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JOHN CALVIN, JOHN KNOX AND THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION

by W. Stanford Reid

To say that the Scottish Reformation had its roots in the religious reformation on the continent of Europe would be to utter a platitude. Yet not many historians have bothered to show exactly how the two movements are related. Nor have they, although they take his role for granted, sought to indicate the place of John Knox in this process of transmission. When one studies the problem, however, it soon becomes apparent that Knox played a major part as a protagonist of the views of John Calvin, the Genevan reformer, from whom he obtained most of his theological views both by direct contact and by indirect influences. Therefore, to understand both the way in which Calvinism was disseminated in the sixteenth century and the reason for the Scottish Reformation's strong Calvinistic character, we should look closely at the relations of the two men as well as at Knox's activity in the movement for church reform in Scotland.

I. Knox's contacts with Calvin

Although John Calvin preached and taught in Geneva from the pulpit of the cathedral for most of his time in the city, his outreach by this means would have been relatively limited if he had spoken only to the Genevan citizens. With the constant inflow of refugees from other countries, however, he was able to wield an influence much wider than the relatively small area of Genevan political influence would warrant. Many of the refugees

stayed for only a time in the city and then passed on to other places, or as in the case of Knox returned to their home lands. In this way they became bearers of the ideas which they had heard expressed in the Protestant "New Jerusalem."

Even more important than his preaching were Calvin's writings. The most important of these was the Institutes of the Christian Religion which appeared first in 1534 as a small book of seven chapters, but which Calvin revised repeatedly until it took its present definitive form in 1559.[1] Added to this major work were his pamphlets, many of which were translated soon after their publication in Latin or French into various vernacular languages as widely different as English and Czech. Perhaps as important as these expository and didactic writings were his biblical commentaries in which he endeavoured to make plain the meaning of most of the biblical books. Again these, although published originally in Latin were soon translated into French and many other languages.[2] Last of all he had a very wide correspondence, not only with other theologians and reformers, but with many of the leading political figures and crowned heads of Europe and with humble supporters of the Reformation who sought his advice and help. These letters were very often a commentary on his other writings, bringing out points which had been overlooked either by him or by his readers. By these means Calvin wielded a wide influence over the whole movement of reformation throughout his lifetime, and "he being dead yet speaketh."

When we turn to the relationship of Calvin and Knox, we find that it is a little difficult to determine when Knox first

came in contact with Calvin's writings. The original Reformation movement in Scotland would seem to have come out of Wittenberg with a strongly Lutheran character.[3] By the middle of the 1540s, however, this influence would seem to have become somewhat weakened, and as we look at Knox's sermon preached in St. Andrews Castle in 1548, we find that the views expressed might be termed generally evangelical, perhaps influenced by Luther, and strongly anti-papal.[4] They could hardly be described as Reformed or Calvinistic.

It may be that Knox's first knowledge of Calvin came during his captivity in France when he toiled at the oar of the galley Notre Dame. Captured in the Castle of St. Andrews by French forces he was carried to France where he was sentenced to the galleys for life. During this period he undoubtedly had contacts with French Protestants in Rouen and Nantes, from whom he may well have heard something of Calvin's teachings for by 1548 Calvinism was beginning to make itself felt in those regions. Released from his captivity in 1549 through English intervention Knox may have visited Geneva before going to England, for we find him quoting in 1549 Calvin's comments on the Prophet Jeremiah, although they were not published until some years later. It would seem certain, however, that he acquired the 1539 edition of Calvin's Institutes and a little later obtained a copy of the 1550 edition. From his statements in letters and some of the pamphlets which he wrote at this time, he gives an indication that he was being influenced by Calvin in his thinking.[5]

With the accession of Mary Tudor to the English throne Knox found it advisable to leave England for Dieppe, where he

spent the first few months of his sojourn on the Continent. There he devoted his time to writing pamphlets to encourage the English Protestants in their faith and to incite them to take action when possible to restore Protestant freedom.[6] These writings, however, raised questions in his own mind concerning the lawfulness of rebellion and also concerning the right of a woman to rule a country. To satisfy himself concerning these matters he journeyed to Geneva where he discussed the problem with Calvin and then passed on to consult Viret in Lauzanne and Bullinger in Zurich. One cannot but suspect that he was somewhat disappointed in the replies of both Calvin and Bullinger who advised great caution, insisting upon following constitutional processes according to the laws of each individual country.[7]

Any lukewarmness towards rebellion on the part of Calvin did not, however, deter Knox from his desire to study in Geneva, with the result that when he reached the conclusion that he could do no more from Dieppe he returned to the Swiss city to study Hebrew and other important subjects. But he was not left in peace. Some eight hundred English Protestant refugees had arrived in Frankfort-am-Main where they sought to establish a religious colony free from the control of some of the English bishops who had moved to Strasbourg under the threat of persecution of Mary. After some efforts to obtain the services of an English pastor which were not successful, they requested Knox to take the post. He was not really interested, but when Calvin applied some pressure he relented. His term of office in Frankfort, however, was not long, for soon after his arrival Richard Cox came from Strasbourg to attempt the takeover of the congregation. In this

he was successful, and Knox returned to Geneva soon to be followed by some 200 of his former congregation. In the struggle which had taken place in Frankfort over the use of the second Edwardian Book of Common Prayer, both sides had appealed to Calvin, who had given firm support to Knox, insisting that he had not been dealt with in a brotherly fashion.[8]

In Geneva, which Knox termed "the most perfect schole of Christ", he became the pastor of a congregation which he felt was truly reformed. The Form of Prayer and Ministration of the Sacrament produced by the congregation under Knox's leadership, reflected quite clearly the influence of Calvin's Forme des Prieres. But what was equally important was the close contact which Calvin and Knox enjoyed at this time. It was more than the relationship of a teacher and a pupil, for we find indications that it was on a close personal level. When Knox's wife died some years later in Scotland, Calvin commented on her characteristics in a letter, indicating that he must have had close contact with the Knoxes while they were in Geneva. It is also interesting to note that Calvin was one of Knox's sponsors when he was made a burgess of Geneva.[9] Throughout the period from 1555 when the English congregation came into existence until the departure of its members in 1558 on the accession to the English throne by Elizabeth, Knox and Calvin must have been in constant communication.

We must recognize, on the other hand, that they did not always agree. It was during his Genevan exile that Knox wrote one of his most famous works: The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women (1558) in which he

attacked the view that a woman might rule a country. Although he probably felt that this was a logical deduction from Calvin's own views on women, neither he nor Jean Crespin the publisher were willing to take the risk of appending their names to the publication; and later Calvin denied all knowledge of its origin.[10] More in accord with Calvin's views was his attack on an Anabaptist work which sought to refute Calvin's view of predestination. This is Knox's longest, indeed only, theological work and it is pure Calvin through and through. Other writings, pamphlets and letters sent to Scotland usually had a political objective, but it would seem that Knox felt in the views he expressed in these that he was simply carrying Calvin's ideas on government to their logical and practical conclusions.[11]

With the departure of his English congregation for home in 1558, Knox had no more cause to stay in Geneva. Moreover, since Elizabeth of England had no use for him because of his First Blast he could not return to his former congregations, Scotland was the only place he could go. By May of 1559 he was back home taking a leading part in the movement for reformation. Yet he seems to have kept in contact with Calvin although absent from Geneva. We find them exchanging letters on the subject of church government, baptism and the death of Knox's wife, Marjory. And after Calvin's death in 1564, Knox and Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, continued to correspond.[12] Knox's personal contacts with Geneva continued until the time of his own death in 1572.

II. Calvin's and Knox's Differing Situations

To understand the relationships of the two men and in turn their relationships to the Scottish Reformation, we must look at them and their actual situations somewhat more closely. It is always necessary to keep in mind that they were both rather strong-minded individuals. While they might well agree on some matters, on others they could differ quite widely. Such differences, however, were by no means merely a matter of personality. They were in situations which could only be contrasted rather than compared. These two factors must be kept in mind when one seeks to understand their actions, thoughts and influences.

One way in which they resembled each other was that both were trained in law. Calvin, on his father's insistence after a fight with the Bishop of Noyon, had moved from Paris to Orleans where he read law under the direction of Pierre de l'Estoile and also spent some time at Bourges attending the lectures of the humanist lawyer André Alciat. He thus had the benefit of the best legal thinkers of the day. Knox, on the other hand, studied law at St. Andrews University, becoming a Papal Notary on his graduation. His training was not in civil law but in Canon Law which would perhaps give him a somewhat different perspective from that of the humanist civilian, John Calvin.[13]

The differences in their legal training would show up in a number of ways. For one thing, Calvin trained as a humanist at Paris would tend to be philosophical in his thinking about law and its enforcement. True, he was very practical as we can see from his work on the legal reform committee in Geneva in

the early 1540s. But he would be interested in systematization and a theoretical understanding of law, as becomes very clear in his commentary on Seneca's De Clementia, his first published work.[14] In contrast to the humanist approach, Knox who had little or no contact with the Renaissance in his training, was obliged to be very practical in his preparation of documents and in the general carrying out of the rather mundane duties of a notary.

This difference undoubtedly reinforced Knox's radicalism over against the more philosophical coolness of Calvin. Calvin, a typical Picard, had a love of order and a reflective attitude to all that he did. Knox was different in that he was much more emotional. His reactions to any situation were usually from the heart rather than from the head. He could and did use his mind, but the emotional aspect was always very important. This would seem to be the basic reason for his radicalism and his rebellious characteristics which displayed themselves at times to his disadvantage and at other times to the accomplishment of his purposes.

The differences between the two men make their appearances in the situations in which they found themselves. When Calvin came to Geneva in 1536 on his way to Strasbourg, the Reformation had already exercised a powerful influence in the city owing to the activities of the fiery Guillaume Farel. The latter, however, realized his own deficiencies as an organizer, so when Calvin appeared on the scene he immediately demanded that the young lawyer stay and assist him in organizing a truly Reformed church.

Although Calvin had his difficulties at first from 1541 on much of his time was spent establishing a truly Reformed discipline in both Geneva and other lands. His work did not consist in initiating the Reformation but in providing it with a viable organization and structure.[15]

Knox's problem was very different from that of Calvin. Although the Reformation had already commenced in Scotland, it was largely an underground movement, with "privy Kirks" in nobles' houses or in the quiet house gatherings of burgesses in the burghs. What he had to do was stimulate the crypto-Protestants to come out into the open and take a stand. This had been his problem before he was captured in St. Andrews Castle, when he was acting as a co-pastor in the Reformed church in Dieppe and when later he was dealing either by letter or in person with the hesitant nobles in Scotland. He had to stimulate the Protestants to action, and in the chaotic political state of affairs which prevailed in the country such a task could not be accomplished by a cool, rational statement of objectives. As the English ambassador explained in a report to his superiors, Knox was able to put more courage in the Protestants than "five hundred trumpets blustering constantly in our ears."[16] His words give a good picture of Knox's approach, which was very different from that of his Genevan counterpart.

Part of the reason for Knox's somewhat more vigorous, at least outwardly, approach to his task was that he faced a much greater challenge than did Calvin. The latter had the problem of organizing a reformation in a relatively small town with four

churches. Knox, on the other hand, had the gigantic task of trying to establish a Reformed church in a much larger and much wilder country with at the most twelve Reformed ministers to bring this project to fruition. To attain this objective more than a rational, humanistic approach was required. Vim, vigor, vitality and plenty of emotion as well as a practical political sense were called for, and these Knox possessed. Furthermore, because of the largeness of his task in attempting to bring about a national Reformation, much of his attention had to focus on France, where the structures of a national Reformed church had already begun to take shape.[17]

It is not strange, therefore, that Knox seemed to follow the example of the French in a number of ways. He had apparently come to know something of the French Protestant movement while in the galley. Later he was active in Dieppe,preached in La Rochelle and may have visited Poitiers at the first synod of Reformed pastors. Moreover, he undoubtedly saw the draft of the first French Discipline which was adopted by the first national synod, held three weeks after he had left for Scotland in 1559.[18] In this way he followed Calvin, but at one remove through the French example establishing a nationwide church organization.

