of his attempt to hold Christian faith and the best of the Enlightenment tradition together on the assumption that the truth is one and self-consistent. Such an understanding of theology as a scientific discipline implied ecumenical co-operation in a society that understood itself to be Christian before it was Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic or Presbyterian.<sup>53</sup> Grant was pushing for a post-denominational Christian church which would be at the centre of Canadian society.

Bereft of his leadership, however, the result of his death would be a decade of muddled struggle, as Queen's, the Presbyterian Church and eventually, in 1912, a newly-elected Conservative government in Ottawa, juggled the question of their legal relationship. The broader issue was the old bug bear that had divided Presbyterians for centuries, the relationship of Church and State. But, at the eleventh hour, the Jewish community jumped into the fray to champion the secessionist Presbyterian (and also Baptist and American) political doctrine of separation between Church and State. But it was neither a British nor a Canadian assumption. The terms of the peace settlement after the French defeat on the Plains of Abraham involved a pact between the British military authorities and the Roman Catholic church. What had changed in the interim, between 1902 and 1912, was the growth of a substantial Jewish community in the Montreal riding of Saint Lawrence. Thus, a private member's bill to amend the terms of the 1841 Queen's College charter,

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<sup>52</sup> A.M. Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (London, 1893), 548

<sup>53</sup> W.L. Grant to S. Dyde, January 28, 1920. Quoted in George Rawlyk and Kevin Quinn, *The Redeemed of the Lord Day Say So: A History of Queen's Theological College 1912-1972* (Kingston, 1980), 47.

which was designed both to facilitate institutional separation of the theological college from the rest of the University and to clarify Queen's confessional status as a Christian rather than as a Presbyterian institution, generated heated political conflict from a Jewish community which had forgotten on which side of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel it lived.

Queen's had never been a confessional institution in the sense that students had never been required to subscribe to the Presbyterian Westminster Confession as those attending Anglican institutions of higher learning were required to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine articles. In fact, it was precisely in protest against this exclusive religious test that Queen's had been established in the first place. Under the terms of the original charter, faculty were required to subscribe to the Confession, (although that provision had become a dead letter in Grant's time); the Board of Trustees was to be comprised of Presbyterian lay people and clergy, the Principal was required to be a Presbyterian minister. As we have already noted, Grant had stretched these provisions considerably, but they were nevertheless the terms of original charter. It needed to be revised in the light of how the institution had evolved. But, springing as it did from the established Church of Scotland tradition, its founders had taken the close relationship of Church and State for granted. They were anything but American liberal republicans. To secularize the charter was not to broaden it, but to betray it.

Thus, a private member's bill that involved legal housekeeping and which reflected acquiescence by both Church and University authorities in the arrangement that Grant had already drawn up before his death, was transformed by the Jewish community in Montreal into a political football in Ottawa. It became a *cause célèbre*: hardly an auspicious debut in the exercise of Jewish political power at the federal level. What had gone wrong? After Grant's death, the terms of the discussion about Queen's future shifted in a crassly materialistic direction. He had never been indifferent to questions about funding, of course, but recognized that money followed vision and evidence of at least the first fruits of an anticipated harvest. Without Grant's advocacy, talk about the ecumenical future quickly disappeared, replaced by debate about the legal terms required to qualify, theoretically, for provincial funding. Soon the prospect of the Carnegie Fund funding to provide pensions for professors of retirement age pressed in the same direction, since Carnegie money also required an end to the denominational connection with the Presbyterian church. For

Grant, the legal arrangements were matters of detail in his overarching strategy for expanding constituency and funding-base. Existing practice needed to be regularized so as to prevent legal technicalities from impeding his plans. Although he had concluded that a revised charter was necessary, it was hardly a sufficient condition for realizing his ambitions for the university over which he had presided for a quarter century. Removing a legal impediment would not, in itself, generate any new funding towards creating a national Christian university for Canada - the goal towards which he had striven for a life time. The real challenge lay in forging the political and financial alliances with like-minded allies so as to realize his dream on the ground.

In the leadership vacuum that quickly became evident after his death, the Honorable John Charleton, an American-born Liberal M.P. who preferred Canadian assumptions about the proper relationship between Church and State to those of the land of his birth, resurrected the possibility that Grant and Alexander Morris had discussed fifty years earlier in Glasgow. He offered \$50,000 towards the goal of making Queen's into a national Presbyterian university, one in which Arts and Theology would both be funded. The 1904 Assembly was persuaded to reverse the direction for which approval in principle had already been given, to retain legal control of the University and undertake to raise \$500,000 towards funding the Faculty of Arts. It would require another seven years for it to become obvious to practically everyone that Grant's assessment had been correct; the Presbyterian Church was not willing to concentrate its educational resources in Kingston. The fundraising campaign failed to meet expectations, especially when it had to compete with simultaneous campaigns by Knox and Presbyterian College. The belief that Arts education was properly the responsibility of government was far too deep-seated to be changed in most Canadian Presbyterians. The only realistic possibility for a university that tied Arts and Theology together on the Church of Scotland model lay in an ecumenical direction in an alliance with Anglicans and Roman Catholics, who saw the impossibility of dividing up the educational task in the Secessionist manner. Grant played his cards close to his chest, but his ambitions at Queen's had much in common with John Henry Newman's objectives, first at Oxford in the 1840's and then later when

founding the Roman Catholic University in Dublin in the 1880's, when Grant read his *The Idea of a University*.<sup>54</sup>

As it became increasingly clear that Canadian Presbyterians were not willing to fund their own national university, resentment mounted amongst faculty and students against irresponsible control of the university being exercised by a body unwilling to pay the bills. The question came down to whether or not the General Assembly would do what was legally required in order to allow Queens to pursue other sources of funding. Longtime supporters feared for the future of the university in which they had invested so much. Without his leadership, Grant's project of a national and Christian university, animated by a vision of Christian nationalism seemed less and less plausible. Rather than ecumenically Christian, the future proposed for Queen's began to sound more and more secular; they did not find it an attractive prospect.

Among those who moved into opposition were Robert Campbell, the Clerk of the General Assembly, and G.M. Macdonnell, the university solicitor, as well as the Rev. Professor Samuel Dyde of the philosophy department. They pointed back to the mission laid out in the original 1841 Royal charter, namely "the education of youth in the principles of the Christian religion and for their instruction in the various branches of science and literature" and urged the Assembly "not to consent to any change in the constitution of the College which would place beyond the control of the corporation the proper fulfillment of the trusts upon which the said college is founded."<sup>55</sup> They insisted on some legal protection that the education provided at Queen's would continue to be Christian in character, as its founders had intended. They were not prepared to abandon that trust for the sake of the mere possibility of non-Presbyterian funding. Looking at the shambles the ensued after Grant's death, it is clear that his successors were not up to the task that Grant's death had left them with. Without a leader of his energy and capacity to realize the possibilities in Kingston, without a visionary with the ability to inspire others with a sense of destiny and passion to work towards a common goal, his successors got lost in details - and mishandled even those. There was a tangible loss of confidence; momentum gave way to drift.

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<sup>54</sup> Travel Diary for 1888 (trip around the world), Vol 3. Grant's shipboard reading also included Edersheim's, *The Laws and Polity of the Jews*, Hinton's *Life and Letters*, Martineau's *Study of Religion* and Maurice's works.

<sup>55</sup> Acts and Proceedings of the Thirty Seventh General Assembly (1911), 36.

When the private member's bill to revise the 1841 Queen's charter was presented to Parliament in 1912, it generated outrage amongst Canada's recently-arrived Jewish immigrant population. Protest rallies, excited by the Yiddish press, erupted at the prospect of "a Christian and national university" in Kingston. Such fears were easily stoked amongst those who still spoke no English and who had bad memories of Eastern Europe. Archie Bennett, a young Zionist, a graduate who attended Queens on scholarship and won a gold medal in philosophy under John Watson (and who would later play a leading role in establishing the Canadian Jewish Congress) characterized the reaction in the Jewish press as "inflammatory rather than instructive".<sup>56</sup> Even in English, the *Canadian Jewish Times* thundered against those who "desired to have a small sectarian university for their own brotherhood. . .if they desire to organize and promote a university upon broad and national lines, then let them strike out all those foolish restrictions by declaring the university to be Christian. . . this would virtually exclude any Jews even from being a door-keeper in a National University." A Jewish delegation descended on Ottawa to meet with the private members bill committee and the Conservative minister of Justice, Mr Docherty. The delegation included Samuel Jacobs, Lyon Cohen (grandfather of Leonard), Alderman Blumenthal and L. Silver from Montreal, Rabbi Jacobs from Toronto and A.H. Wolfe of Ottawa. A telegram barrage also descended on the Dominion capital.<sup>57</sup>

The Jewish case was presented in parliament by the Liberal M.P. from Saint Lawrence, Mr. Bickerdike, who represented the views of the 10,000 Jewish voters in his riding. The gist of the objection was that the very notion of a Christian and national university was contrary to the allegedly "Canadian" principle of the separation of Church and State. Marcus Sperber denounced "the gratuitous insult to all non-Christians, that is to say Jews, because there are no other religions in the Dominion against whom, it could possibility be intended" and then waxed eloquent on the subject of Canadian liberal democracy. "We object to Parliament being made the vehicle of the opinion of a small number of Presbyterian fanatics, and giving its sanction to an act which draws distinction between different religions in this Dominion of Canada and sanctioning test oaths. It is true that these gentlemen have a perfect right to make rules for their institutions, but they have no

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<sup>56</sup> *The Canadian Jewish Times*, June 7, 1912.