All of the above mentioned factors must be kept in mind when it comes to the actual influence of Calvin on the Scottish Reformation through the agency of John Knox. We must, however, go one step further to see the differences and resemblances of their doctrinal views. Only then will we really grasp the impact which Calvin had on the Scottish religious changes in the

sixteenth century.

III. Calvin's and Knox's Theological Views

To understand the theological positions of both Calvin and Knox one has to begin with their doctrine of Scripture, for to both of them the Bible was the foundation of any Christian theology. To Calvin, as he expressed his thinking in the first chapters of the Institutes, the Bible was the inspired Word of God. In and through it God had revealed himself to Israel in the Old Testament dispensation, and now spoke to his people through both the Old and the New Testament. He recognized, however, that the word to his people was not static, but that it was progressive in the sense that it was a gradual unfolding of his redemptive purpose in history. This meant, as he pointed out on numerous occasions that neither the economic system nor the political structures of the Old Testament were to be copied in the sixteenth century A.D. Rather the Scriptures were the ultimate guide to the Church given by God through the prophets and apostles to guide, direct and vivify the Church. This work, however, could be accomplished only by the action of the Holy Spirit's enlightening of the eyes of men that they might understand.[19]

While Knox was prepared to accept these ideas, he yet had a somewhat static view of the Scriptures in the sense that he constantly went back to the Old Testament for guidance as to what political actions or structures Christians should favor. If one compares his political views as expressed in some of his pamphlets with those of Calvin in Book IV of the Institutes one

finds a different approach on the parts of the two men. Furthermore, the views expressed by Knox in his questions submitted to Calvin and others on the subject of women rulers along with his argument in his First Blast, set forth a definite Old Testament point of view about which Calvin and Bullinger had very grave doubts. To Knox even the oldest parts of the Old Testament were truly contemporaneous.[20]

On the subject of sin both men were in hearty agreement, believing that sin had corrupted man totally so that he was unable of his own accord to listen to and believe the Gospel. Yet even here one notices something of a difference, for while Calvin held that man still had some of the image of God left in him by God's grace which enabled him to establish states and nations, which enabled him to produce things of beauty in the world and which enabled him to manifest certain "civil righteousness."[21] Knox, on the other hand, did not seem to take much cognizance of such an idea. He tended to regard all those who did not accept the Gospel as totally bad, not just relatively bad under the restraint of divine grace.

It was on the basis of the doctrine of human total depravity and of divine grace that both men followed the Pauline teaching on election, predestination and reprobation. Here again, however, Knox was somewhat more radical than Calvin, for while the latter was not prepared to say exactly what lay behind the divine choice of man to salvation, Knox believed that it was a matter of simple divine volition. In his thinking the divine will was the ultimate arbiter of man's fate, a position from which Calvin was never quite willing to take.[22]

Central to both men's theologies was the fact of redemption. Here again one notices subtle differences. On the one hand Calvin laid great stress on the atoning work of Christ. Christ had paid the penalty of sin for his people and they are infallibly brought to faith through the work of the Holy Spirit in their effectual calling. Knox agreed with all of this most heartily, but he also stressed the place of faith, even more than Calvin.[23] He spoke and wrote as the preacher, rather than as the theologian or scholar. Perhaps one might say that this was in fact the basic difference between the two men. Calvin was operating within an already established paramater,while Knox was faced with the necessity of persuading people to take action to change both church and society.

This comes out somewhat more clearly when one examines both men's attitude towards their theologies. While they agreed on both the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, as one author has pointed out, Knox tended to be more the rationalist. Calvin was prepared to leave a mystery as a mystery. Knox, on the other hand, in his endeavours to persuade men to accept his views was inclined to attempt explanation and reasoning as his instruments for convincing his opponents. In some cases, as in his dispute before the Bishop of Durham concerning Romanism, he actually employed typical medieval syllogistic arguments to prove his point.[24]

One is able to see this facet of Knox's thinking on turning to his doctrine of the church. Calvin had set forth the church as the people of God, redeemed by him to serve in this

world. For this reason the true church had definite marks by which it could be recognized: the faithful preaching of the Word and the proper administration of the sacraments. Knox, finding that the Genevan situation was very different from that in Scotland, while accepting Calvin's two marks added a third: "ecclesiastical discipline uprightlie administered." The Scots Confession, in whose formulation Knox played a major role, stressed the importance of good works and the binding character of the Old Testament law, expressed in discipline. In this he was following the French model as set forth in the acts of the Synod of Poitiers (1557) and as certainly was required in the lawless society which he encountered in Scotland.[25]

In this connection one must note that Knox in his whole concept of the church and its work, tended to look to the Old Testament even more than the New for his pattern of the Church. Here again we see his failure to recognize the progressive character of biblical revelation which Calvin with a better historical sense, took for granted. This influenced Knox's idea of the church's character and of its function in society, particularly, its relation to the state.

From a practical point of view, he found that the French model as projected in the Discipline set forth by the Synod of 1559 more in line with his needs as he worked for reform in Scotland. Thus when one examines what was probably the first draft of the Book of Discipline one finds the similarity with the French work noticeable. In much the same way, the French confession also served as a model for the Scottish statement of

faith, although it was by no means followed slavishly.[26] The Scots had their own ideas and their own needs to be met.

In both Confession and Book of Discipline, however, Knox's view of the relation of church and state show some clear differences from that of Calvin. The question of the relationship of the two bodies was one of the most important which the reformers found it necessary to face. Calvin insisted that both church and state held independent commissions from God, the one to preach the Gospel and to nourish the faithful, the other to maintain justice and quity in public life, while at the same time seeing that the Gospel was faithfully proclaimed, primarily by financing the Church and by making it adhere to its confession. He did not stress a covenant relationship, but implied that there was a covenant existing between ruler and subject to which both must adhere as ultimately responsible to God.[27] This provided some basis for the later thought of the Monarchomachs in France, but was carried even farther by Knox.

Knox based his view of the relation of church and state upon the Old Testament concept of the covenanted nation. Once a nation such as England or Scotland had accepted the Reformation it had become a covenanted nation in a position similar to that of Israel under the old dispensation. He held that a double covenant existed, one between the people and their rulers and a second between the people and ruler, and God. The state, therefore, had a solemn responsibility to make very sure that all subjects conformed to the true religion which was set forth by the Reformed church. One receives the impression from what Knox, himself, states,

that he carried his thinking to a logical conclusion which Calvin had tended to avoid.[28]

This appears in his doctrine of resistance. Except for the last paragraph in the Institutes Calvin had steered well clear of advocating anything like armed resistance to a ruler. And even when he sanctioned it, he agreed that only the subordinate magistrates had the right to call upon the people to withstand a godless or persecuting magistrate. Knox, at first seems to have agreed with this.[29] But once Mary Tudor ascended the English throne and began to persecute the Protestants, his opinion changed somewhat suddenly. While waiting in Dieppe for news of the happenings in England, he wrote a violent pamphlet in which he called upon the English, as a covenanted nation, to overthrow the persecutor of the true religion. Five years later he summoned the Scottish nobles to overthrow Mary of Guise who was persecuting the Protestants and then issued another pamphlet telling the "commonalty" that if the nobles would not take action, they had a perfect right, indeed a duty, to do so. These views were supported by his First Blast and by the outline of his Second Blast, and some nine years later when Queen Mary had been taken prisoner by the Protestant nobles, Knox called for her execution as an accomplice in the murder of her husband, Henry Darnley. One cannot but doubt if Calvin would have carried matters to these extremes.[30] On the other hand, we have to recognize that Knox's radical approach was not entirely foreign to past events in Scottish history.

As one attempts to compare Calvin and Knox in so far as their theological views agreed or disagreed, it can be said that

Knox in general followed Calvin. Indeed, he was quite prepared to acknowledge this. But he was also more radical than Calvin, a tendency which arose partially out of his personality, partially out of his concept of his calling as "a trumpeter of God" and partially out of the actual situation in which he found himself in Scotland. Only one who had a strong sense of calling and a willingness to carry his views through to their full length, would have been able to accomplish anything lasting in Scotland of the sixteenth century.

IV. The Character of the Scottish Reformation

Although Knox felt that Geneva was "the most perfect schole of Christ" he had ever known, on his return to Scotland he sought to achieve the same objective only it would not be limited to a city and its environs, but would extend to a whole country. He was, therefore, quite happy to state in the introduction to the book of his History of the Reformation in Scotland, that the Scots had the "best Reformed church."[31] This phrase was repeated by others of his following. He and his supporters felt that they had carried the Reformation through more fully and completely than had any of the other reformers. What was more they seem to have believed what they said!

It would seem that one of the principal reasons for their confidence that they had done a better job of reformation than any others, was the stress which they laid upon the covenant people. Furthermore, he had insisted that as the covenant people the church had the right to act freely in its holding of assemblies, in its preaching of the Word and in its enforcement

of discipline. It was for this reason that he and many others after him were prepared to take positions which often brought them into direct conflict with regents, queens and kings who tried to tell the church what it should do.

Knox and the other Scottish reformers, however, did not limit their concept of the covenant people to the church. Following the Old Testament example, they believed that Scotland as a nation was covenanted with God to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the ultimate head of the state to whom the rulers were responsible and by whom they would be judged. Knox emphasized this point to Mary more than once, and Andrew Melville's famous statement in which he called James VI "God's sillie vassal" underlined this covenant concept. Likewise, the whole plan for popular education outlined in the first Book of Discipline had its raison d'etre in the view that Scotland was a covenanted nation whose citizens had the responsibility of fulfilling their obligations to serve God in every aspect of their lives.[32]

Such thinking carried over into the following centuries, and exists in some quarters even today. Most important, however, was its influence in the seventeenth century when it provided the ideology of those who opposed the Stewart monarchs from James VI to James VII. From Andrew Melville through William Carstares, Anthony Peden and James Renwick the Covenanters or Cameronians constantly demanded that Scotland recognize its covenanted position by acknowledging officially "the crown rights of Jesus Christ." This in turn would call for a national act of repentance for its sins and a heartfelt manifestation of

national righteousness.

The covenant relationship was not thought of as being merely something national or public, but also as an obligation of the individual. Stress was laid upon the idea of calling in which the individual was to serve God in this life. To fulfill one's calling one needed the best possible training, a view which was reflected in the plan for universal public education. But education was only one aspect of the individual's responsibility. Hard work, thrift, diligence in political, economic, social and religious life were all required. At the same time rest and relaxation were not ruled out. But all was to be done to the "glory of God."

In all of this Calvin's influence can be seen. The theology, the form of church government, the ethical and moral obligations all find their roots in the Genevan teaching. Part of the thinking came to Scotland via France, but in the final analysis most of it, whether through the prism of French example or directly from Geneva, reached Scotland through John Knox, who gave it the stamp of his own personality and experience. The result was an amalgam which might be termed "Scottish covenanting Calvinism," a product very often more radical, perhaps more extreme, than the original Calvinism, but a Calvinism which was definitely well-suited to the climate intellectual, social and physical of Scotland. It is this Calvinism which, modified, sometimes even rejected it is true, which lies at the foundation of Canadian Presbyterianism, indeed at the foundation of Canadian character upon which Scots have had such a strong influence.