<sup>57</sup> B.J. Sack, *Canadian Jews— Early in This Century* (Montreal: CJC, 1975), 77.



right to apply to parliament to recognize these rules. Parliament cannot and should not make any distinctions between one class and another or between the different races and creeds which inhabit this Canada of ours. The aim of Canada is too pure to allow that, and the British flag recognizes no distinction because of race, religion or creed.”<sup>58</sup> Lyon Cohen observed in the same extravagant and florid rhetoric that, “When a charter as broad as the boundless mercy of God was sought, it was not consistent to bar Jews.”<sup>59</sup>

Sam Jacobs, who would soon replace Bickerdike in representing the Jewish interest in Parliament, complained in the *Montreal Herald* about “the the narrow-minded and intolerant spirit” demonstrated by Queen’s. Elsewhere, he upped the rhetorical ante. He warned ominously that a national university that remained “distinctly Christian” raised the prospect of marauding Cossack hordes descending on Montreal from Kingston. The plan to transform Queen’s from a Presbyterian institution to a generically Christian one would make Queen’s “more Russian than Russia.”<sup>60</sup>

Dr. Robert Campbell, then almost eighty, and an exact contemporary of Grant’s had served for most of his life on the Board of Queen’s College. His reply to Jacobs was tart.

“He attacks the clause in the charter which says that the institution was founded for the education of youth in the principles of the Christian religion, and for instruction in the various branches of science and literature, the retention of which in the charter was made a condition on which the Presbyterian Church, that founded and endorsed it, would surrender control of it; the profession of Christianity shall be exacted of the corporation and staff.”

He alleges that 10,000 Jewish citizens are publicly insulted by this qualifying clause. According to the position he takes, every institution in the country of a distinctively Christian character is a public insult to the Jews. The authorities of Queen’s College which has been hitherto avowedly Christian are only asking now that changes be made in its charter, opening the way for Christians of every denomination to share in its government, not confining its control to Presbyterians as hitherto. Surely that is a proper and reasonable request to make of Parliament.”

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<sup>58</sup> M. M. Sperber’s editorial in *The Canadian Jewish Times*, March 22, 1912.

<sup>59</sup> A detailed account of the newspaper campaign can be David Rome, *The Immigration story II: Jacob’s Opponents* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1986), 83- 123.

<sup>60</sup> Bernard Figler, *Sam Jacobs: Member of Parliament* (Ottawa, 1970), 30.

“The bill does not ask Parliament for money, nor are the Jews asked for contributions to the college. When they are, it will be time enough for Mr. Jacobs to object.”

“Mr. Bickerdike is reported as having use the same phrase in Parliament that “clause 20’ is an insult to the Jews.” I know that Parliamentarians are privileged in their utterances, but their constituents are supposed to have a right to criticize. This exaggeration of the member for St. Lawrence division may seem to him good politics, but I humbly submit that it says little for the sanity of his judgment if he believes it. Further, as a voter in the division, I venture to remind him that there are other people in his constituency whose wishes are entitled to consideration as well as Jews.”<sup>61</sup>

## THE BITTER AFTERMATH

The main legacy of the legislative uproar in Ottawa was a legacy of bitterness on both sides. The bill, as it emerged from Parliament in its mutilated form, was stripped of any reference to Grant’s national aspirations for Queen’s. The references to it being a “national institution” or “for the general advantage of Canada” were removed due to the Jewish protest. The intension of those who drafted it, in conformity with Grant’s wishes, was surely not to surreptitiously and nefariously to impose an established church on the Canadian public, as critics implied. The revised charter was, in effect, to be a new mission statement for the university. Queen’s would be a “national university” in much the same way that the *Canadian Jewish Times* sought to be a “national newspaper” for Jews. Although edited and published in Montreal, it did not confine itself only to matters of local interest to the Montreal Jewish community. It aspired to be something more than that, namely to serve and to attract a readership from across the whole of Canada. The announced mission of the *Canadian Jewish Times*, (itself renamed “Canadian” shortly before the proposed revision to the Queen’s charter) was to

“cater to the whole Jewish community in Canada, from the Atlantic to the to the Pacific, and our new name we feel, will now be recognized by all as appropriate. . . . [We] desire to supply Canadian Jewry with a paper worthy of it, and the vital interest we strive to represent. . . . There are few places in the Dominion where [it] is not known, read and regarded as a trustworthy vehicle of Jewish thought, contemporary history and inter communication. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Newfoundland to the Yukon, it is a welcome visitor in Jewish

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<sup>61</sup> David Rome, *The Immigrant Story Vol 2: Jacob’s Opponents* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1986) 97-99.

homes, and is, for the Jews of Canada, a medium of information, superior to any other obtainable.”<sup>62</sup>

In vain did the Honorable William Nickel, recently elected Conservative M.P. for Kingston (and son-in-law of Grant’s replacement, Principal Gordon), seek to explain to the interested parties and to Parliament, that when objectors to the Bill, “say that because the university is declared to be a National university, therefore it becomes the ward, so to speak of the state, they do not give the word its true and distinct meaning. The idea that the trustees had in the use of that word, was that “national” meant that Queen’s is a free institution to which every student could freely come, that it was geographically National; and, while certain restrictions were put on the staff, and on the trustee board, she was National in this, that she offered, free opportunity to those who seek an education to take advantages of the opportunities that she presents.”<sup>63</sup>

Nickel, not surprisingly, resented Bickerdike’s accusation that he was “a persecutor of the Jews. The Jews in my own constituency know where I stand on this matter.” He accused Bickerdike of engaging in slanderous calumny for political gain in relation to his Jewish constituents, and claimed that the attempt to see an internal contradiction in the claim that the university could be both “national and Christian” was false. Clause 3, namely that,

“The management and discipline of the university shall be in every respect freedom from all denominational restrictions, and it shall be national and non-denominational in its character and management.” and

Clause 20: “The university shall continue to be distinctively Christian, but no religious test or qualification save for the profession of Christianity shall be required of or appointed for any officer, trustee, member of council, or official of the university.

involved no logical contradiction, he insisted. He cited court judgments in both England and Ontario which enunciated the doctrine that “Christianity was part and parcel of the law of the land.” He cited the former prime Minister, Sir John Thompson, when he was minister of Justice to this effect in relation to the “Lord’s Day Act” legislation (also challenged by the Jewish

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<sup>62</sup> *Canadian Jewish Times*, November 19, 1909.

<sup>63</sup> Rome, *Jacob’s Opponents*, 100 – 110.

community), and concluded that “to say that a university is National and to say that it is distinctly Christian, is practically saying legally one and the same thing, but in different terms.”<sup>64</sup>

But the real issue at stake was not legal but political. Opponents of the Bill wanted to make use of the opportunity presented to them by a legal requirement to revise the charter to persuade Parliament to act in a way that overruled Canadian legal precedent. And, in the event, they were successful. Not surprisingly Baptists were also opposed, in principle, to any suggestion of a link between Church and State. Without someone of Grant’s stature to defend historic Canadian and British assumptions about the importance of the Church and State connection and to clarify the issues, Jewish and Baptist objections and American slogans carried the day. Those who favoured deconstructing the Christian Canadian culture that had come into being since Confederation, prevailed. By the time the smoke of battle cleared, the reference to Queen being either a “national” or a “Christian” university had disappeared, leaving only the watered-down and ambiguous requirement that faculty be of “gentlemen of Christian character” - though even this did not, of course, assuage Jewish critics. The *Canadian Jewish Times* concluded that,

“the fact that persons not professing Christianity will be admitted there both as student and as professors does not change the character of the persons who seek admission and entrance thereto inasmuch as the part is always absorbed by the whole. It is a pity that the promoters of the Bill did not see their way clear to establish a great and free institution admitting within its doors without loss of self-respect. . . everybody who desired to learn and to teach. We use the words “without loss of self respect” because nobody who is not a sincere Christian could possibly seek admittance either to learn or teach in the University because, by doing so, he assumed a Christian character, which is not in keeping with the upbringing or with his needs and mode of life. But those who respect themselves and their institutions will naturally seek their opportunities to learn and to teach elsewhere than the narrow halls of Queen’s University. The loss will not be ours but theirs.”

Despite the fact that many Jews had studied at Queen’s when it was a Presbyterian College, it was now beneath the self-respect of Jews to study at Queen’s University under the provisions of its new charter. No outcome short of complete de-confessionalization was acceptable. The loud and public dispute had made clear that any notion of a Christian Canada was completely repugnant. A small Jewish minority had spearheaded and championed the militant secularism in Canada that would eventually lead to the “naked public square” of late-modern liberalism. Minority interests

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<sup>64</sup> House of Commons Debates, March 11, 1912.

prevailed over the religious consensus that Grant had sought throughout his life to forge. The multicultural ethos which distanced itself from any conception of a common Canadian identity and which would become official government policy in the 1960's had already arrived - two years before the outbreak of World War I. Rather than appeal to a common culture, the new Canada would be bound together with a Charter of legal rights, the judicial system and a homogeneous regulatory regime spawned by the Federal bureaucracy in Ottawa. In Grant's terms, law would triumph over grace and gospel. But without a shared body of cultural assumption, society dissolves into a competition for resources between interest groups; morality is defined as the limit of the law. The "national interest" that Grant had once boldly voiced in the pages of the *Queen's Quarterly* effectively ceases to exist and disappears beneath the conflicting demands of individual and factional interest. This is the real import of his grandson's threnody, *Lament for a Nation*. By the 1960's, Canada was dissolving into a geographical entity of tribal and regional entities linked to each other only by the marketplace and the institutions of government.

In retrospect, it is clear that Dr. Robert Campbell, the Queen's solicitor George Macdonnell, William Nickel and the others who still upheld the old Church of Scotland understanding of the proper relationship of Church and State were seeking to defend a lost cause, as parallel developments in twentieth-century Britain would make clear. Legal enactments derive their power and authority as expressions of cultural and religious consensus; law is a tool not an end. The changes wrought on Canadian society by the First World War would make much of the fierce 1912 political debate meaningless in English Canada. (Quebec society had had its own trajectory). But Campbell was prescient in his suggestion that it would have political consequences. The Canadian Jewish community had taken a strong public stand championing the secularized outcome on the horizon, that Campbell was trying to resist. How, exactly, the opposition to a Christian university was to be squared with the great enthusiasm in the same community for the founding of a Jewish state in the Middle East was not then a question for public discussion – although it is not one that has disappeared in the meantime.

The public clash left a bad taste in some mouths and would contribute to poisoning the Canadian political climate against immigrants in the ensuing decades. No one would have better view on Canadian immigration policy in those years than Sam Jacobs, who would replace

Bickerdike as the Liberal M.P. for the newly-created riding of Cartier in 1917. He would remain the elected voice of Montreal Jewry in Ottawa for the next twenty years. Significantly, the Montreal Jewish establishment, including Sir Mortimer B. Davis and Mark Workman, opposed Jacobs' candidacy. They were worried about the effects of a small minority challenging, too loudly and publicly, the assumptions on which the country had been built.<sup>65</sup> Political agitation on a matter that had seriously divided Canadian Presbyterians for decades and around which passions ran deep, was perhaps not the wisest behaviour for a recently-arrived immigrant community.

Jacobs had, himself, been born in Presbyterian Cornwall, Ontario, in a community established by the chaplain of a Loyalist regiment of Highland Scots - the Rev. John Bethune, great grandfather of the Communist Chinese hero, Dr. Norman Bethune. One of five children of William Jacobs, he grew up in the nearby Highland community of Saint Télesphore, Quebec, where his father ran a dry goods store. (The community also included the Freidman family who were Polish immigrants.) The children all attended the Côte St. Georges School, located beside the Presbyterian church, since historically the minister was also the schoolmaster. There, the young Sam Jacobs would learn English, French and even some Gaelic (much as Wilfrid Laurier learned English in similar circumstances in the Scottish community of New Glasgow, Quebec) before attending the St.Télesphore de Mountjoy School in nearby Dalhousie Station. Legal studies, first at McGill and then Laval, combined with a talent for rabble-rousing in Montreal's immigrant Jewish community, against perceived injustices would help to launch his long political career. By 1912, Jacobs had already made a name for himself in challenging the confessional nature of the Protestant school Board of Montreal and the Lord's Day Act.<sup>66</sup> The private member's bill in relation to Queen's College provided another opportunity to crusade against Presbyterian oppression of Jews in a way that no doubt impressed his future constituents. The law was to be used as an instrument to deconstruct Christian Canada.

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<sup>65</sup> Michael Brown, *Jew or Juif: Jews, French Canadians, and Anglo-Canadians, 1759 -1914* (Philadelphia, 1987) , 247

<sup>66</sup> For the background to the financial shenanigans behind the Protestant Jewish educational tensions, see Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: the Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto, 1992), 137ff. Rabbi Meldola de Sola's arrangement with the Roman Catholic Board for wealthy Jews to avoid paying tax to the Protestant Board by registering as Roman Catholic taxpayers - and then receiving a 80% kick back of the monies in question to the school operated by the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue was "against the whole tenor and spirit of the School Acts" The upshot was that Jewish students were educated on the Protestant dime, and then regularly complained about it. .



Fig 3. *Côte Saint-George Presbyterian Church, Saint-Télesphore, Quebec*

The outcome of the Queen's charter legislation left a bad taste on both sides and contributed to a widening gulf between the Jewish community and its host society in way that would ultimately frustrate Jacob's political ambitions. The incident left a legacy of rancor in Jewish Montreal where people were embittered by what they had been told by Jacobs and the Yiddish press was a plain demonstration of gentile anti-Semitism. Canada was apparently no different than Czarist oppression in Russia. On the other side, Presbyterians also felt ill-used. Mr. Nickel asked Parliament resentfully if the objective of those who opposed the bill was to "set Jew against Gentile in this country by striking at the very foundation of Christianity we revere?" Instead of public gratitude for magnanimously turning over to the public an institution they had founded and funded for seventy years, Presbyterians were pilloried in press and in Parliament as a nest of anti-Semites. The fact that significant numbers of Jews had attended Queen's for years - apparently without injury - did not figure in the public discussion. It was left to one such, Archie Bennett, to defend his Alma Mater in the columns of the *Canadian Jewish Weekly*. "The Queen's University Bill incident has been one of the most unpleasant episode sin the history of Canadian Jewry" he began. Surveying the debacle, he deplored the ill-informed political propaganda in the Yiddish Press that had inflamed the Jewish community. "Its function is to guide public opinion. In this case

it did not guide; it misled and perverted it.” It was simply not the case that “Queen’s College is a hot-bed of prejudice and Jew-bating.”<sup>67</sup> Moreover, Jacobs and his partner in founding the *Jewish Times* - Lyon Cohen - knew this, personally, to be untrue. Cohen’s father, Lazarus, spoke English with a “slight Scottish brogue” which he had acquired in Glengarry County where he had first settled as a peddler in the 1880’s.<sup>68</sup> Scottish Calvinist settlers, as a group, were as philo-Semitic as Russian Orthodox peasants tended to be anti- Semitic.

But Bennet’s concern was not simply to correct erroneous perceptions for the sake of setting the historical record straight. His deeper concern was for the future of the Jewish community itself in Canada. People who don’t read reality accurately set themselves up for trouble.

“We will not be able to appreciate our position as Jews, in this country, our relation to the people about us, and the future that we may expect here, unless we interpret such important phenomena as the Queen’s affair correctly. We are a comparatively recent factor in the national life of Canada. We must understand our surroundings and learn to enter into a harmonious relation with them, if we are to become an appreciable force in this country. . . . “No institution is a truer reflection of the spirit of the Canadian nation, of its civilization at its best and noblest than Queen’s College. . . its thorough democracy – its curriculum is the most democratic of those of all the universities of Canada – and yet with the essential note of conservatism and reverence for tradition and the past vibrating through its entire system. Where can you find a better mirror of the characteristic feature of the Canadian people, energetic, democratic and tradition-loving as they are? Misunderstand a phenomenon like the Queen’s Bill; misunderstand an institution like Queen’s College, and you will place a barrier in your own way to an appreciation of the genius of you environment, and of your position in it, which will be hard to surmount.”

Obviously, Archie Bennett was one on whom Queen’s had cast its spell; George Grant would, no doubt, have been pleased at the tribute. The 1912 political campaign, however, had made Jewish hostility to any conception of a Christian Canada a matter of public record. According to Michael Brown, it aroused animosities that surprised and frightened many in the Jewish community.<sup>69</sup> Erma Paris dates “overt anti-Semitism” in Quebec to the following year.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Rome, *Jacob’s Opponents*, 116-123.

<sup>68</sup> Bernard Figler, *Rabbi Dr. Herman Abramowitz; Lazarus Cohen; Lyon Cohen* (Gardenvale, 1968) , 102.

<sup>69</sup> Brown, *Jew or Juif*, 246.

<sup>70</sup> Paris, *Jews*, 50.



Moreover, it was not the only issue that pitted Jews and Presbyterians against each other. The Presbyterian General Assembly had decided in 1907 to begin a mission specifically targeted on Jews, as one of a number of immigrant groups it was seeking to “Canadianize”. Unlike other immigrant groups, however, Jewish evangelization promised ancillary benefits, at least for those who, like Grant’s old adversary, Sir Mortimer Clark (now Lieutenant Governor of Ontario) speculated about God’s plans for the End Times and the Jewish role in them. Toronto became the headquarters of the mission, with two male and five lady missionaries, and about fifty voluntary workers. In 1908, the Rev. Sabeti Benjamin Rohold, was engaged as the Superintendent of Jewish missions, having already served in a similar role in the Bonar mission in Glasgow. Rohold was what today would be termed a “Messianic Jew” with strong Zionist convictions. His talents and qualifications, as the son of a respected Jerusalem rabbi, Naphtali Rohold, were obvious to the Presbytery Committee. Among other assets, he spoke half a dozen languages, including, Hebrew (his father was an early linguistic nationalist) Arabic, Yiddish, Spanish, German and English. In 1915, those gifts and his stature as a wise and reflective leader would be more widely recognized when he was elected as the first president of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America.

The objective of the Toronto mission was not to turn recent Jewish immigrants into Scottish-Canadian Presbyterians, but to establish Christian synagogues that would remain culturally Jewish. Rohold had sufficient credibility with his support committee and with the Presbytery of Toronto that they funded him until his return to Haifa in 1920, and raised \$35,000 in 1912 to build an immigrant centre at the corner of Elm and Elizabeth at the heart of what was known in Toronto as “the Ward”. The facility included a reading room and a free medical clinic, night schools for both men and women, sewing classes for women and girls, a “Sabbath School”, Boys' Club and manual training, Boy Scouts, Nursery, Bible classes, and an employment agency. Rohold’s success in generating Jewish interest generated intense and violent opposition – however fervent his Zionist convictions. Rohold liked to preach in Yiddish from the back of a wagon at the corner of Elizabeth and Agnes (today Dundas St.) The pedestrian traffic was evidently better on Agnes than two blocks north on Elm where the Hebrew Christian Presbyterian congregation was located. He issued a standing invitation to open discussion – but the community was unable or unwilling to respond to Rohold’s appeal for dialogue with rational discussion. The response came mostly in the form of rotten vegetables, harassment, broken windows and general abuse – organized by the religious

leadership. His preaching required police protection; and was occasionally shouted down by a chorus of young men, (as was that of the Rev. Henry Singer who had been engaged by the Toronto Mission to Israel a few years before Rohold's appointment.) A young rabbi was engaged, with premises facing the Presbyterian mission, to organize an "anti-missionary league" which soon claimed to have 600 members keeping close surveillance on Rohold's activities. Whatever virtues recently-arrived Jewish immigrants and their religious leadership possessed, religious tolerance was clearly not among them.