FOOTNOTES

1. B.B. Warfield, Calvin and Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 373ff.

2. Cf. D.A. Erichson, Bibliographia Calviniana (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1960) passim for the translations of Calvin's pamphlets and commentaries.

3. W.S. Reid, "Lutheranism in the Scottish Reformation," Westminster Theological Journal, VII (1945), 91ff.

4. John Knox, History of the Reformation in Scotland, W.C. Dickinson, ed. (Edinburgh: Thos.Nelson & Sons, 1949), I, 84ff.

5. V.E. d'Assonville, John Knox and the Institutes of Calvin, (Durban: Drakensberg Press, [1968]), chap. 1.

6. John Knox, Works, D. Laing, ed. (Edinburgh: T.G. Stevenson, 1864), III, 157ff; 251ff.

7. Ibid., III, 217; II, 442, 459, 460.

8. Ibid., IV, 1ff, 59; W. S. Reid, "The Divisions of the Marian Exiles", Canadian Journal of History, III (1968) 21ff.

9. Gènève: Registre du Conseil, LIV, fo.217.

10. Knox, Works, IV, 357f.

11. Ibid., V, 9ff.

12. John Calvin, Opera Omnia, C. Baum et al. edd. (Brunswick, 1878), XVIII, 434ff; Knox, Works, VI, 562ff, 613ff.

13. J. Cadier, Calvin, (Paris: Presses Universitaire, 1966), pp. 17ff; T. Thomson, "Where was Knox born?", Proceedings Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Edinburgh,(1862) III, 67; P.H. Brown, John Knox, (London: A. & C. Black, 1895) I, 58-61.

14. Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's de Clementia, F.L. Battles & A.M. Hugo, edd. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), Introduction.

15. Cf. E.W. Monter, Calvin's Geneva (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1967) for a description of Calvin's work in Geneva.

16. Calendar of State Papers, Scottish, J.Bain, ed., (Edinburgh: 1898), I, 551.

17. For the national organization set up in France see Documents Protestants Inédits du XVIe Siecle, E. Arnaud, ed. (Paris: Grossart: 1872), pp. 6ff.

18. For further details cf. W.S. Reid, Trumpeter of God (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1974), pp. 145, 153, 192.

19. D'Assonville, op.cit., p.66.

20. Ibid., pp. 67f.

21. Cf. L. Nixon, John Calvin's Teachings on Human Reason (New York: Exposition Press, 1960), pp. 53ff; John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965) J.T. McNeill and F.L. Battles, edd., I, chaps. IIIff.

22. Knox, Works, V, 8ff: "An Answer to the Cavillations of an Adversary Respecting the Doctrine of Predestination."; D'Assonville, op.cit., pp. 47ff.

23. Works, III, 433ff.

24. Ibid., III, 29ff.

25. Knox, History (Dickson ed.), p. 266; cf. Documents Prots. Inedits.

26. Cf. W.S. Reid, "French Influence on the First Scots Confessions and Book of Discipline", Westminster Theological Journal, XXXV (1972), pp. 1ff.

27. Cf. W.S. Reid, "Calvin and the Political Order," John Calvin, Contemporary Prophet, J.T. Hoogstra, ed., (Grand Rapids, Mich., Baker Book House, 1959), pp. 243ff; Calvin, Institutes, IV, chap. 20.

28. D'Assonville, op.cit., pp. 73ff; Knox, Works, IV, 461ff; Reid, Trumpeter, 110f, 171, 234, 251, 288f.

29. Calvin, op.cit., IV, xx, 32.

30. Cf. C.P. Finlayson, "A Volume Associated with John Knox," Scottish Historical Review, XXXVIII (1959), 170ff.

31. Knox, History, II, Prefaetio to the Fourth Book; Works, VI, 544.

32. Knox, History, II, 26f; Jas. Melville, Autobiography and Diary, R. Pitcairn, ed., (Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1842) p. 270.

The Churches and Emigration

by

Mrs. Freda Ramsay

From the very first of the emigrations to the North American Continent, the Churches have been tremendously involved, not only in the actual organisation of such movements but especially for the spiritual guidance of the people after settlement. The early seventeenth century emigrations were entirely theocratic: they consisted of parties of people leaving Britain to follow patterns of worship which were frowned upon and often persecuted. In the eighteenth century the reason for emigration, especially in Scotland, was quite different. They were not tied to any religious aspect but were organised by men of standing for their own families, friends and sub-tenants and servants who wished to join them. Their reasons were connected with the demise of the clan system whereby the Tacksmen would become nothing more than bigger tenants on the Chief's estate, which they resented after having held the position of leading warriors in the clan armies. These emigrations were carefully organised, and very often the leader of the expedition had already been there to survey the lands on which they were to settle.

The early years of the nineteenth century, however, were to see a quite different type of emigrants. They were drawn from the lowest strata of Highland Society - mostly only Gaelic speaking and in no way versed in the ways of the world outside their mountains. They often became the victims of unscrupulous agents (only too often Highlanders themselves who had outside experience) who persuaded them to hand over their meagre savings and promised to convey them and settle them in Canada. The agents bought or chartered the oldest and most unseaworthy hulks, which landed, after many weeks of misery, wherever the winds and waves might take them, the people being put ashore with literally nothing in their hands and left there. As a result of the great public outcry, the churches and individuals organised Emigration Societies to advise those who wished to go. They gathered information of reputable ships and Captains, the amount required for fares, for the down-payment on their Lots when they arrived, the necessary provisions for the journey and the most useful tools to take with them.

There were as many as thirteen Emigration Societies in Renfrewshire and twenty-two in Lanarkshire, mostly assisting the many hundreds of hand loom weavers who had been made redundant as a result of mechanisation in the industry. In 1821 the Committee of Management on Emigration assisted 2,000 to go to North America. In 1830 Dr. Thomas Rolph interested the Duke of Argyll in emigration and a few years later was appointed Canadian Immigration Agent in Britain. John Galt founded the

Canada Company in 1824. Ten years later his son was involved in the formation of the British American Land Company which operated in the Eastern Townships. In 1831 the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Land Company was formed and in 1841 The British American Association for Emigration and Colonization. In 1840 the Protestant Emigration Society of Glasgow and in the following year the Glasgow Protestant Canadian Emigration Society and the Glasgow Wesleyan Emigration Society came into being.

The post of minister to these pioneer settlements was by no means a sinecure. Conditions were primitive, roads non-existant, the groups of people widely spaced and very little money was available to pay a minister for his bare needs. The Presbytery of Inveraray recorded in 1741 that the Argyle Colony settled at Cape Fear in North Carolina were in desperate need of a minister "there being but two or three ministers in the whole Province and these of poor character who besides have not the language spoke, i.e. Gaelic." Repeated petitions for a Gaelic-speaking minister to both the Presbytery and the Society for the Propogation of Christian Knowledge brought forth no minister, but at least the Society sent £21, to the cost of supporting one. Finally, they were visited by the Reverend Hugh McAden, an itinerant preacher to the scattered Northern communities of North Carolina. He confided to his Diary that "the Highlanders were the poorest singers I have ever heard." He was also distressed to find that the bulk of the congregation in another settlement who had apparently much appreciated his

preaching spent the night in the house in which the service had taken place "drinking and shouting profanity".

Nevertheless, McAden did help them to find a minister by putting their active and very concerned Elder in touch with Reverend James Campbell, a native of Argyll living in Pennsylvania. Twelve men guaranteed that he should be paid £100 per annum. Because the Church of England was the official Church of the Colony, no Dissenting Minister could legally perform marriages, until this situation was rectified in 1762. Campbell was joined in 1771 by the Reverend John MacLeod, who arrived then with a group of immigrants from Skye. They worked together until the outbreak of the Rebellion when, in spite of having taken the obligatory Test Oath of loyalty to the Crown on his Induction, Campbell joined the Rebels. MacLeod fought with the Loyalists and was taken prisoner at Moore's Creek.

After the Rebellion, Nova Scotia received refugee Loyalists from the new republic, discharged soldiers and, later, shiploads of immigrants from the United Kingdom and, again, the lack of Ministers of the right calibre was a constant source of anxiety. The continuing stream of emigration was now directed to Upper Canada, where other United Empire Loyalists had already settled along the shores of Lake Ontario.

The Glasgow Colonial Society, which was set up by a group of Scottish Ministers in 1821, received constant applications for Ministers, who spoke Gaelic, from Pictou. From Miramachie came a request for one who "ought to be a good Preacher not a

Reader. Evangelical, pious and intelligent, well-grounded in Presbyterian principles, a considerable portion of missionary spirit and able to undergo considerable fatigue, it would be of advantage that he should not be very young, the state of society here requires a person of experience".

As the new immigrants penetrated further and further into the bush their pastoral needs became greater. John Burns wrote in 1825 that Martinstown in Glengarry was "a flourishing Scots community and able to afford £200, a handsome Manse and Glebe of 12 acres of excellent land. It would be an advantage to speak Gaelic and to deliver a Discourse - settlers are adverse to Reading, a good address and genteel appearance is of more importance in this country than you are aware of. The old country people appear very clownish in general when compared with the natives. Preachers must not come to this country without being ordained by the Church of Scotland or else, by a Law of this Province, they will not be allowed to perform Baptism, Marriage or Burial".

There were other difficulties, too. John Lawson, ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, sailed in 1820 from Greenock as Minister to the Township of Lochiel. He had received letters for a Bond of £200. and was told of an expected government grant of £100 - "such", he wrote, "were the promises held out". He preached in Lochiel to five hundred hearers, at Longueil (sixteen miles distant) to three hundred and at Hawkesbury (ten miles from Lochiel there were two hundred and seventy-five communicants and,

in the second year, four hundred. He was considered a good preacher but, in spite of all, he was forced to accept the position of schoolmaster of a government school twenty miles away, in order to support himself and his family, preaching every third Sunday at Lochiel, once a month at Hawkesbury and once a month at New Longuiel and occassionally at other Scottish Settlements. During two years he had not received £50.

There were thought to be 70,000 Presbyterians in Upper Canada, but only four ministers of the Church of Scotland, two of whom taught school and the other two lived soberly enough. The labours were immense, but the recompense so small that they were starving and in debt. The minister of Dalhousie Township reported that his parisioners found difficulty in converting their produce into cash.

In 1833, the Reverend Peter McNaughton, peregrinating through the newer townships, complained bitterly that "the people in Vaughan, like those of Eldon and Thorah, drink and squander, boast of Equality, Independance and Liberty. I do not know well what they mean, they seem equal in Povery, Ignorance and Indifference to Religion." In fact, these Townships had had a raw deal; since their settlement they had had only itinerant ministers and those but rarely. Then the Islay folk (who had settled in great numbers) welcomed among them a former minister from Portnahaven, who had been cast out by the church authorities at home for the "sins of the flesh". They approached him to again become their minister and for the

matter of a year or two he served them faithfully and well. Inevitably, he was denounced to the Presbytery in Toronto and again deposed but, equally, the Presbytery failed to replace him. Many of his parishioners now found that they were not legally married and had to travel long distances to have this rectified. The people had constructed the Stone Church north of Beaverton but did not wish to use it until they had a minister; finally Dr. Robert Burns from Toronto, on one of his visits, organised the Session and preached the opening sermon. After 1851 the Reverend Mr. Grey in Orillia made great efforts to stir up the Church Authorities to provide for these Townships and, at last, it was announced that the Reverend John MacTavish (who had already visited Canada in 1846 as a representative of the newly-formed Free Church) was coming to settle in Canada. He was known to the Islay people as a son of their much loved and revered minister of Kildalton in Islay and a member of a family that had had close contact with the Church throughout the difficult and troublesome years following the Reformation. He was received with great joy and enthusiasm and for many years he stood, not only physically, but morally, head and shoulders above his Congregation in the best tradition of a Scots Pastor.