In 1911, a group of young Jewish vigilantes cranked up the usual harassment and a full-scale riot ensued. Jewish authorities were quick to insist that the problem was not with the law-abiding young men who were arrested. The fault for such disruptions to public order lay not with the young men, who were simply being zealous for the traditions of their ancestors, but with those who offended their feelings. On Halloween night, 1912, despite the promised watch of the police, Singer's little church in the Ward was badly broken up. "Such men as Rohold", the *Times* complained "are a menace to the good fellowship that should exist between Jews and Christians."<sup>71</sup> His preaching amounted to "insolent presumption" and "impertinent interference". Subsequent Jewish attempts to persuade the legal system to ban such activities, however, yielded meager results. When pressed by community leaders for an injunction to against missionary street preachers, Judge Winchester declined, on the grounds that "Canada was a Christian country."<sup>72</sup>

In nineteenth-century Canada, robust public debate was a Presbyterian tradition. Ministers were expected to be strong public advocates in matters of "controversy." It was certainly a major factor in Grant's own acknowledged position as a Presbyterian leader. His skill in debate, both at the General Assembly and on the public platform was legendary, even if the only language he spoke fluently enough for that purpose was English. But instead of the reasoned discussion and rebuttal he invited, the reaction to Rohold – especially in the early years - was abusive vituperation. He was very much a man in the middle. On the one hand, he sought to interpret the

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<sup>71</sup> *Canadian Jewish Times*, June 13, 1913, 4.

<sup>72</sup> *Jewish Times*, July 1913, 1 cited in Stephen A. Spiesman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History until 1937* (Toronto, 1979) 131-144.



*Rev. S.B. Rohold*



*The Christian synagogue at Elm and Elizabeth*

and explain the dignity of Jewish life in the Toronto ghetto to his Presbyterian readership and financial backers.<sup>73</sup> But, in the face of Jewish sensitivities about Jesus - of which he was all too aware - he also felt compelled to seek to reconcile “the suffering race to the suffering Messiah” it had produced. Without such a homecoming between Joseph and his alienated brethren, Rohold feared that the Zionist project (for which he sought both Christian and British support) would just add yet another tragic chapter to the long history of Jewish suffering. At the core of his ministry lay the conviction that the Jewish people did not understand the true meaning of their own divine election as a chosen people. They were reaping the terrible curses pronounced in Deuteronomy 28: 15-68, which would befall Israel when they ceased to hear “the voice of the Lord their God.” (“The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind; you shall grope about at noon as blind people grope in darkness, but you shall be unable to find your way; you shall be continually abused and robbed, without any one to help.”) Like St. Paul, Rohold agonized over

<sup>73</sup> “A Glimpse of Toronto’s Ghetto” *The Westminster* Nov 1910 (Vol 17), 345 ff.

suffering Israel's destiny. But he was also caught up in speculation about the Jewish future in the Middle East, which had not presented itself as an issue for Paul.<sup>74</sup>

Not all Rohold's attempts at explanation may have inspired confidence in the recently arrived. In 1910, he warned readers of *The Westminster* ("Modern Developments in Judaism") that they were not to look for traditional Highland virtues in their new neighbours. Quoting an unnamed Jewish source he noted that they had been,

"forced into secret and sordid ways, denied hope, aim, or ambition of any worthy sort, contemptuously shunned, when they were not actively hated, protected by princes and persecuted by priest. What wonder if the Jews at last became degraded? Honour and honesty came to be regarded as impossible virtues. Life was so uncertain that it became unduly dear, and men and women in terror became selfish and cowardly. Under the terrible conditions of their life, the very virtues of the Jews turned to vices. The old Jewish characteristics of steadfastness and prudence and intelligence seemed to take new and lower forms; for bare life's sake, the loyal, large-minded Jew learned to be narrow and secret and cunning. Money-getting became the one absorbing pursuit of the race, the one ambition of life, the one possible protection against cruel and tortured death. To toil for wealth which they might not openly enjoy, and to passionately believe in a religion which they might openly confess was the portion of the Jews for centuries."<sup>75</sup>

The Presbyterian reader may have been left enlightened by this historical explanation of Jewish behaviour, and even, perhaps, more willing to support Robold's mission in "the Ward" financially, but it hardly amounted to an endorsement of Jewish honesty in the present. Indeed, although warm in his description of the Jewish orthodoxy from which he, himself, had come, he warned of "the assailment that is being levelled against the Christ of God and Christianity by modern and liberal Jewry." Their claims of "liberality and charitableness" were suspect; it was a disingenuous front for dismantling Christendom. "To the Jews in general, Christ is an impostor, at best, who claimed for himself the attributes of God.... in the bitterness of their onslaught. . . . they never even halt to consider their own contradictory statements."<sup>76</sup> The implication was that anyone engaging in dialogue with such people should expect cunning and sophistry, but not frank or honest engagement in the pursuit of truth.

<sup>74</sup> Jacob Gartenhaus, *Famous Hebrew Christians* (Grand Rapids, 1979) 153- 9.

<sup>75</sup> S.B. Rohold, "Modern Developments in Judaism" *The Westminster*, Feb 1910 (Vol 16), 93ff. rpt. as *Modern Developments in Judaism* (Toronto, 1910), 5.

<sup>76</sup> S.B. Rohold, *Are missions to the Jews a failure? A study of official Judaism and Christian missions* (Toronto, 1914), 6, 9, 12.

Christian Jewish confrontation was less physically violent in Montreal than in Toronto, although it also featured its share of windows broken by bricks and stones, including one occasion which threatened the recently-appointed Anglican Bishop Farthing and his wife. This led to an extended exchange in the *Montreal Gazette* between the Bishop and by Rabbi Meldola de Sola of the Spanish Portuguese synagogue. When Farthing appealed to the public on behalf of the vandalized mission, the Rabbi launched what Rohold described as “a gloveless attack on the Lord Bishop of Montreal” with “vigour and vim”. Low level polemic in the public press was not his own style, but Meldola de Sola was an old hand at such scraps. Controversy involving school-funding arrangements between the Protestant and Roman Catholic Schools Boards, the Spanish and Portuguese congregation, the Baron de Hirsch Institute and the Quebec government had spilled into even the pages of French publications, like *La Minerve*, twenty years earlier.<sup>77</sup>

“As the leading spirit of the Montreal Jewish Mission, Bishop Farthing [ ] ignores the absolute right of my people to adhere to their religion without impertinent interference. . . . If Bishop Farthing considers conversion to Christianity essential for our salvation: if he really believes that an infinitely benevolent God will consign us to hell fire unless we see eye to eye with him, how is it that he has never made an attempt to convert me or my fellow Rabbis? Are our souls of value? Are we such hardened sinners that we are unworthy of redemption?. . . . I pause for a reply.. . . As a Canadian interested in the welfare of this country, I denounce Bishop Farthing’s Jewish missionary movement as an undertaking which is fostering that religious strife in a mixed population which all patriotic citizens, irrespective of race and creed, must deplore and condemn.”

The Bishop replied with the classically liberal observation that,

“the rabbi confuses religious liberty and the duty of every man to propagate truth as he understands it. The Church of England is not, either through her Jewish Mission or in any other way, interfering with the religious liberty of the Jews or any other part of the community. We would stand side by side of the Jews to contend for his full right to worship God according to his conscience were anyone to attempt to interfere with that liberty. No Anglican, Jewish or Gentile, has ever interfered with their service or desired to do so. On the other hand, the Jews have tried to curtail our liberty of worship by trying to disturb the service at the Mission House. . . . Rabbi de Sola says rightly, that under the protection of the British flag that Jews have ‘rights,’ and that one of these rights is religious liberty. No one questions this. May I remind him that in no country in the world have those rights been so well protected as under British rule. The Jew owes his privileges here to the fact that the ideals of Jesus Christ have governed the people. “Whatever ‘rights’ the Jews enjoys here, he owes to Jesus Christ.”

The rabbi’s pompous and personalized attack on Farthing appealed to an alleged right of Jews not to be offended. The Bishop pointed to the concrete legal rights which were part of

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<sup>77</sup> Tulchinsky, 142

the fabric of Christendom, as it had developed in British society over the centuries. Legal rights to freedom of association, assembly, and worship were inextricably linked to freedom of speech. Meldola de Sola's appeal to the rights of British subjects in order to defend rioting and vandalism was silly high school sophistry, unworthy of an educated man. It is perhaps not surprising that the arrogant son did not enjoy the same access to anglo-Montreal society as his father, who had taught Hebrew at McGill.<sup>78</sup>

It would be left to Rabbi Harry Joshua Stern, a man whose version of Judaism de Sola ridiculed, to try to repair frayed Jewish Gentile relations in Montreal after his arrival at the Reformed Temple Emanu-El Beth Shalom in 1927. At a mass meeting of 10,000 at the Montreal Arena, organized to protest Hitler's rise to power in 1933, it was the Rev. Dr. Leslie Pidgeon, the former Moderator of the United Church, who ensured Stern – in the face of Jewish opposition - the opportunity to speak. Like Rohold, Stern saw a link between the 'suffering race and the suffering Messiah'. "Verily we Jews are 'the Christ people'; a thousand times have we been crucified and a thousand times we shall yet be crucified until then truths taught by our faith become the common possession of all mankind. . . . What can we do in this hour of tragedy?. . . We can appeal to the Christendom that is not Christless." When, as a member of the organizing committee, Stern did just that and invited the Bishop Farthing to the rally, he witnessed "tears [of] shame which this religious leader felt that he should be called upon to protest against the barbarism of so-called Christian Germany."<sup>79</sup> But however great his shame at the collapse of the German Church in the face of Nazism and however much he lamented the decline in political and business standards in Montreal over

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<sup>78</sup> Farthing's predecessor, Bishop William Bennett Bond, had headed the Citizen's Committee which solicited subscriptions and raised over \$4,600 in 1882 for the relief of Russian Jewish refugees. Tulchinsky, *Taking Root*, 111. For evidence of a similarly warm reception in Toronto see, *The Globe*, January 12, 1881: 4; February 2, 1882: 2; February 8, 1882: 1; February 21, 1882: 2; March 4, 1882: 14; March 18: 14. April 20, 1882: 2; 26:1; May 22, 1882: 1; May 24, 1882: 6; July 1, 1882:1; January 25, 1883:6; February 10, 1893: 3; June 25, 1884: 1; June 23, 1887: 8; There would also be a very sympathetic reaction to the Dreyfus case in the 1890's. *Globe* July 3, 1896: 1; September 12, 1899: 1, 2, 10. This generally philo-Semitic reaction continued through the Russian pogroms of 1905 as the Jewish population in Toronto grew significantly. Sack, *Canadian Jews*, 26-28. Goldwin Smith would not live to see the anti-Semitic reaction that he anticipated before his death in 1910. To put the Canadian response in a larger perspective, see Donald M. Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Lord Shaftesbury and Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland* (Cambridge, 2009), 223-226. I am grateful to Bill Reimer for these references.

<sup>79</sup> Harry Joshua Stern, *Judaism in the War of Ideas*, (New York, 1937), 83-4 cited in Kenneth Irving Cleator and Harry Joshua Stern, *Harry Joshua Stern: A Rabbi's Journey*. (New York, 1981), 79.

the course of his thirty year tenure in office, Farthing still operated within the assumptions of a Christian Canada.<sup>80</sup>

It was easy for gentiles to be cynical about Jewish leaders like de Sola and to dismiss their professions of faith in British law and justice as tactical rhetoric. Their real commitment was clearly to the Zionist project. But even when waxing eloquent on that subject, de Sola could not refrain from dark warnings about,

“an apostate from Judaism, who wished to save our souls by converting us into renegades from Israel’s sublime faith, recently stated in this city that Zionism was a sign of the times foreshadowing a general adoption by the followers of Judaism of the religion of their neighbours. Zionism has been frequently misrepresented, but the misrepresentation has yet to be coined that can vie with this unblushing and insolent falsehood. . . [from] conversionist missionaries, who, being powerless in manly, straightforward and logical argument, resort to tactics that place a premium on deceit, falsehood and hypocrisy. Zionism is a proclamation of the Jew’s conviction that while England, the United States, and one or two other enlightened countries uphold the principles of justice and righteousness, the “peace and goodwill” preached elsewhere in the name of religion is practiced in the form of fanatical intolerance and persecution, and that then only remedy for this survival of medieval bigotry is to secure for the Jewish people ‘a publicly, legally assured home’ in the land of their fathers.”<sup>81</sup>

Whoever he may have thought lacking “in manly, straightforward and logical argument”, it was clearly not Rohold, the Presbyterian superintendent for Jewish missions. Invitation to dialogue and argument was his constant offer and refrain, but he had no rabbinical takers – not even from one, like de Sola, who might have come close to being his intellectual equal.<sup>82</sup> It was not the Presbyterian who demonstrated reticence in engaging in dialogue. But the Jewish reaction to such invitation, in the years immediately prior to the First World War, was public disorder and broken glass.

Such, then, was the broader social context in which Jews and Presbyterians wrestled over the future of Queen’s as a confessionally-Christian and national university and the offense that this

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<sup>80</sup> John Cragg Farthing, *Recollections of the Right Rev. John Cragg Farthing, Bishop of Montreal, 1909-1939* (Montreal, 1943), 182-191.

<sup>81</sup> Meldola de Sola, *Zionism: A sermon delivered on the seventh day of Passover, 5660* (Montreal), 12.

<sup>82</sup> “He was a man of wide learning, familiar with the Talmud and other Jewish religious works. Quite often [Rohold] would challenge one of the Toronto Orthodox rabbis to meet him in a public debate. Needless to say, his humiliating challenges were never taken up. Knowing from experience the futility of debating over religion, and regarding it as beneath their dignity to accept, the rabbis ignored his challenges. Shmuel Mayer Shapiro, *The Rise of the Toronto Jewish Community*, (Toronto, 2010), 29.

represented to Jewish sensibilities. The Jewish community strongly championed the liberal principle of the separation of church and state, set out in the first amendment of the American constitution and historically favoured by Baptists and secessionist Presbyterians. That is what Marcus Sperber's rhetoric in the *Canadian Jewish Times* about "the British flag recognizing no distinction because of race, religion or creed"<sup>83</sup> pointed to. (In point of fact, however, the distinction between religious creeds was precisely what the confessional educational provisions set out in the British North America Act both recognized and protected.) Rather than working peacefully towards negotiated solutions within the established system, the Jewish community aggressively availed itself of legal and political means to seek its overthrow and to insist on minority rights. But the commitment and appeal to abstract liberal principle was quite selective in a community in which Zionist passion also ran high. Logical consistency, as Rohold had pointed out, was not the strong suit of "modern and liberal Jewry". It was inclined to claim rights for itself it was not willing to grant to others.

Grant's opinion on the wisdom of evangelistic efforts targeted at the Jewish community is not available; there had been no significant Jewish population in Canada during his lifetime. It seems likely that he would have voted against the proposal at the 1907 General Assembly for the same reasons he had always opposed an analogous mission to French Canadian Roman Catholics. The result of such efforts was inevitably to detach a few individuals from the community of which they were a part and to turn them into pariahs. The conversions, for which End Time enthusiasts looked, would come in God's own time, and would be tied to broad social movements and historical developments that lay within the providence of God. In the meantime, the limited funds available for Christian mission were better spent, in his opinion, in making use of the British Empire to evangelize India and China, or the sorts of urban missions that he had organized and fundraised for in Halifax. In Kingston, rather than engage in Jewish proselytizing, he helped raise funds for its burial ground.<sup>84</sup>

What one can say, however, is that Grant's commitment to free speech was robust, deep and abiding; it was certainly not just tactical or rhetorical. When the ex-Roman Catholic priest,

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<sup>83</sup> M. M. Sperber's editorial in *The Canadian Jewish Times*, March 22, 1912.

<sup>84</sup> The plot in the Kingston cemetery was acquired in the 1890's. *Principal Grant*, 493.



Charles Chiniquy, had arrived in Halifax forty years earlier, his presence sparked a riot amongst the Irish Catholics that destroyed the windows of the Fort Massey Presbyterian Church. Grant disapproved of both the content and the style of Chiniquy's preaching. As one who strove to build consensus, he disliked rabble-rousers. But, rather than submit to the tyranny of the mob, he opened the pulpit of his own church, St. Matthew's, to Chiniquy the following night. Grant's friend, archbishop Thomas Connolly was out of town, so Grant reminded the Halifax public that the windows of St. Mary's Cathedral were very beautiful and would be very difficult and expensive to replace. The windows at St. Matthews, on the other hand, were of ordinary plate glass and easily repaired. Irish Roman Catholics, who had given vent to their deep offence at the *meshumad* in their midst, took the hint. Chiniquy's speech was not disrupted a second night nor were there any broken window panes. An indication of the extent of Chiniquy's *chutzpah* is reflected in his request for a show of hands from those who had gathered in Grant's church. How many in the congregation agreed with him on the subject of Roman Catholic iniquity and how many supported their minister? The vote did not go in Grant's favour. However much they may have respected or feared him as their minister, his congregation apparently did not regard his unwillingness to bash Roman Catholics as a model to be imitated.<sup>85</sup>

Grant's liberal strong commitment to free speech was situated, however, within the context of shared Christian faith. For all that divided them, and however exorcized people might get on the subject of the proper form of church government, explanations of the "real presence" of Christ in the sacrament or the dogma of Papal Infallibility, Catholics and Protestants had a great deal in common. Their disagreements occurred within a shared conviction that the Holy Spirit would eventually lead all Christians into a comprehensive grasp of "the truth that sets men free". It was precisely such a conviction that made free discussion worthwhile. Grant's commitment to free speech, besides this assumption of a common framework of faith, included a conviction that the truth was ultimately one. Once ambiguities, mistaken assumptions and partial knowledge had been exposed in open dialogue, the law of non-contradiction applied. Truth would prevail. It was less clear that those of other faiths shared his convictions. Without the assumption of divine transcendent truth, truth which is beyond the possibility of human control or manipulation, without the assumption of a *norma non normanda*, the rationale for free speech disappears. The Rev.

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<sup>85</sup> Charles Chiniquy, *Forty Years in the Church of Christ* (Montreal, 1901), 282-302.

Sabeti Robold's efforts at inter-faith dialogue - despite his obvious qualifications for such a task – met with a response closer to the present day clash of “incommensurate discourses” and the endless power struggles on university campuses than the space for open debate and discussion which Grant created at Queen's in the 1890's.