Mary O'Brien in her Journals reports that in 1832 "two hundred Islay people under their Minister passed through Oro heading North". These were probably the group that settled in the area in the north of that township known as the dry lots, owing to the lack of springs or streams: most of them were

allocated, later, lots further west.

Canada owes much to those early ministers: they made great sacrifices and underwent great hardship and fatigue to carry out their pastoral duties in a country that held out equally great promises but had yet to be tamed.

Early Settlement in Lanark County and the Glasgow Colonial Society

by

E.A. McDougall

The end of the Napoleonic Wars coupled with the depressive effects of the Industrial Revolution brought unemployment and overwhelming poverty to the British working class after 1815. To alleviate the distress of the poor and possibly lessen the chances of violence in the streets, one means considered by government was to assist impoverished families, willing to emigrate, to settle in British North America. Similarly, disbanded army personnel might be settled on the land. To transplant loyal British subjects to Upper Canada would benefit the colony as well as Britain - there was too much vacant land in the colony, situated precariously close to the American border and the rapidly expanding settlements behind it. Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, accepted the idea and quickly took steps to implement it.

Land, formerly the hunting ground of the Indians, was quickly purchased for the purpose. It lay in Upper Canada, north of the Rideau River which flowed generally north and east from the Rideau Lakes to empty into the Ottawa River at Bytown (Ottawa). The land was high enough above the St. Lawrence River and the American border to provide, when peopled with loyal Canadians, a second line of defence should hostilities with the United States again trouble the colony. Townships were surveyed and prepared for settlement whilst Bathurst advertised in Scotland his proposal to grant free passage and 100 acres of land to emigrating families. Almost as quickly as the land was surveyed Scots arrived in the townships. In the following years more townships were surveyed and more settlers from Ireland and Scotland settled on the land, although not on as generous terms as the first settlers, until by 1824 all the townships now comprised in Lanark County had been surveyed and partially settled.

This paper will consider the efforts made by emigrant Scottish Presbyterian settlers in Lanark County to bring Church of Scotland clergymen to their townships and conversely, the measures adopted by the Glasgow Colonial Society to meet the ministerial needs of the Scottish emigrants.

In Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire, Scotland, the weaving industry was hard hit by depression. Unemployment was rife in the counties and wages plummetted. Some of the distressed families were considering emigration to the colonies and to forward the idea Emigration Societies were formed throughout the striken area. Two high-ranking Scotsmen, Sir Archibald Campbell and Mr. Kirkman Finlay, successfully petitioned government for assistance to the Emigration Societies.[1] Land was granted in Lanark County, transportation from Quebec to Lanark County but not the cost of the ocean voyage from Greenock to Quebec. Fortunately for the weavers, a small Committee on Emigration to His Majesty's Settlements in Upper Canada was formed by public spirited citizens in Glasgow and its environs to help the Emigration Societies raise money for the passage to Quebec, to watch over the Societies' funds, and to act as intermediaries between the Emigration Societies and the Shipping Companies in whose ships the emigrants were to sail. One of the five Committee members was Kirkman Finlay, the same man who had earlier petitioned government on behalf of the weavers.

In the sailing season of 1820 and 1821 ships sailed from Greenock to Quebec with the emigrating weavers and their families. Lord Dalhousie, the new governor-general of the Canadas, a Scotsman and a good friend of the Scots in British North America, had arranged the settlement of the Scots in a newly surveyed township of Lanark County. He later wrote of the settlement, "I gave them a new township ten miles square and called it Lanark, close adjoining the Perth settlement. They reached it at the

same time as I did and in two days after, I saw the first of them, with a Captain Marshall as Superintendent, and a surveyor attached to him, set forward into the woods to occupy their lot."[2] Dalhousie also saw the neighbouring township surveyed and named Dalhousie in his honour. Dalhousie township was also settled by the Scots.

On the 23rd of January, 1821, back in Quebec, Dalhousie wrote the Duke of Hamilton to suggest that contributions be sought in the Glasgow area for the building of a church in New Lanark,[3] a small village in Lanark township pleasantly situated on the Clyde River about 15 miles from Perth. This was done and in 1823, £280 were sent to Canada from Scotland for the purpose. Soon a stone church with eight windows was built. It had a gallery across the back and room for three hundred persons.[4] But although the emigrants had sought a minister even before leaving Scotland, one was not easily to be found.

In June, 1820, when the ship Commerce was docked at Greenock preparing to sail for Quebec with one of the first shiploads of the Lanarkshire emigrants, one of the Presbyterian Scots had handed a petition to the Rev. Mr. Robert Easton, a Montreal Secession Presbyterian minister standing on the landing. The petition, signed by the Presbyterian emigrants, asked that a minister be sent to their new home in Upper Canada.[5] Easton seemed the logical man to receive the petition because he was in Scotland for the purpose of raising funds to send Presbyterian clergymen to British North America. No answer was received from Easton and over a year later, in September 1821, the Presbyterian Church Committee at Lanark, Upper Canada, again wrote Easton, now back in Montreal. The Committee stated that sites for the church and school had been granted and "that a house is now in a state of forwardness to answer the double purpose of church and school."[6] But again, no answer was received. By March, 1822, a schoolmaster had arrived in the township and "it was

agreed by the church managers that unless they had some answer to their request for a minister they would apply directly to Earl Bathurst and the Joint Committee in Edinburgh"[7] - the latter committee had sent the Rev. Mr. William Bell to the town of Perth. What the Lanark Committee evidently did not know was that an ordained Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Mr. John Gemmell, was already among them.

Gemmell, a 61 year old Ayrshire Scot and a Secession Presbyterian minister, had been ordained to a "Lifter" congregation in Dalry, Ayrshire. Because of inadequate payment of his salary,he had turned first to medicine, receiving a medical degree from the University of Glasgow, and then to the printing business. Gemmell and his family emigrated in 1821 to Lanark township but it was not until August, 1822, that he held his first church service in the township. Gemmell never managed to rally Lanark's Presbyterians around him:the ministry was but one third of his professional interests, he outspokenly supported one party, even in his sermons, in a divided community[8] and by itinerating he visited each community too infrequently - usually once a month. Consequently, in 1824, we find the Presbyterians in Lanark once again in search of a minister. This time they petitioned the Church of Scotland but with little expectation of success.

It was at this point, in July, 1824, that Lanark's school master, Robert Mason, wrote to his former minister, the Rev. Mr. John Robertson, Church of Scotland minister at Cambusland, a Clydeside village near Glasgow. In his letter, along with other news,he wrote of the difficulty the township was having in finding a suitable Presbyterian clergyman. The letter is included in the correspondence of the Glasgow Colonial Society[9] although it was written before the Society was formed. It was in answer to

this letter and others like it written from various parts of British North America that laymen and clergymen in Glasgow and its vicinity felt called upon to bestir themselves on behalf of their colonial brethren. The result was the formation of the Glasgow Colonial Society on the 15th of April, 1825.

The purpose of the Society was embodied in a Resolution, " That this meeting contemplates with deep interest the moral & religious wants of the Scottish Settlers in many parts of British North America and resolve that a Society shall be formed in this city and neighborhood with the view of promoting their improvement by means of ministers, catechists, and schoolmasters to be sent to them and by such other means as may be found

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expedient". One of the laws of the Society formulated at the meeting, namely that no minister might be sent out who was not licensed or ordained by the Church of Scotland,may be considered partisan. But when one remembers that the source of funds for the Society's operations was Church of Scotland parishes, it does not seem unlikely or unreasonable that the donors expected their money to be used to send Church of Scotland personnel and no others, to British North America.

Laymen and clergymen worked together at all levels of the Society's business. Possibly because Lord Dalhousie had agreed to accept the position of Patron of the Society and Kirkman Finlay, now mayor of Glasgow, that of its President, other laymen of a high calibre took an active part in the Society's financial and practical concerns. Among these laymen were Mr. Richard Kidston of the shipping line of that name. He proved invaluable to the Society not only because of his help in securing passages for clergymen sailing to the colonies, but in all the other business of the Society as well. Equally helpful was Mr. J.D.Bryce,

a Glasgow merchant with an agency in York(Toronto). Bryce travelled frequently to the colonies and on these occasions acted as courrier and agent of the Society. He carried letters, parcels and intelligence from the Society to the colonial ministers and brought back invaluable information to the Society. Scottish clergymen were, nevertheless, the backbone of the Society. The secretaries, on whom the burden of the correspondence fell, were clergymen and the principal Secretary, the Rev. Mr. Robert Burns, was the Society's most influential figure and chief spokesman. Word of the formation of the Glasgow Colonial Society quickly reached the colonies.

Soon Lanark township petitioned the Society for financial help towards the salary of a clergyman, promising on their part to provide their minister annually 46 bushels of wheat. Although both Mr. Kirkman Finlay to whom the petition was addressed and Col. Marshall, the superintendant of the Lanark settlement, expressed their support for the Lanark township petition, the Society firmly asserted that until much greater financial provisions was raised by the settlers, the Society could do nothing. The petition was not forgotten, however, either by the Society, its president, Kirkman Finlay, or Col. Marshall. In its Second Report, printed in April, 1828, the Glasgow Colonial Society wrote, "The case of Lanark, Upper Canada, has beenrepeatedly under the notice of the Committee, and more particularly at the time when Colonel Marshall, the superintendant of the Settlement was in Glasgow. His communications, which were transmitted through the medium of the respected President of the Society, were seriously attended to and although difficulties were found to stand in the way of a favourable answer to the petition of the settlers, the Committee resolved to keep it steadily in

view and we are at the present date waiting in expectation of some additional information from Mr. Marshall which may lead to the nomination of a minister."

At the same time neighboring Dalhousie township was seeking help from the Society. On the 5th of September, 1825, the Presbyterians of the township petitioned the Society for help in building a church and supporting a minister. To this request the Glasgow Colonial Society replied that it could give no help until a church was built. Three years later the prospects for help seemed brighter. In a letter of thanks to Lord Dalhousie for his generous donation of books for their library, the Dalhousie Scots wrote:-

> "We further trust, from the very laudable and benevolent exertions of that Society, formed in Glasgow, also honoured by your lordship's patronage, that we will ere long be blest by a Gospel preaching by having a stated minister, which, together with the increase of common schools, enables us to enjoy the pleasure of hoping that the rising and future generations will have every facility afforded them of acquiring that degree of knowledge which (even in common life) is so essentially necessary to form the mind to just and equitable principles, and fit it for the discharge of all the social and moral duties of life, good and loyal subjects of our King, and a firm and unbending adherence and attachment to our uncorrupted creed and to our inestimable constitution, the birthright, boast and pride of every true Briton."[11]

Some two months later, on a more sober note, a representative of the Dalhousie Presbyterians wrote to the Glasgow Colonial Society of the

suitability of their new St. Andrew's Hall - which housed their library - as a church, as follows, "As none of the school houses which has as yet been our "Kirk" has a stove, I have seen poor old Dr. Gemmell, who is now above 80 years of age and who traveled above 8 miles of a very indifferent road once a month for the last three years to preach to us, so shivering with (the cold) that he could hardly articulate. Now, thank God, through the persevering energy of our Society - the St. Andrew's Society - and the liberality of our respectable neighbours this difficulty is removed as our new house can contain a Congregation of at least 200 & be comfortable in the most inclement weather."[12]

Correspondence between the Glasgow Colonial Society and the townships of Lanark and Dalhousie dragged through 1829 but on 27 April, 1830, the Committee of the Glasgow Colonial Society meeting in Glasgow read a letter from Presbyterianw of Lanark and Dalhousie townships intimating their union and that £60.17.6 had been subscribed towards a minister's salary - a satisfactory amount. The Committee therefore agreed to offer a suitable licentiate of the Church of Scotland, the Lanark-Dalhousie charge with a supplementary salary of £70 Sterling for three years, an unusually generous allowance offered because the townships' minister would not receive a share of a government grant made to specific Church of Scotland charges. A suitable candidate, the Rev. Mr. William MacAlister was chosen, ordained by the Presbytery of Skye, and on the 14th of October 1830, designated in Glasgow to the Lanark-Dalhousie charge. He sailed almost immediately to New York and from there made his way overland as quickly as possible to the village of Lanark. MacAlister was welcomed by his parishioners and successfully ministered to his congregations until 1842.

On the 29th of April, when Mr. MacAlister was still on a sailing vessel crossing the Atlantic heading for New York, a Chureh of Scotland minister

arrived in Perth, the County Seat of Lanark County, and handed Mr. William Morris, an outstanding Presbyterian citizen of the town, a letter of introduction from the Rev. Mr. David Welsh, a Secretary of the Glasgow Colonial Society.[13] The clergyman had not been sent to Perth by the Society. He had been chosen minister of a newly-formed Church of Scotland congregation in Perth in a traditional manner. A blank call and bond for the clergyman's support had been sent to a Scottish minister - in this case the Rev. Mr. Alexander Stewart of the parish of Douglas - with the request that Mr. Stewart present the call and bond to a suitable young licentiate of the Church of Scotland. The bond would, of course, have to be sufficiently large to tempt a licentiate to emigrate to the colonies. Mr. Hugh Scott had, after some delay, been chosen but first delayed and finally refused to leave Scotland. The impatient Mr. Morris of Perth wrote Welsh to ask his help in expediting the appointment. Welsh reassured Mr. Morris and when the appointment was finally made, gave Mr. Thomas C. Wilson, the licentiate chosen, a letter of introduction to Mr. Morris. The attitude of the Glasgow Colonial Society to the Perth appointment is expressed in the Society's 5th Report-"The newly-erected Church at Perth has been supplied with a minister, the Rev. Thomas C. Wilson, ordained by the Presbytery of Lanark. In his nomination the Society had no concern; but he enjoys their best wishes, and he may rely on their readiness to do him every service in their power."[14]

In late spring of 1831 a convention of Church of Scotland ministers and commissioners brought a major change to every Church of Scotland congregation in the Canadas. At the convention was created the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland. Subordinate to it were Presbyteries, and every congregation and minister in the Canadas was attached to one or other of the Presbyteries,

The Lanark County congretations and their ministers, Mr. MacAlister and Mr. Wilson, along with the congregations and ministers of Bytown and Kingston, now formed the Presbytery of Bathurst. No longer could a township call a minister on its own initiative; a Presbytery must be consulted. The first township in Lanark County to receive a Glasgow Colonial Society minister after the Presbytery of Bathurst was formed was Beckwith.

Beckwith township was surveyed in 1816 and almost completely settled within six years. Some three hundred Perthshire families, mainly from towns by Loch Tay and Loch Earn, formed the bulk of the Scottish emigrants. They had left Scotland for Beckwith in 1818, through a private arrangement with Lord Bathurst, an arrangement rather similar to the later arrangement made with the Lanark emigrants. To the early Scottish settlers in Beckwith were added Anglican Irish. Of the two national groups, Jean McGill writes in A Pioneer History of the County of Lanark, "Though the Irish immigrants might get along without religious guidance, the Scots were not inclined to be satisfied without their own ordained leader."[15]

Miss McGill had been led to this remark by the fact that in March, 1819, less than a year after their arrival in Upper Canada, a group of the Beckwith Presbyterian Scots walked to Perth to ask the Rev. Mr. Bell, the Secession Presbyterian minister of that town, how they might secure the services of a minister. Bell visited Beckwith and, satisfied with the condition of the people and their desire for a minister, petitioned the Edinburgh Secession Committee (which had sent him to Perth in 1818) for a minister. In 1821 a petition from the Beckwith Presbyterians followed and a year later, in June 1822, a minister arrived in Beckwith from Edinburgh.

The Rev. Mr. George Buchanan, the Edinburgh minister, was an ordained Secession Presbyterian clergyman. In Edinburgh he had been without a pastoral charge, and he had a large family to support. With some difficulty passage money and adequate outfits for Buchanan and his family had been found.[16] Buchanan remained in Beckwith until his death in 1835. But two years before his death a Church of Scotland minister arrived in the township in answer to a petition sent to the Glasgow Colonial Society in 1831 by Beckwith Presbyterians. In a letter written by an unnamed Beckwith Presbyterian to a Mr. Wilson of Glasgow the background of the petition is given. It reads:

> " Beckwith, 28Sept. 1831
>
> In the beginning of the winter of 1819 the Residenters wrote a petition to the Governor at Quebec to see if the Township could be supplied with a clergyman of the Kirk of Scotland, and also some aid from Government for his support. To this petition they received no answer.
>
> They then applied to the Revd. Wm. Bell of Perth to see if he would send a Petition to the Old Country for a minister. I believe between 70 & 80 members subscribed two Bushels of wheat for his support.
>
> Bell wrote the Petition in which he desired that they would send out one of the profession of Hall and Peddie, Edinburgh. We wished for one of the Kirk of Scotland, but we did not know at that time but these men in Edinburgh were of our own opinion, nor did we know at that time but the Kirk of Scotland might be established in Canada as firmly as in Scotland without any trouble: but now we know otherwise.
>
> A minister came out but several breaches in the Congregation have taken place. At last Sacrament there were about

120 Communicants. The present minister is disesteemed and he cannot preach in Gaelic.

A petition was sent to the Society signed by Between 70 and 80 individuals, preparations are making for building a place of worship and the Erection is to commence in the Spring of 1832."[17]

The petition sent from Beckwith to the Glasgow Colonial Society had included a Bond securing £50 annually for five years for their minister. In reply the Society had written that until a church was built it would not consider the subject.

In November the moderator of the Presbytery of Bathurst, the Rev. Mr. Wilson of Perth, on the authority of Presbytery, wrote to the Secretary of the Glasgow Colonial Society concerning the Beckwith petition. An extract of the letter written 22 Nov. 1832 reads :

"We, the Presbytery, have judged it expedient earnestly to request that some information may be sent without delay by the Society in regard to the steps which have been taken, and as to what prospect there is of a minister being sent out. I may mention that a good stone Church has been erected at Beckwith. The people are in general industrious and comfortable in worldly circumstances, and warmly attached to the Church of their fathers. And I know of few country places here, where a faithful minister may be more agreeably situated."[18]

It was in answer to proddings such as this from Beckwith as well as similar proddings from the Rev. Mr. Peter McLaren, Church of Scotland minister at Lecropt, near Stirling, Scotland, some of whose relatives had emigrated from Perthshire to Beckwith, that the Glasgow Colonial Society sent the Rev. Mr. John Smith to Beckwith township. In addition

to granting Smith 3 guineas above his travelling expenses, the Society
19
paid him £40 per annum for two years.

In 1833, the same year it sent John Smith to Lanark County, the Glasgow Colonial Society experimented with a new method of sending preachers to the Canadas. The idea grew from a successful missionary enterprise of the year before. In 1832, at the request of the Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, the Society had chosen and sent to Canada a young licentiate, the Rev. Mr. Matthew Miller. He was to be the Synod's missionary in the Canadas. He itinerated from one Presbyterian community to another with enthusiasm and it was because of the glowing reports he sent home of the opportunity open to Church of Scotland ministers in numbers of towns in the Canadas, that the following year the Glasgow Colonial Society decided to follow the Synod's example and send missionaries to the Canadas. The Society advertised widely for six young ministers, guaranteeing to each £100 Sterling, one half to be paid on his leaving Scotland, the other when he began his labours under one or other of the Canadian Presbyteries. Six ministers were selected from among the applicants and six missionaries sailed in 1833 for Quebec.

Of the six, two, after itinerating in Upper Canada, accepted charges in Lanark County. The Rev. Mr. John Fairbairn after itinerating for two months in the Bathurst and Johnstown District, accepted a call from Presbyterians in the township of Ramsay, in which the village of Almonte is situated. The Rev. Mr. George Romanes toured the Home and Gore Districts, and the London and Western districts before visiting the eastern part of Upper Canada. There he accepted a call to Smith's Falls, an important new centre on the Rideau Canal.

The year John Fairbairn and George Romanes settled in Lanark County

1833, was a memorable one for the Glasgow Colonial Society's management committee. It was the most productive, yet the most disastrous, that the Society experienced. Eleven ministers, a record number, were sent to the Canadas, but the Society had overspent its income and until it was clear of debt, agreed to make no new appointments to the colonies. Few Church of Scotland clergymen arrived in the Canadas in 1834 and 1835 and the following year, 1836, brought the union of the Glasgow Colonial Society and the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland (the official Church of Scotland missionary body). With union came a gradual reduction in the responsibilities of the Glasgow Colonial Society which led eventually to its demise. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Glasgow Colonial Society sent no more ministers to Lanark County after 1833, leaving the total of its ministers in the County at four. It is of interest to see how these four men fared in British North America.

Mr. McAlister, the first to be appointed, remained in Lanark, ministering to his joint charge of Lanark and Dalhousie for twelve years. Thereafter he moved to Sarnia, Upper Canada and later to Metis, Lower Canada where he died. Mr. Smith, sent to Beckwith Township, remained in the charge until his death in 1851. Mr. Fairbairn, the missionary settled in Ramsay Township, returned to Scotland in 1842 and after the Disruption of the Church of Scotland, accepted a call to a Free Church congregation in Berwickshire. The second missionary, Mr. Romanes, remained at Smith's Falls until 1846 when he was appointed Professor of Classical Literature at Queen's College. He retired in 1850 and returned to Britain. The four men, therefore, spent a minumum of nine years in Lanark County, vital years in the rapidly growing and maturing settlements in the Canadas and which brought

in 1840 the union of the United Synod of Upper Canada (the Secession Presbyterian Synod) and the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland. Thus friction which had separated the two bodies for too long was ended.

Ill feeling between Secessionists and Church of Scotland Presbyterians had been evident in Lanark County when MacAlister and Smith arrived in communities already, some Secessionists felt, adequately served by Secession Presbyterian ministers. The charge does not, however, seem justified. The two Secession ministers were old men: when MacAlister came to Lanark, Gemmell was seventy years of age, when Smith arrived in Beckwith, Buchanan was seventy-one or seventy-two. Not only were they unable to hold their congregations together but the question of successors seems never to have been raised. Young, active, and intelligent Methodist itinerants were making converts in the townships - John Ryerson, the brother of Egerton Ryerson, itinerated in Lanark County with seccess, in the early 1820's. The Baptists were making similar inroads in the largely Presbyterian townships and Sectarians were wandering through the countryside. A Presbyterian wrote, "Many of the people are actually wandering from one Religious Sect to another as sheep without a shepherd."[20] Young, active Presbyterian ministers, Church of Scotland or Secessionist, were needed who could take over from the older ministers if the younger generation of Scots was to remain within the Presbyterian Church.

Because the United Secession Presbyterian Church did not commence missionary work in the Canadas until 1832 and then confined its interest to the London district of Upper Canada, the only Presbyterian missionary organization prepared to select and send out a suitable minister from Scotland was the Glasgow Colonial Society of the Church of Scotland.