In retrospect, it was perhaps unwise for a recently-arrived Jewish community to put itself at the vanguard of a legal and political struggle to challenge the Christian cultural hegemony in Canada, as unwise as it would be today for the Muslim community to take on an analogous role in challenging the legal framework of late-modern liberalism (however justified it might seem.) Phrases like “insolent presumption” or “impertinent interference” can be lobbed in more than one direction, and with pernicious results. The misgivings of Archie Bennett and the Montreal Jewish establishment about the long-term consequences of such behavior were not unwarranted. It is generally wise for newly-arrived immigrants to pay some dues before being too vocal in their criticisms and complaints about their host society.

Perhaps such nineteenth-century liberal faith in free discussion was naïve, along with the belief that fruitful dialogue could lead to a workable consensus that served as a basis for joint action. But it was certainly the goal towards which Grant strove on the Queen's campus in the 1890's. Appealing to ideals like “courage, honesty, loyalty and inexhaustible zeal in any good cause, he reached the state where he could say with sincerity that the only cure for the abuse of liberty was more liberty, and he contrived to make Queen's safe for such a dangerous doctrine.”<sup>86</sup> Sam Jacob's worldview, and that of the community he represented in Parliament, was much narrower. In his opinion, the religious rioting that had taken place, “should remain a lesson for the conversionists not to outrage Jewish religious feelings. Much as I regret [the rioting] I do not feel that I can blame the Jews for refusing their feelings to be outraged, though I regret other and more peaceful means were not possible.”<sup>87</sup> Fruitful Christian Jewish discussion was simply not possible in the way that Grant had discovered Roman Catholic and Protestant dialogue could be.

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<sup>86</sup> Neatby, 199.

<sup>87</sup> Bernard Figler, *Sam Jacobs: Member of Parliament 1871 -1938*, (Montreal, 1970), 13

A few years later, having being elected as a Laurier Liberal in 1917, Jacobs' main concern as an M.P. in Ottawa concerned Jewish immigration. In 1921, when the U.S. Congress adopted a quota system, 650 Jewish immigrants who were refused entrance at the American border were admitted to Canada after a delegation consisting of Jacobs, Lyon Cohen, A.J. Freiman of Ottawa and H. Wolofsky (the new proprietor of the *Canadian Jewish Times*) visited Mackenzie King. In 1923, the same players met with the Minister of Immigration, Mr. Robb, in relation to several thousand Russian Jews who had found temporary asylum in Roumania. Five thousand immigration permits were issued to the Jewish Immigrant Aid Committee which was to vet and admit an annual quota of Jewish immigrants on the assurance that they would not become a burden to the taxpayer. This arrangement had the advantage of thus significantly reducing the workload of the Immigration branch.<sup>88</sup> The JIAS collected the \$10.00 application fee on behalf of the government, and then an additional \$25.00 for approved applications which were then sent to Ottawa for submission to Cabinet. Approximately 70% of the approximately 5,000 Jewish immigrants who arrived between April 1, 1925 and March 31, 1926 came under JIAS auspices.) But the temptations to which individuals were exposed proved too much and "the dishonest behavior of a minority tarnished their collective reputation."<sup>89</sup> Certainly it did in the minds of key immigration officials like Frederick C. Blair - who would become deputy minister of immigration in the 1930's. The racket in false immigration documents either convinced or reconfirmed Blair in an unfavourable opinion of Jewish honesty. Henceforth, resistance within the Immigration Branch to further Jewish immigration increased significantly. Applications were scrutinized on a case by case basis. Instead of 5,000 immigrants being admitted in a year, the number would drop to 5,000 between 1930 and 1938. A Jewish immigrant group that had been quick, under Jacob's leadership, to avail itself of the law to press for its rights, now found itself on the receiving end of bureaucratic legalism. If the relationship between Jews and Christian could not be bridged by a shared culture or faith, but could only be mediated by recourse to law, then both sides could play that game. The appeal to law, in *The Merchant of Venice*, is doubled-edged; those who live by the letter of the law often die by it.

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<sup>88</sup> Figler, *Abramowitz; Lazarus Cohen; Lyon Cohen*, 135

<sup>89</sup> Jack Lipinsky, *Imposing Their Will: an Organizational History of Jewish Toronto, 1933-1948* (McGill-Queen's, 2011), 83.

Irving and Abella's *None is too Many* (1983), targets Blair as the villain in their piece. But , deputy ministers do not make government policy, they simply administer it and apply regulations more or less creatively or cooperatively. An increasingly restrictive immigration policy accurately reflected both Mackenzie King's well-documented personal ambivalence towards Jews and the increasingly hostile public opinion in English Canada and especially Quebec.<sup>90</sup> An obviously irritated McGill professor told a young David Lewis in 1928 that he didn't like it "when people of your race, who enjoy this country's freedom and opportunity, spend time attacking and denigrating our great society."<sup>91</sup> As Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Ira Mackay, wrote to Principal Arthur Currie about the need for a quota on Jewish enrollment, which had grown in 1924-5 to 25% in Arts and Science, 15% in Medicine and 40% in Law . (The Jewish population in Canada was only about 1.5%). Mackay complained that a lack of available space meant that McGill was not training the sons and daughters of its own constituency – anglo-Protestant Montreal – and the Jewish community made no financial contribution to McGill, as earlier in the century it had made little contribution to the Protestant Educational system in Quebec. Mackay pointed out that McGill would certainly not admit francophone students in anything like similar numbers in the absence of that community's financial support. (In the 1940's, after Sam Bronfman began to make some donations to McGill, quotas were lifted. The *quid pro quo* seems pretty clear.<sup>92</sup>)

Besides the eternal grouching about money, however, there were important cultural factors at play. By the 1930's, cultural conservatives like T.S. Eliot in Britain, resented the contribution of secularized Jews to the cultural dissolution of Christendom during the interwar years.<sup>93</sup> No one was fonder or more sentimental about a fading Christendom than Mackenzie King; Jewish Canadians, as a group, favoured a secularization of Canadian society that King opposed. King recalled Goldwin Smith's view that Jews "were poison in the veins of a community". But, by the 1930's, an opinion deemed in King's student days to be a peculiar and eccentric hobby horse of 'the Professor's', had become mainstream. As King noted in his diary, his long time friend, Tom Eakin, Principal of Knox College, now shared that opinion. When Presbyterian students pelted a May Day Parade of Communists with water balloons from the windows of the college residence

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<sup>90</sup> Exiles, 65-7; 88-9.

<sup>91</sup> David Lewis, *The Good Fight: Political Memoirs: 1909-1958* (Toronto, 1981), 23.

<sup>92</sup> William Fong, *J. W. McConnell: Financier, Philanthropist, Patriot* (McGill Queen's, 2008) , 479.

<sup>93</sup> Anthony Julius, *T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form* (London, 1996).

and the militants threatened to tear the building down, Eakin defended his rambunctious boys in *The Varsity*, the student newspaper, in proprietorial terms. Things had come to a pretty pass, when you had “Communists, who can hardly speak the English language, threatening the life of a youth whose grandfather was probably a pioneer of this country.”<sup>94</sup> Those whose ancestors had wrested a nation from the wilderness at considerable sacrifice now saw a plague of locust descending upon it - aggressive foreigners who were quick to demand legal rights and avail themselves of the courts, but loath to make sacrifices for the Dominion. Stereotypes of “the Other” operated in both directions; hazy perceptions of reality often have adverse consequences, as Archie Bennett had observed thirty years earlier. The false perception of hostility and rabid anti-Semitism in the host society had now become actual.

While loathe to take full responsibility for the administrative decision-making required, Canadian immigration policy would only change after King’s retirement and the arrival of a new generation of civil servants with its new religious creed of secularized liberal internationalism and enthusiasm for the United Nations.<sup>95</sup> “Mike” Pearson would be its representative and philo-Semitic political manifestation.<sup>96</sup> King would remain skeptical about that future and distrustful of Jewish opposition to the Christian Canada that Grant had helped to create, and that he, himself, was trying to preserve. In this respect, King shared the concerns of the religious and political authorities in Roman Catholic Quebec. His obvious hesitations on the subject certainly left him unwilling to strenuously oppose those whose views on the subject of Jewish influence were firmer than his own.

The Bronfman empire, after all, was hardly a stellar advertisement of Jewish business probity. Well-known links to organized crime might not be an impediment to Senate appointment in the

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<sup>94</sup> *The Varsity*, March 20, October 26, 27, 1936. quoted in D.C. Masters, *Henry John Cody: An Outstanding Life* (Toronto, 1995), 219. Cf. “Red-Capped Workers March in Thousands Observing May Day” *Toronto Star* 1 May 1936. “Bears Stage May Day Parade Walk to Win Over Leafs” *Toronto Star* 2 May 1936.

<sup>95</sup> Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948* (New York, 1982), 190ff

<sup>96</sup> That Pearson, the son and grandson of a Methodist minister, should have turned away from Christian faith for reasons of political expediency and in order to become a smooth facilitator of the new secularized ‘liberal order,’ lies behind the scathing treatment he is accorded in G.P. Grant’s *Lament for a Nation*.



*Sir Sandford Fleming and the Old Order*



*Max Aitkin (the future Lord Beaverbrook) and the new*

twenty-first century, but King frowned on them. No doubt there were also lots of corrupt WASP businessmen in the Canada that had come into being by the 1940's, but King could remember the day when Montreal society had blackballed Max Aitkin (the son of a Presbyterian minister) for corrupt business practice.<sup>97</sup> Sandford Flemming, the octogenarian chancellor of Queen's since 1880, had marshalled the public case against Aitkin in relation to dubious financial dealings with the Canada Cement Company. It had precluded the possibility of a political career in Canada; Max settled out of court and moved to England.<sup>98</sup> Flemming was old school. He remembered the strict justice that Grant had meted out in financial matters at Saint Matthew's, their congregation in Halifax. As the minister, he had once spent a week trying and (and convicting) one of his elders for

<sup>97</sup> King Diary, April 25, 1931. King had heard from Bennett that one of [Lord Beaverbrook's] "delusions at times just now was that he is God. He had said to intimate friends, not to say certain things in his presence as he was God. Blasphemy is a part of extreme sinning against the light. Aitkin, being of the manse must have some religious perceptions and sense, but they have been used to further wrong ends." Beaverbrook would probably have agreed!