The Society's standards were high. A young licentiate of the Church of Scotland who could produce adequate testimonials from respected Church of Scotland ministers and could preach an acceptable sermon to a Glasgow Congregation of which directors of the Society were a part, was the young man they were looking for. Mr. MacAlister was 26 years old when he was accepted by the Society; Mr. Smith was 32. Both ministers and congregations in Lanark were content with the appointments.

When thd Lanarkshire weavers, the Perthshire farmers and other Scots prepared to emigrate to Lanark County in the 1820's it was with the expectation that one hundred acres of government granted land would provide them and their children a comfortable living but their hopes were in many cases ephemeral. Much of the land granted was rocky or swampy and unfit for cultivation. In the 1830's depression hit not only Lanark County but all of British North America hampering even the farmers with fertile land. The disillusionment of new settlers in Upper Canada was a factor in the rebellion of the late 1830's. Presbyterian ministers in Lanark also suffered. Their salary was rarely if ever paid in full. They were forced to travel over very indifferent roads often in most inclement weather to preach to small congregations in back settlements. But perhaps because of the disillusionment of the 1830's settlers and ministers were able to look forward to the 1840's with more sober, realistic Canadian eyes.

NOTES

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3. Letter, The Earl of Dalhousie to the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, etc., Castle of St. Louis, Quebec, 23 Jan. 1821, Occasional Papers.

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8. "Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence", I, 5.

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11. Haydon, Pioneer Sketches, p. 177-8.

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13. Letter, David Welsh to William Morris, 11 August 1829, Queens University Archives, Presbyterian Church Synod 1818-35, Box I, File I.

14. "G.C.S.", 5th Report, p. 15.

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16. Robert Small, History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church 1733 - 1900 I (Edinburgh: David M. Small, 1904), p. 204.

17. "G.C.S.", Min. I, 19 Jan. 1832.

18. "G.C.S.", III, 141.

19. In 1832 Beckwith was placed on the list of Church of Scotland charges in Upper Canada sharing a goverment grant.

20. Letter, Thomas C. Wilson to John Geddes, 22 Nov. 1832. "G.C.S.", III, 141.

The Origins of the Church Union Controversy*

by

N.K. Clifford

The controversy over church union in the Presbyterian church began as an argument over the way the issue was introduced, handled and justified by Principal William Patrick of Manitoba College. It was Patrick who initiated the movement, formulated its ideology and, as convenor of the Presbyterian union committee from 1906 to 1911, directed its course through the General Assembly. Yet in spite of his central role in the first decade of the negotiations, Patrick has received little mention in the literature on the church union movement in Canada.

The predominant reason for this neglect is that William Patrick was not a Canadian. Soon after his death, therefore, unionist writers began to bypass him in order to establish the Canadian origins of the union movement in the nineteenth century. They emphasized the years of preparation prior to Patrick's proposal for organic union in 1902 and sought the founders of the movement in a previous generation of Presbyterian leaders such as George M. Grant and William Caven. This focus on the nineteenth century background helped to explain why many Canadian Presbyterians became unionists, but it avoided the question of why a Scottish immigrant and not a Canadian initiated the movement. Moreover, it obscured the causes of the conflict by deflecting attention away from the man whom the dissidents believed had introduced the issue improperly, handled it illegally and justified his action in terms which verged on blasphemy. Although other prominent Presbyterian leaders also supported the idea of union, the full force of the dissidents' attack was against Patrick, for they saw him as an outsider who had broken the rules and set the church on a course from which it could not retreat.

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In order to understand the resistance to church union, therefore, it is necessary to begin by taking a new look at William Patrick which emphasizes the importance of his position as an outsider. As a newcomer, Patrick was freer to act independently in proposing organic union as a solution to the problems facing the Canadian churches. He rose quickly in influence as the spokesman for an ideology rooted in Scottish liberalism which was shared by an increasing number of Presbyterian leaders in Canada. But once his leadership was established his unfamiliarity with Canadian Presbyterian practice led him to handle the union question in a way which caused ever-increasing resistance.

I

When Patrick recommended organic union to the Methodist General Conference in 1902, he had only been in Canada for two and a half years. He knew very little about the Canadian west and even less about eastern Canada where seventy-five percent of the church's membership resided. Outside of Winnipeg he was almost unknown in the courts of the church, having first been introduced to the Presbyterian General Assembly in Toronto only three months prior to making his suggestion for union. In fact, he was so new to Canadian church circles that Albert Carman introduced him to the Methodist Conference as a "tenderfoot". (1) Yet in spite of this, Patrick made his recommendation for union without being authorized to do so by the Presbyterian church. To be commissioned by the General Assembly as a fraternal delegate did not authorize an individual to do or say anything which might come to mind. The limits of such a commission were clearly established by custom.

All that was expected was a few well-chosen pleasantries, spiced with good humor and generously sweetened with compliments and good wishes for the future. The occasion was understood by all parties to be a formal courtesy call and nothing more. Fraternal delegates were never authorized to communicate major proposals from one denomination to another. Therefore to introduce an issue like organic union in this way violated both custom and the Assembly's commission.

The Presbyterians had other well-established procedures for dealing with such proposals. If Patrick had observed these rules, he would have had to persuade Winnipeg Presbytery to request the General Assembly to invite the Methodists to discuss the question of union. In many ways this procedure was cumbersome. Yet it was designed to prevent individuals from taking action on their own authority which might embarrass the church. Patrick, however, chose to ignore this process and to take independent action. As a result, the issue of church union did not come to the General Assembly through the usual channels as a well-considered proposal of the lower courts of the church but rather as an invitation from a sister denomination. Courtesy demanded that such an invitation receive a positive response regardless of what the Presbyterian church might feel about the principle of union itself. Patrick's action therefore put the Assembly in a difficult position which many resented. It also created another problem that was even more significant in terms of the total controversy. By going directly to the superior court of Canadian Methodism and prompting it to issue an invitation to the superior court of the Presbyterian church, Patrick determined that from the beginning the church union issue would come down to the people from the Assembly. Thus the proper order of procedure, as Robert Campbell put it, was reversed. (2)

There was a way out of this dilemma. It was to present the principle of union to the people before any further action was taken. In 1907 Dr. James Barclay, a unionist from Montreal, proposed an amendment to this effect, saying that "he wished to stand on the democratic constitution of the church and ... the inalienable right of the people." "The voice of the people," he said, "should be heard before steps were taken which might morally force a union." In supporting this amendment C.W. Gordon, another unionist from Winnipeg, said that "the simple question of principle had not yet been submitted to the sessions and presbyteries." If this were not done early in the proceedings, he argued, it would "convey the impression that men were being led along in spite of themselves into a position from which it would not be possible for them to retreat." (3) Nevertheless, Patrick, as chairman of the union committee, fought this procedure and persuaded the Assembly to handle the issue in a way which ensured that by the time the question of union finally reached the people it would be what Ephraim Scott later characterized as a "loaded referendum". (4)

There were several steps in this process. After first making certain that the union issue would come to the General Assembly in terms of an invitation it could not refuse, Patrick then maintained that the acceptance of the Methodist invitation committed the Presbyterian church to organic union and no other alternative. Secondly, he convinced the Assembly that the issue of organic union should not be sent down to the people until the joint committee of the three negotiating churches had completed its work on the "Basis of Union". Finally, when the Basis of Union was completed, Patrick argued that the General Assembly should first approve it before sending it down to the Presbyteries under the Barrier Act for their approval. Only after a majority of the Presbyteries had given their approval was the question at

last to be sent to the sessions and congregations. By this scheme the proposal for union would come to the people from the top down in a finalized form with the full weight of the authority of the church courts behind it. This procedure was contrary to Canadian Presbyterian practice in the unions of 1861 and 1875. Yet it was not until Dr. W.T. McMullen, the most senior supporter of union, a former moderator and a participant in both of the earlier unions, joined the dissidents' attack against it in December of 1910 that the unionists realized an error had been made which was serious enough to frustrate their hopes for the consumation of union in 1912. (5)

The logic behind Patrick's method of handling the issue was rooted in his conviction that the union movement was divinely inspired. From the beginning he claimed that "the movement had come upon them spontaneously: it was the result of no human effort ... (and in it) the voice of God was being heard." (6) Writing about his part in inaugarating the movement, he admitted he had not discussed the issue with his brethren and had wondered at the time whether "it was prudent or becoming that a person simply commissioned to assure the conference of the good will of a sister church should venture to introduce a question of such moment?" Patrick claimed to be fully aware of the objections which could be raised about his course of action but, as he put it, "the more I differed to them (i.e. the objections) the more commanding became the voice which bade me to speak on this and no other topic." (7) In other words, Patrick was claiming to be motivated by the Holy Spirit. Therefore while he admitted his action was not authorized by the Presbyterian church, he justified it by the higher authority of God Himself.

When Patrick first made this claim at the 1904 General Assembly in St. John, New Brunswick, Dr. William MacLaren of Knox College warned that "it was unsafe for Dr. Patrick and other advocates of union to take their own

conclusions for the leadings of the Spirit." "Many things," he said "had been accepted as leadings of the Spirit that Presbyterians could not accept." (8) While many heeded this warning and thereafter emphasized the practical aspects of the case such as the economies union would effect, Patrick continued to maintain the movement was God's will for the Canadian Church.

In Presbyterianism the test of divine guidance was Scripture, for they believed the Holy Spirit would not contradict the Word of God. Consequently, throughout the controversy the question of divine guidance revolved around the interpretation of John 17:21, where Jesus prayed that his followers might be one as he and the Father were one. Patrick and the unionists maintained this text was the Scriptural warrant for their belief that the movement was God's will for the churches. The dissidents, however, amassed so much critical evidence to prove there was no necessary connection between the unity for which Jesus was praying and the "organic unity" of the churches that some unionists found it difficult to justify the movement on this basis. Eventually the Rev. J.A. Macdonald, editor of the Toronto Globe, came to the rescue by standing this argument on its head. "I do not undertake to say just what the Saviour had in view in that prayer for unity," he said, "but I do know that the thing He did not pray for was the wasteful competition and petty denominational bickering and strife which are seen in many a Canadian town and village today." (9) Many of the most ardent unionists, however, continued to believe that John 17:21 was proof that the union movement was divinely inspired.

William MacLaren in opposing such an interpretation said that "men are insensibly lapsing into the Romish view of the church when they understand the Saviour's prayer literally." (10) The foundation of this argument

had been laid by MacLaren in 1889 when he suggested that liberal Catholics like Ignaz von Dollinger and the Tractarians were leading many Protestants astray by their view that John 17:21 and Matthew 16:18 referred to the unity of a visible ecclesiastical organization. There was nothing in these texts, MacLaren declared, to suggest "that all Christians should be embraced in one external organization." The oneness of the church from his perspective depended on "the presence of Christ by His Spirit in believers and their abiding in Christ by faith," not in external organization. (11) For Patrick, however, both Scripture and the whole of Christian history taught that "union is a duty unless conscience prevents". (12)

II

In 1909 Dr. Thomas Sedgewick, a former moderator of the Presbyterian church, became so frustrated by the unionists' arguments and the manner in which they were handling the issue that he paraphrased Galatians 3:1 and said to the Assembly: "O foolish Presbyterians who hath bewitched you?" (13) Sedgewick could not understand what had happened to the Presbyterian church. In five brief years it seemed to him as if the Assembly had taken leave of its senses. Who was responsible for this change in which all that had previously been considered sacred was now being treated as either non-essential or an impediment to the furtherance of the church's work in Canada?