<sup>98</sup> Richards, David Adams. *Lord Beaverbrook* (Toronto, 2008); Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie, *Beaverbrook: a life* (London 1992), 51-68

financial impropriety.<sup>99</sup> Turning the man away from the communion table was the hardest thing he ever had to do as a minister, he confessed to his son.<sup>100</sup> But he had done it. When the sentence was appealed to a higher Church court, the Synod of the Maritimes, it had been upheld. Presbyterian Church discipline in the nineteenth century, at least under Grant's tenure, had not been confined to shaming unmarried and conspicuously pregnant teen-age girls. No one in the congregation – not even powerful business men – was exempt from the moral wrath and censure of the covenanted community. It was a world that King understood and whose values he shared at some level, however poor his own self-understanding of his own motives and ambitions. It was a vanishing world for which he felt nostalgic. The future belonged to the gangster morality of the devious and the unscrupulous.

There was too much Jewish influence around the Washington of FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt for King's taste, and he worried about parallel developments in Canada – especially after the Igor Gouzenko revelations.<sup>101</sup> For King, who still lived in a world thick with the dead and dying spirits of Christendom, “the evidence [was] very strong. . . . that in a large percentage of the [Jewish] race there are tendencies and trends which are dangerous indeed.”<sup>102</sup> In a materialistic age, King saw himself as a lonely defender of Christendom, whether it was under attack by the Nazis, the Conservative leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons or from any other quarter.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> In 1872, an elder, William Montgomery, owner of the Nova Scotia Iron Works that manufactured, among other things, steam engines for the Intercolonial Railway, was accused by his business partner and brother-in-law of shady business practise. The investigation which lasted every night for a week revealed a tendency to use “misleading” language in correspondence to banks and creditors and “improper” behaviour in relation to a business rival. The moral expectations of a Presbyterian elder in business were clearly higher than the standards of practise set by commercial law. Only because Montgomery appealed the verdict first to the Presbytery and then to the Synod, where the normally closed proceedings of the Session investigation printed and distributed. Session also disciplined for offences like “conspicuous drunkenness”, fornication, or lying and Grant and his elders were quite capable of close examination of those called to the bar in pursuit of the truth. In extreme cases, and in the absence of repentance, the result was excommunication. Congregational discipline was taken seriously at St. Matthew's, even if it had waned elsewhere. Investigating the business dealings of a wealthy and powerful elder was perhaps more reminiscent of Calvin's Geneva than nineteenth-century Presbyterian Canada!

<sup>100</sup> *Principal Grant*, 118. “Grant always considered the elders worthy of the highest reverence, and few things in his whole career gave him more pain than the occasion of which he was compelled, as head of the session, to depose from the eldership and unworthy member, and at the next communion to forbid his attempted approach to the table of the Lord.”

<sup>101</sup> Mendelson, *Exiles*, 72, 88.

<sup>102</sup> Mendelson, *Exiles*, 88.

<sup>103</sup> King Diary, February 26, 1942. “[Hanson] went on to quote what Hutchinson said about my reading the Bible, having faith in prayer and believing in immortal life. He made the astonishing statement that he himself used to read the Bible, but had no time for it now. Personally, I felt proud to have this declaration made in Parliament of my foundational belief. I have always hoped that the day might come when, in the Canadian

Beneath the military and political struggle between Fascism and Democracy, King discerned lay a deeper, spiritual struggle. It was a conviction that had grown upon him throughout the 1930's and was the ultimate source of his disagreement with the agnostic, materialist and rationalist O.D. Skelton - however useful he was as a civil servant.<sup>104</sup> While visiting President Roosevelt in 1937, (Skelton refused to go to church with them) King had noted in his diary that he could have spoken of "Christ or Caesar as being the real issue," though he had refrained from doing so. He had made it clear however, that in his view "it was Christian civilization or the opposite."<sup>105</sup>

In such a context, it is hardly surprising that Samuel Jacob's impassioned pleas in the House of Commons during the 1930's for increased levels of Jewish immigration fell on deaf ears. Jewish immigration was one of the several factors eroding the religious past to which King still clung. From the perspective of this last Victorian Canadian, it was certainly not something worth the political risk of imperiling national unity. Jews were a disruptive bunch and partisans of the secularized and materialist future that King was trying to resist. Ironically, a political career that began with a public campaign against even a nominal connection between Church and Nation, ended in heartbreak over the same issue. Jacobs was crushed at not being sent by Mackenzie King as a Canadian representative to King George VI's coronation at Westminster Abbey in 1936 - surely a very odd ambition for one so violently opposed to the British connection between Church and State.<sup>106</sup>

Public opinion in Canada on the subject of Jewish immigration had shifted dramatically since first decade of the twentieth century, when churches had raised significant sums of money to aid Jewish refugees from the 1905 pogroms.<sup>107</sup> In 1938, in a *Queen's Quarterly* article entitled, "This Anti-Semitism", W.S. McCullough summed up this development. He denied that the

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Parliament, I might stand for the kind of thing that Gladstone stood for in the public life of England in the matter of political action being based on religious convictions, and the latter known and boldly stated. The fact that the leader of a political party would dare to say that he had no time for the reading of the Bible indicates, perhaps, better than anything else, just how completely the materialism of the recent past has destroyed the religious spirit, and the need there is, if mankind is to be saved and a new order established, to get back as rapidly as we can to the old faith and the appreciation of Eternal realities."

<sup>104</sup> King Diary, December 26, 1936.

<sup>105</sup> King Diary, 6 March, 1937.

<sup>106</sup> Mendelson, *Exiles*, 127; Erna Paris, *Jews: an account of their experience in Canada* (Toronto, 1980), 80-2.

<sup>107</sup> B.G. Sacks, *Canadian Jews - early in this century* (Montreal, 1975),



“recrudescence of anti-Jewish feeling” in both democratic and fascist states could simply be attributed to anti-communism. Sociological explanations did not really get to the theological root of the matter. He admitted that the Medieval Church had “to its own lasting disgrace” persecuted Jews (although it did not exterminate them as it did the heretical Cathars of Southern France). Since the beginning of the Christian era the “Jewish attitude to Jesus” had created an “unfavourable atmosphere for co-operation between Jews and Christians.” Nevertheless, he argued that the roots of anti-Semitism were deeper and pre-dated the Christian era. The Jewish diaspora in the ancient world had also lived as “resident foreigners” amidst the pagan empires of Egypt, Persia and Rome. Hebrew nationalism, and the phenomenon of anti-Semitism in the ancient world to which it was linked, predated Jesus by many centuries. McCullough pointed to the Jewish self-understanding as a Chosen People, which, to his mind, meant that “the roots of anti-Jewish feeling lie within the very nature of Judaism itself; Anti-Semitism is therefore fundamentally a Jewish problem and its solution rests largely in Jewish hands.” The solution to which Mr. McCullough looked was Zionism. While he doubted that it would improve the status of “the rest of the Jews throughout the world”, he ventured to hope that “if the Arabs can be appeased” Zionism could establish a Jewish state in which traditional Judaism can be practiced without let or hindrance.”<sup>108</sup>

Another gentile supporter of the Zionist solution to the anti-Semitism that was, by 1938, so conspicuously on display in Germany (but obvious, too, in Canada) was John Buchan, the Governor General. Mordecai Richler famously blamed the words of one of Buchan’s *The Thirty Nine Steps* (1915) for distorting his relationship with a paternal grandfather who, he admitted, gave “less than honest weight on the old junk yard scale” in the Griffintown salvage business, and on that basis accused Buchan of being an anti-Semite. It was a charge the novelist repeated on numerous occasions. “My grandfather, *pace* Buchan, went in fear of being flogged in some one-horse location on the Volga, which was why we were in Canada. . . . I owe to Buchan the image of my grandfather as a little white-faced Jew with an eye like a rattlesnake.”<sup>109</sup> However useful an anti-Semitic Buchan may have been in the construction of a personal mythology, the charge does

<sup>108</sup> W.S. McCullough, “This Anti-Semitism” *Queen Quarterly*, 45 (Autumn, 1938), 384-393; Mary-Ann Shantz, “Kingston Christians and the Persecution of European Jews During the Nazi Era” C.S.C.H, Historical Papers 2003. Although relations between the Kingston ministerial association and various Reformed rabbis still seems to have been cordial at a personal level in the 1930s, it didn’t stir people to action in relation to lobbying the government for increased immigration. The warm welcome extended in the early years of the century had disappeared. .

<sup>109</sup> Mordecai Richler, “James Bond Unmasked” *Commentary* (July, 1968).

not t bear the weight of historical scrutiny.<sup>110</sup> As one of Lord Milner’s “young men”, he indeed left his time as a colonial administrator in South African with a strong distaste for the Jewish financiers who had made quick fortunes in less than scrupulous ways and thus tarnished and disrupted Imperial rule, but by the 1930’s the scattered unflattering comments about Jewish villains in his fiction had disappeared. A Zionist hero figures in *A Prince of the Captivity* (1933). By then, Buchan was a friend of Chaim Weizmann, a public supporter of Israel and recognized as an enemy by Nazi authorities. (At the risk of belabouring the point, Buchan was not untypical of one raised in a Scottish Presbyterian manse. There were no pogroms in Scotland - or any other Calvinist country. Amsterdam was a place of refuge for Jews from all over Europe for centuries.)<sup>111</sup> Fears and bad memories of outraged grandmothers and grandfathers flogged “in some one-horse location on the Volga” poisoned Jewish-Gentile relations in Canada in the early years of the twentieth century. Those in the community who knew better chose not to challenge such fears, but use them politically. This was precisely the concern identified by both Sabeti Rohold and Archie Bennett a few years before *The Thirty Nine Steps* was published. Jewish resentments would prove toxic in the new environment and impede an accurate reading of reality. But, despite the fact that Buchan, a conservative Imperialist, was very aware of the fragility of “the thin crust of civilization” (far more than Grant ever was) he did not blame Jewish critics, plutocrats or communist revolutionaries for the decay of Christendom, however eager they may have been to promote such an outcome.

Opinions differed about the global social crisis in the 1930’s, and who, or what, was responsible for it. A progressive like McCullough was much less impressed than Mackenzie King with what had been achieved. (“The Christian gospel had, after centuries of effort, only succeeded in producing the Europe and America of 1938.”) A secularized future (except, perhaps, for Israel?) beckoned. In retrospect, the conservative Mackenzie King’s assessment of significant decline from the high-water mark of nineteenth-century civilization looks shrewder, and his fears about a secularized future not unfounded. He was less complacent about taking for granted what had been achieved over the centuries than the young Ottawa bureaucrats like Pearson who worked

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<sup>110</sup> Charles Foran, *Mordecai Richler: the Life and Times* (Toronto, 2010) , 455. Reinhold Kramer, *Mordecai Richler: Leaving St. Urban* (Montreal, 2009), 215. William Buchan, *John Buchan: a Memoir* (London, 1982), 250; Janet Adam Smith, *John Buchan: a Biography* (Oxford, 1965).

<sup>111</sup> “One Covenant of Grace: A Contemporary Theology of Engagement with the Jewish People” *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (2010) , 291-355.

for him; more worried about the downside risk of a disappearing Christendom. When the Second World War finally came, King understood it to be a contest between Christian Civilization (badly decayed by the effects of materialism) and Nazi Paganism, an assessment that secular rationalist democrat like O.D. Skelton viewed with patronizing amusement. But however silly it sounded in sophisticated Ottawa circles, it was a common enough opinion amongst culturally conservative Christians like T.S. Eliot.

Shortly before Christmas 1939, King attended a speech at the Canadian Club that reminded him of a conversation with Principal Grant, forty-five years earlier. What he recalled was not Grant's "coldness towards Jews" (an unfootnoted allegation in Michael Brown's book *Jew or Juif? Jews, French Canadians, and Anglo-Canadians, 1759-1914*).<sup>112</sup> Nor did he recall the "genteel anti-Semitism" that Alan Mendelson attributes to Grant in *Exiles from Nowhere: The Jews and the Canadian Elite*.<sup>113</sup> What he remembered was Grant's contention that human politics, at the deepest level, involved a struggle between worldviews and philosophies. "I felt over and over again the truth of Principal Grant's statement to me at the time I wrote him about post-graduate studies as I was about to leave for Chicago when he said everything has its beginning and end in philosophy. The present conflict is between Christianity and Paganism."<sup>114</sup>

Mendelson notwithstanding, King's opinions on the subject of Jewish immigration had nothing to do with Principal Grant, who had, in fact, championed the cause of Canadian Jews against the criticism of Goldwin Smith in the 1890's.<sup>115</sup> Grant as a confident "eminent Victorian" and was far too certain of the strengths of Christian civilization to worry about the influence of a few Jews – who were a statistically insignificant minority in Canada at the time of his death in 1902. King's fears reflected a different era, and a nostalgic appreciation of the constructive and self-sacrificing virtues of Christian Canada, its energy and sense of purpose in the task of nation-building north of the forty-ninth parallel. As Archie Bennett had pointed out to the readers of the *Canadian Jewish Times* many years earlier, the Kingston and the Queen's College that King had known as a young man had been anything but a centre of rabid anti-Semitism. The leading figure

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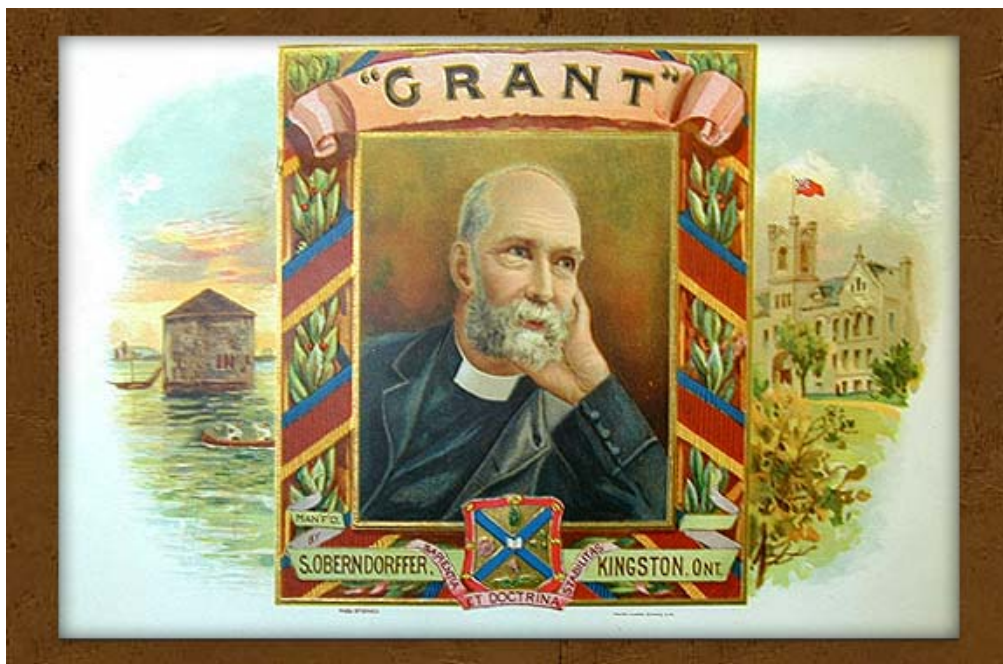
<sup>112</sup> Brown, *Jew or Juif*, 245.

<sup>113</sup> Mendelson, *Exiles*, 95-110.

<sup>114</sup> King Diary, December 19, 1939.

<sup>115</sup> Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: The origins of Canadian Jewish Community*, Toronto 1992), 323.

in Kingston's Jewish community, Samuel Oberndorffer, had been a friend of the Principal's - whose smiling face (between a Martello tower and the New Arts building) adorned the boxes that left Oberndorffer's cigar factory for the tobacconist shops of the nation. On at least one occasion, Grant put his skills as a fundraiser to work on behalf of the Kingston Jewish community.<sup>116</sup> The historian, B.G. Sack, singles out Kingston as a Canadian city particularly hospitable to Jews.<sup>117</sup> Kingston churches raised significant money for the victims of the Russian pogrom in 1905. When a synagogue was finally built, Kingston's gentiles contributed a fifth of its cost. The Hon. William Harty, by then Kingston's M.P. in Ottawa, alone contributed \$200. At the laying of the corner stone of the synagogue in 1910, the invited guests included two Presbyterian ministers (the Rev. Dr. Mackie, Grant's minister at St. Andrew's and the Rev. Dr. Macgillivray of Chalmer's Presbyterian) both of whom made speeches extolling the Jewish contribution to Western civilization.<sup>118</sup>



**Fig 4:** Grant on cigar box from Samuel Oberndorffer's factory in Kingston.

<sup>116</sup> *Principal Grant*, 493.

<sup>117</sup> B.J. Sack, *Canadian Jews - Early in this Century* (Montreal, 1975), 7, 55.

<sup>118</sup> *Kingston Whig Standard*, October 11, 1910.

One understands Jewish anger, resentment and suspicion of the Christian past; the tragic events of the twentieth century have also provoked deep self-examination of an uneasy Christian conscience. No doubt a critique of Christian Canada is warranted and necessary. But history is the realm of ambiguity. In the years between the 1881 and the 1911 census, the Jewish population had increased from virtually nothing to the only significant religious minority in the country – approximately 1% of the population, the vast majority of whom lived in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. A generalized Christian antipathy for Jews, such as Mendelson posits, doesn't explain the obvious difference in public attitudes toward Jewish immigration to Canada before the First World War and after it.<sup>119</sup> There were other factors at work, perhaps including the vocal opposition of recently disembarked Jewish immigrants to the ground rules and assumptions on which the country had been built. This was most evident in relation to Catholic Quebec, but it also surfaced in the public opposition led by Samuel Jacobs and his associates in relation to Grant's plans for Queen's and for Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1926, long after Queen's had turned towards the secularized and fragmented future that was to be Canada's twentieth-century destiny - a future bereft of any substantive account of the human good or Grant's unifying vision of the whole - a future Principal of Queen's, William Mackintosh, wrote to his friend, the Rev. Neil Leckie, complaining about the sense of drift and malaise in the university's administration: "I don't think that anyone here since the days of Grant had any clear conception of what he was trying to do with the university."<sup>120</sup> Whatever his faults, and whatever the results of his strenuous and focused life, Grant at least knew what he was aiming for.

D. B. Mack August 2015

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<sup>119</sup> Michael Brown "From Stereotypes to Scapegoat" in Alan Davies, ed. *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation* (Waterloo, 1992), 39- 66.

<sup>120</sup> W.A. Mackintosh to Rev. Neil Leckie, March 15, 1926.