In answering this question, some pointed directly at William Patrick. His rapid rise to leadership in the Presbyterian Church in Canada seemed almost unnatural and many tried to account for it in a variety of ways. Dr. G.B. Wilson, for example, thought "the removal by death of such great

leaders as Caven, King, Grant, Warden, Robertson and MacVicar had ... contributed to place him in a unique position in the General Assembly." Others like C.W. Gordon believed "his debating powers and his remarkable ability for clear statements gave him a foremost position." In fact Gordon believed that as a master of logical expression "he had no superior and few equals in the Presbyterian church." (14) More important than either of these factors, however, was Patrick's association with Scottish theological liberalism and the union movement between the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church of Scotland prior to his arrival in Canada. Those with whom he was most closely associated in Scotland gave him a farewell dinner in Edinburgh before he left and prominent among the guests were the leading liberal theologians and unionists of Scotland: Principal Robert Rainy, Lord Overtoun, Professor George Adam Smith and Dr. Alexander Whyte. (15) All of these men were well known in Canadian Presbyterian circles and Patrick was seen as a representative of a similar viewpoint.

These liberals, by drawing distinctions between the essentials and non-essentials of Christianity, adopted an evolutionary concept of the development of Christian institutions and doctrine which saw both denominationalism and creedalism as non-essential aspects of Christianity. Both doctrinal confessions and forms of polity were seen as responses to particular environmental circumstances rather than as embodiments of essential Biblical truths which had binding power on the future. The essence of Christianity was seen as an ideal which was above and beyond any particular historical manifestation of it in the past and therefore as something which could be given entirely new shape in the future. The tendency of liberalism therefore was to dissolve doctrinal particularity and to relativize the organizational principles of religious institutions.

Patrick's inaugural lecture at Manitoba College revealed that he shared this outlook. Speaking on "The Person of Christ" he said that "he saw Christ as the crown of the moral ideal; the goal of moral history; the starting point of a new evolution; the energy which conducts it and the goal to which it moves." (16) It was not until he published his first article on church union in 1904, however, that the implications of his liberalism for doctrine and polity became explicit. "The polity and administration of the church," said Patrick, "are matters of expediency to be determined in the light of reason and experience. The institutions of the church should be altered and improved like those of the state ... the Word of God no more prescribes Episcopacy, Independency or Presbyterianism than it prescribes a monarchy or a republic." The same held true for doctrine. "We know," he said, "that the substance is more than the form and we know also that some of the greatest truths can only be imperfectly expressed. The number of essential doctrines is small. It is idle to expect agreement in details of doctrine any more than in ethics or politics .... These truths felt rather than confessed have modified our attitudes towards statements of doctrine." (17) Similar attitudes toward doctrine and polity were becoming widespread among the younger generation of Canadian Presbyterian leaders. Many of these men, such as Robert Falconer, Walter Murray, Alfred Gandier, Clarence McKinnon, C.W. Gordon and Robert Haddow, had received their graduate education in Scotland and they recognized Patrick as a powerful and articulate representative of Scottish liberalism. He quickly became a leader, therefore, of those who wished to reshape the religious and social life of Canada in accordance with these views.

The movement of this group of younger leaders into positions of power and influence manifested itself in the new set of priorities which gradually

made their appearance on the agenda of the General Assembly. Concern for doctrine and polity was replaced in the new liberal theological perspective by a zeal for social reform. The earlier emphasis on individual salvation was replaced by an emphasis on social salvation. It was no longer adequate to simply snatch individual brands from the burning. If, as Patrick had put it, "Christ was the goal of moral history and the starting point of a new evolution," then the whole of society had to be shaped to conform with this moral ideal. It was this task which demanded a united Protestantism. In his brief statement of "Some reasons for Church Union", Patrick placed this task even before the mission to the west. He said:

> "Consider the moral influence of such a united church on the community. Take such questions as the observance of the Lord's Day, the promotion of temperance, the prevention of gambling, the charge of the poor, the sick and the criminal. With how much greater power would the voice of the Christian community be heard and to what more lasting results?" (18)

Drawing on his experience in the temperance movement, Patrick argued that "the forces arrayed against that cause reckon confidently on hastily arranged and ill-matured" common action on the part of the churches. "A united church", he continued, "would express the sentiments of Christian men more powerfully and secure their embodiment in legislation more easily than is possible at present." Patrick hailed the great benefits conferred on the Dominion by the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada. But, he said, those who value these benefits "most highly are the first to perceive how much the cause of reform would gain in ease, directness and efficiency of the movement were the churches more united than they are." (19)

The shift from individual to social salvation in liberal theology was never simply confined to social reform. It also involved a vision of the nation as an instrument of God's design for the salvation of the world.

Those who embraced this new outlook, therefore, had little difficulty in endowing Canada, one of the newest nations which was still taking shape, with a millennial role. One of the most "bewitching" qualities of Patrick's rhetoric on behalf of the union movement lay in his emphasis on the fact that Canada could be the first to show the Christian nations of the world the way to reunion. Why should Canada be the first of all Protestant lands to deal with this question? Because, Patrick answered, "Canada alone is in a position to deal with it. Canada is the only country in which Presbyterianism is one and Methodism is one." (20) Canada had already led the Christian world in the path of church union. Now a still greater opportunity offered itself. "The eyes of Christendom are upon Canada today," declared Patrick, "and the stand taken by the Canadian church will have a far reaching influence in other parts of the world." (21) For those desirous of making "this Dominion His Dominion", the possibilities of Canadians showing Christendom the way back to the original apostolic unity of the church were irresistable.

The reformulation of Christian doctrine, social reform, and the reunion of the churches were all seen as phases of the evolutionary process in moral history. The capstone of this evolution was to be the creation of a new type of Christian character within the church. A united Protestant church, Patrick argued, would be more worthy of the Christian name than separate churches because "it would exhibit a richer and broader and more varied type of Christian character and achievement than is possible for any single church today." (22) It was Patrick's conviction that "a mixed church like a mixed race, would be a higher church." (23) Enlarging upon this theme, he said:

> "The combined experience of the three churches in the united church will produce a nobler form of model of Christianity. The spiritual life of each section of the church will be enriched from the others. There will be new knowledge, new sympathies, new efforts. The horizons of the church's thought and aims will be widened; and the standard of spiritual attainment will rise." (24)

This fusion of the separate churches to produce a new type was necessary in Canada because the nation's rapid expansion demanded a new conception of the church's task. If the church's vision did not keep pace with the nation and provide it with adequate spiritual leadership, Patrick said, "the Christianity of the nation may become feebler, less energetic and less resourceful at the very time when its forces should be at their highest point." (25)

As Patrick and the advocates of the new evolution in moral history realized from the outset of the union negotiations, it was essential for them to establish that churches were living associations with personalities which were capable of change and development. If the new evolution was to achieve its purpose it was necessary for the church to demonstrate it was not a creature of the state but in fact an independent creation whose existence and freedom of development should be recognized by the state. The problem which they faced, however, was that the common law refused to acknowledge the validity of such a conception of the church. The House of Lords had made this clear in the Free Church of Scotland Appeal Case when the justices refused to accept Lord Haldane's argument on behalf of the Scottish liberals and unionists that "the identity of the church is the identity of an individual human being. It is not the colour of his eyes, nor his opinions, nor his appearance, because that changes from time to time; it is the continuity of his life that his identity lies in." (26) The Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury countered this argument by defining the

church as an "associated body of beneficiaries". The only thing it was necessary for the court to consider, therefore, was whether any article of the original trust had been violated. (27) Insofar as a church's doctrine was considered to be its articles of association and this had been changed, the House of Lords upheld the resistance of the "Wee Frees" and awarded all the property and assets of the Free Church of Scotland to those who had opposed the union.

The results of this decision were known in Canada before the joint committee on union held its first meeting in December of 1904. Prior to this meeting Alfred Gandier had published an attack on the decision arguing that the Westminster Confession itself was "a charter of liberty, freeing the church from undue bondage to a dead past" and that the church was not a "trust corporation" but an association which "must always witness to such new light as God gives through His word and Spirit." (28) Patrick had left Scotland before the union was completed in 1900 and he did not publish a defence of the Free Church position. As soon as the inequities of the decision were rectified by legislation, however, he declared that in Canada legislation would be sought to avoid "the imbroglio of the Scottish church" and to make plain that "the church asserts its freedom to frame its own doctrines and to change its written creed from time to time." (29)

The necessity of using the legislative power of the state to declare the church's freedom to effect the changes a new environment and evolution demanded, however, would create more problems than Patrick seems to have recognized. For those who were convinced that the Westminster Confession was the clearest possible statement of Scriptural doctrine and that the Presbyterian polity was closest to that of the early church, the changes contemplated by the unionists appeared like an abandonment of those principles

which every Presbyterian minister had taken a sacred vow to defend and promote. Moreover, the promised benefits of a united church appeared like a Utopian fantasy and any attempt to legislate them upon those who had no desire for them seemed like a denial of the historic liberties which generations of Presbyterians had fought to preserve. The shift to the new liberal outlook within the Presbyterian church, however, was sufficiently far advanced by the turn of the century that many responded to Patrick's glowing rhetoric with such enthusiasm that ends became more important than means and the desire for union more compelling than the fear of disruption within the Presbyterian church.

III

Of course, William Patrick was not responsible for the rise of liberalism within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. This change in the outlook of the church had been in the making for some time. Patrick happened to arrive in Canada, however, just as the new generation of young Presbyterian liberals was ready for a strong leader and an issue which would focus their energies. His appointment in 1900 as principal of the college which in Presbyterian eyes occupied a more important place in the "better life of the vast empire west of the Great Lakes than the Premier of the Province or the Governor of the Territories," (30) made Patrick the first of the new liberals to be placed in a position of authority by the church. The younger men who would eventually assume leadership of the union movement did not yet hold important offices in the church or community.

Many of these younger man who followed Patrick were already advocating union. For example, Alfred Gandier had written about church union prior to

Patrick's arrival. (32) Several nineteenth century leaders of Canadian Presbyterianism had also published articles favoring the idea of church union. Insofar as Canadian opinions about union appeared in obscure Canadian journals, however, it is unlikely that Patrick was aware of them. His own thinking of the subject was influenced by the ideas of the unionist leaders in the Free Church of Scotland. The fact that he acted so quickly, without further exploring the Canadian situation, indicates he brought the idea of union with him rather than discovering it in Canada. What Patrick did discover in Canada was that the Presbyterian and Methodist churches were more advanced than the Scottish churches in confessional union. The various branches of Presbyterianism had been united since 1875 and those of Methodism since 1884. Any further union in Canada, therefore, would have to be across denominational boundaries. Before this major hurdle the nineteenth century Canadian leaders who supported union were hesitant. They were aware of the resistance to liberalism in many sections of the church and they believed union across denominational lines should be approached slowly and carefully lest the quest for unity result in disunity. Since Patrick knew little about the Canadian church and was unaware of the anxieties of those who opposed the spread of liberal ideas, he was freer to act than his Canadian counterparts in recommending union across denominational boundaries.

Had Patrick bothered to discuss the union issue with other Canadian churchmen, he might have acted more cautiously. Those he did consult with, however, were unlikely to put any constraints on him. It was reported, for example, that Patrick discussed the question with George Jackson, the Methodist preacher from Edinburgh, while Jackson was a guest of Professor Kilpatrick in Winnipeg during the summer of 1902. Jackson was a liberal who, when he later accepted an appointment in Canada, felt the sting of Albert Carman's accusation of heresy. (33) Therefore he was hardly a person to

raise any serious theological objections when Patrick told him that "the time was not merely coming, but had already come, when in the great North-western provinces, Methodists and Presbyterians ought, without an hour's delay to join their forces." Since Jackson knew nothing about Canada or the west he found it "impossible to doubt the correctness of this view." (34)

Although Patrick's lack of roots in the Canadian church and his unfamiliarity with Presbyterianism in eastern Canada left him freer to act in initiating the union movement, these same factors were a liability once he became convenor of the Presbyterian union committee in 1906. Initially the church appears to have recognized this fact because the first two men appointed as convenors of the committee were old and trusted servants of the church: William Caven and R.H. Warden. Both men died, however, during the first two years of the committee's existence. Only then did the church turn to Patrick. In many ways it was a logical choice because since his appointment to the committee in 1904 Patrick had played a major role in the discussions and had filled in for Dr. Warden in presenting the committee's report to the 1905 General Assembly. Since initiating the movement, therefore, Patrick had risen in influence and had gained the support of both the older and younger unionists. The church must have assumed these men would help Patrick overcome the difficulties of being an outsider with little experience in the Canadian church.

Yet none of the unionists managed to keep Patrick from leading them into a procedural quagmire. There were several reasons for their failure to do so. Many unionists clearly misjudged their own strength and the extent of the opposition because they were not working pastors who were sensitive to the conservative feeling in many eastern congregations. As liberals who

believed that church administration was a matter of expediency and who were out to create an entirely new set of procedures, they were less concerned with how things had been done in the past and more concerned with how they would be done in the future. Moreover, a close examination of the various groups of unionist leaders reveals that most of them did not have the necessary background to assist an outsider like Patrick in guiding the issue through the General Assembly.

The younger generation of Canadian Presbyterian liberals who followed Patrick had been born in the 1860's and they were all either sons or grandsons of Presbyterian ministers. Since they had not been old enough to participate in the union of 1875, however, they were not familiar with the procedure used in consummating that union. Besides, only one of their number, Robert Falconer, was a member of the original union committee. Among the older men born in the 1840's and 1850's who supported Patrick, many were also immigrants. Unionist leaders such as Dr. Samuel Lyle, Dr. F.B. Duval, Dr. W.T. Herridge, Dr. G.M. Milligan and Dr. M. MacGillivray had come from Ireland, the United States, England and Scotland respectively. Thus they had also not participated in the union of 1875 and were equally unaware of Canadian Presbyterian practice on this question.

The only ones in a position to advise Patrick were those Canadians who had been born in the 1840's, had participated in the union of 1875 and had received their education in Canada. Four of these men were prominent educators: Dr. John Forrest, the president of Dalhousie University, Dr. Daniel M. Gordon, the principal of Queen's University, Dr. George Bryce, the founder of Manitoba College and head of the faculty of science at the University of Manitoba, and Dr. John Scrimger, the principal of Presbyterian College, Montreal. Three others were church administrators: Dr. E.D.

McLaren, who replaced James Robertson as superintendent of Home Missions, Dr. John Somerville, who replaced R.H. Warden as the church's financial agent and became junior clerk of the General Assembly and Dr. R.P. MacKay, the secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions. Only one was a pastor: Dr. W.D. Armstrong of St. Paul's Church in Ottawa. All of these men, except John Forrest and Daniel Gordon, had been ordained in the 1870's just prior to or immediately after the union of 1875 and as a result they too may have been unfamiliar with the procedures followed in that union. Since John Forrest and Daniel Gordon had both been ordained in 1866, however, they ought to have been able to advise Patrick on Canadian Presbyterian practice. But Forrest supported Patrick uncritically on matters of procedure. Daniel Gordon, who ultimately refused to enter the United Church, was involved in his own battle with Robert Campbell over the secularization of Queen's University. It was unlikely he would suggest therefore that Patrick should listen to Campbell, even though Campbell was the most outstanding authority on procedure in the Presbyterian Church.

Consequently the only major advice Patrick received on the matter of procedure came in the form of criticism from dissidents like William MacLaren, Thomas Sedgewick, Robert Campbell, the senior clerk of the General Assembly, and Sir Thomas W. Taylor, the former chief justice of Manitoba, who had drafted the legislation for the union of 1875 and had written the major reference work on the public statutes relating to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. (35) Patrick chose to ignore this criticism because he saw it as an attempt to disrupt what to him was a clear course of action. Moreover, even when the unionists passed criticism on to him, Patrick seems to have been unaffected by it. In 1911, for example, Dr. R.P. MacKay, who was moderator at the time, pointed out to Patrick that many were deeply

suspicious of his methods. He said:

> I have heard it stated by those who are out of sympathy with the union proposals that the convenor of the union committee acts independently. As one person stated to me the other day, the report that came to the last Assembly, with its recommendations, was from the convenor's bat, without his committee. (36)

Patrick replied that his knowledge of mankind had prepared him for almost unlimited misrepresentation but he believed that "persons in public life must be prepared to accept this lot." (37) Such aloofness could not conceal the fact that the mounting criticism would lead the Assembly in 1911 to reject Patrick's procedure in a last minute attempt to give the congregations a free vote on the principle of organic union and the Basis of Union.

Eleven years earlier when the news of Patrick's appointment had leaked out, many had expressed doubts about the wisdom of appointing a man who was unfamiliar with conditions in the west and unacquainted with the Canadian church. J.A. Macdonald stated these reservations when he wrote:

> Experience has proved how unlikely it is that a man transplanted from Scotland to Canada after he has reached middle life will become thoroughly Canadianized or will enter with enthusiasm into new and strange work and become a real force in the life of the church. Not many imported ministers have been more than congregational in their success in Canada. (38)

Patrick was a forty-eight year old bachelor when he arrived in Canada and even after a decade in Winnipeg he "was known only to a comparatively small circle of friends." C.W. Gordon, who was perhaps as close to him as anyone, attributed this isolation to "a serious physical disability" which prevented him "from mingling as freely in the social and intellectual life of the community as he would have liked" and meant that "he was unable to gain that extensive acquaintance with the church and country which would have added so

greatly to his influence and usefulness." (39) Professor T. B. Kilpatrick in a eulogy for his friend and former colleague also mentioned that "there were few days when he did not suffer from physical uneasiness, which sometimes deepened to acute distress" and that "he was a very lonely man" who "no doubt in his solitary room had his hours of sadness." (40) Others who were not as close to Patrick perceived him in a different light. W.W. Buchanan of the Winnipeg Y.M.C.A., for example, suggested that "the mercilessness of his logic led some to regard him as severe." (41) Austin L. Budge, an opponent of union, said of Patrick that "in Scottish broadcloth of dustless lustre and neatness; Roman collar and bushy beard of a Puritan ... he was easily one of the best dressed of clergymen and retained the clerical style of the Scottish church." (42) The picture which emerges from these descriptions is that of a man who had few close personal ties within the Canadian church in spite of his dominance as a leader. Both in his public and private life, therefore, Patrick apparently remained an outsider. As a leader, such isolation from the church and community was a serious drawback which he never overcame.

When Patrick died in Scotland on September 28, 1911, it was possible to question whether he had become "thoroughly Canadianized" but few could doubt he had been "a real force in the life of the church". Indeed, the Presbyterian Church in Canada would never again be the same. Patrick therefore should have been honoured as the founder of the church union movement in Canada. But in following a course which polarized the church, precipitated a resistance movement and transformed a pious dream into an organized conflict, his legacy to the union movement was ambiguous. Nine months after his death the resistance to church union proved to be so large that the General Assembly of 1912 could not proceed with the consummation of union.

After a decade of negotiations under Patrick's leadership, however, it was also not possible to drop the issue entirely. Consequently the only course open to the church was to heal its own divisions. Such a healing process required that Patrick and his dreams be forgotten but his presence had been so commanding and his rhetoric so persuasive that he continued to haunt the church until it accomplished the purpose he had set for it.

Footnotes

(1) Christian Guardian (September 17, 1902), 600

(2) Robert Campbell, "The People's Rights Usurped", The Presbyterian Advocate, 2 (1915), 13

(3) Presbyterian (June 21, 1907), 781

(4) Ephraim Scott, "The Presbyterian Church in Canada: Its Preservation and Continuance" (Montreal, John Lovell and Son, 1914). This pamphlet was the manuscript of Dr. Ephraim Scott's address at the Woodstock General Assembly in 1914. It was circulated by the Executive Committee of the Organization for the Preservation and Continuance of the Presbyterian Church.

(5) Presbyterian (December 1, 1910) 626 and (December 22, 1910), 735

(6) St. John Daily Sun (June 7, 1904), 1

(7) William Patrick, "The Case for Church Union", Presbyterian (March 12, 1910) 583-584

(8) St. John Daily Sun (June 7, 1904), 5

(9) Presbyterian (June 21, 1906), 775

(10) ibid., 782

(11) William MacLaren, "The Unity of the Church and the Church Unions", (Toronto, Presbyterian News Co., 1890)

(12) Presbyterian (June 21, 1906), 784

(13) ibid., (June 17, 1909), 747

(14) Manitoba Free Press (September 29, 1911), 1

Footnotes cont'd

(15) ibid., (September 29, 1911), 11

(16) ibid., (April 18, 1900), 6

(17) Westminster (September 1904), 190-94

(18) William Patrick, "Some Reasons for Church Union", Presbyterian Record (October, 1906), 427-429

(19) Presbyterian (May 26, 1910), 653

(20) ibid., (June 17, 1909), 744

(21) ibid., (June 21, 1906), 780

(22) Presbyterian Record (October 1906), 427-429

(23) Presbyterian (June 17, 1909), 744

(24) ibid., (May 26, 1910), 653

(25) ibid., 653

(26) R. L. Orr, The Free Church of Scotland Appeal Case (Edinburgh 1904), 529

(27) ibid., 223

(28) Alfred Gandier, "Predestination and the Historical Decision", Presbyterian (November 26, 1904), 642-644 and (December 3, 1904), 676-677

(29) Presbyterian (June 18, 1908), 779

(30) Westminster (February 17, 1900), 188-189

(31) The interconnections between these men can be traced through the following biographies and autobiographies: John Dow, Alfred Gandier (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951); Clarence McKinnon, Reminiscenses (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1936); C.W. Gordon, Postscript to Adventure (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1938); James S. Thomson, "Walter Charles Murray (1866-1945)", Royal Society of Canada Proceedings, 1945, 103-108; James S. Thomson,"Sir Robert A. Falconer", Dalhousie Review, 30 (1951), 361-368

(32) Alfred Gandier, "Church Union", The Theologue (March, 1899), 109-116

Footnotes cont'd

(33) For a discussion of this incident cf. Margaret Prang, N.W. Rowell: Ontario Nationalist (Toronto, U. of Toronto Press, 1975), 70-88

(34) Westminster (November, 1902), 314

(35) cf. Sir Thomas W. Taylor, Public Statutes Relating to the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto: Willing and Williamson, 1879; second revised edition 1897)

(36) R.P. MacKay to William Patrick, March 10, 1911 (U.C.A., Presbyterian Church in Canada, Box 7, file 156)

(37) William Patrick to R.P. MacKay, March 11, 1911 (U.C.A., Presbyterian Church in Canada, Box 7, file 156

(38) Westminster (February 17, 1900), 188-189

(39) Manitoba Free Press (September 29, 1911), 1 and 11

(40) T.B. Kilpatrick, "William Patrick: 1852-1911, An Appreciation", Presbyterian (October 5, 1911), 359-360

(41) Manitoba Free Press (September 29, 1911), 1 and 11

(42) Austin L. Budge, "Manuscript Articles on Church Union", (P.C.A., Knox College, Toronto) Articles 4 and 9