

CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY.  
No. VII.

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UNITED SYNOD OF UPPER CANADA. - *Concluded.*

During the following Synodical year, no progress was made in the direction of the long-looked-for union with the Synod of Canada. Negotiations were not resumed, and controversy and agitation tended, apparently, to a wider separation. Storm clouds shaded the horizon, the more darkly perhaps because soon to be dissipated by the emerging sunshine of fraternal love.

## MR. McDOWALL'S CASE.

On the 20th of July, 1836, the committee appointed by Synod met Mr. McDowall at Kingston, and propounded to him the several questions prepared for them. In his replies, he admitted, 1st. That he was informed, in advance, by Rev. A. Bell, of the intention of the Toronto Presbytery to overturn the Synod of Canada to admit himself and Rev. W. Bell, and that he probably approved of it, 2nd. That he made application to the Governor to be allowed to retain his portion of the Government salary guaranteed to the United Synod, if he should join the Synod of Canada, 3rd. That he had encouraged the church at Fredericksburgh to seek a minister from the Synod of Canada, promising his influence to secure for such minister possession of the church property and a liberal personal subscription for his support; and 4th. That for the past two years, he had not used the same influence in favour of the United Synod as formerly. He admitted also that he had no wish to leave the United Synod if he could not retain the Government allowance. These answers were quite unsatisfactory, but upon Mr. McDowall's declaration that he had not "intentionally acted with a view of injuring the United Synod," the committee voted to "rescind the suspension. The Synod, however, disapproved this act of the committee, and put that fact on record at their next Session—June, 1837. Two months afterwards—August 30th—Mr. McDowall was received by the Presbytery of Kingston (probably without formal dismissal from the Presbytery of Hollowell), and his withdrawal from the United Synod was announced to the Lieutenant-Governor by Mr. Smart, as Synod Clerk, in a letter dated December 13th, 1837 just in time to have his name off the roll before the semi-annual payment of Government salaries in the following January.

## COUNTER MEMORIALS.

Under date of December 12th, 1836, Sir Francis Bond Head, Lieutenant Governor, transmitted to Rev. William Smart, of Brockville, a copy of a memorial from the Synod of Canada's Presbytery of Toronto. This memorial asked the continuance of the Government grant to other members of the United Synod who had left, or might leave that body, and become connected with the Synod of Canada, as it had been continued to Messrs. Andrew Bell and Duncan McMillan. As part of the argument for such continuance the memorial said:

"A grant of £700 sterling was made to the United Synod of Upper Canada, in 1833, upon the distinct understanding, originating with the members of the United Synod themselves, that they were to connect themselves with the Synod of Canada, so that the whole sum granted by the Government towards the support of the Presbyterian ministers might be paid to one body."

In an accompanying communication the Lieutenant-Governor referred to a "pledge" made by his predecessor, Sir John Colborne, to Messrs. Bell and McMillan, for a continuation of their salaries, which he seemed to regard as binding upon himself.

The memorial gave great offence to the ministers of the United Synod, and, under date of January 17th, 1837, a counter memorial was prepared by the "Committee of Synod," signed by William Smart, Convener, Robert Boyd, Clerk *pro tem.*, and William King, and forwarded to His Excellency. This counter memorial denied very emphatically any such "distinct understanding," in connection with the grant of £700 sterling to the ministers of the United Synod, and quoted, in support of such denial, the official correspondence on the subject, including the letter from Sir John Colborne's Secretary, Col. Rowan, to which reference has already been made. It recited briefly the history of the negotiations for union, and declared, in substance, that, had there been such an understanding, it had been impossible to carry it out upon honourable or scriptural terms, the Synod of

Canada and not the ministers of the United Synod having been responsible for the continued separation.

In reference to the "pledge" to Messrs. Bell and McMillan, the counter memorial quotes from a communication from Col. Rowan, dated 25th December, 1835, as follows:

"His Excellency requests that it may be understood that when he replied to the application of several ministers intending to unite with the Church of Scotland, and respecting the continuance of their salaries, he was persuaded that arrangements would be made by the two Synods for their union."

The counter memorial severely criticised the *persuasion* used by Messrs. Bell and McMillan, or on their behalf, and their act in that "they first obtained a pledge, and then presented a memorial to Sir John Colborne, praying 'their salaries to be continued,' . . . made sure of their salaries, and then left the United Synod."

After the lapse of almost half a century, it is easy for the readers of these memorials to understand how honourable men and earnest Christian ministers, like Messrs. Bell and McMillan, could do just what they are represented to have done, without violating conscience, or intending any wrong. It is evident that they were themselves "persuaded" that the United Synod would not long hold to its distinct organization, after so large a defection, and that its remaining members would soon follow themselves and Messrs. Ferguson and George to the Synod of Canada. It certainly could not have required much skill to persuade Sir John Colborne, when he saw so many leaving the one body, that all would soon be absorbed in the other; in which event no one would then have doubted the propriety of the ministers of the United Synod having their salaries continued to them in their new Synodical relation. In reference to the Union, the counter memorial said:

"We assure Your Excellency that we are willing to unite with the Synod of Canada on just and scriptural grounds; but rather than form a union on the terms proposed, we would relinquish all just claims to the Royal Grant of £700. . . . Should we form a union with the Synod of Canada, cast our probations upon the world, and repulse every Godly and faithful minister from our communion and most fond embraces, who may arrive in the Province, surely the black injustice of the act would call down the vengeance of a just and righteous God on our guilty heads."

In conclusion this counter memorial said

"We beg leave to state to Your Excellency that by continuing Mr. Bell and Mr. McMillan on our list of salaries, it will encourage ecclesiastical desertion, promote strife and envy, and excite feelings contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which are, on all occasions, to be avoided. Your Excellency was pleased to say to us that we might 'expect even-handed justice' from you, and we neither desire nor look for more. We, therefore, pray Your Excellency to reconsider the case and to transfer Messrs. Bell and McMillan to the list of the Synod of Canada to which they now belong, for their salaries; and consign to the United Synod of Upper Canada the free appropriation of the whole of the £700 sterling which was unconditionally granted by His Majesty's Government for the support of said Synod."

At the next annual meeting (soon to be referred to) the Committee of Synod reported their action, including the presentation of the counter memorial, which was "approved, and a vote of thanks was unanimously passed" It was evident that there were to be no more individual secessions to the Kirk, but that the remaining members of the United Synod, with their secessions, would cling to their independent organization until a Union could be effected "on just and scriptural grounds." Such a Union was *apparently* afar off.

## SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING.

The sixth annual meeting of the United Synod was held at Prescott commencing Monday, June 19th, 1837 Present Messrs. Smart, Boyd, Lyle, Anderson and Dickey, from the Presbytery of Brockville, Messrs. King, McClatchey, Nichol and Cairns, from the Presbytery of Toronto, and Mr. Douglass from the Presbytery of Hollowell, ministers, with John McCrady, Matthew McIntosh and John Harkness, from the Presbytery of Brockville, elders. Rev. C. Nichol preached the opening sermon, and Rev. Robert Boyd was chosen Moderator.

*Address to the Queen.*—An address was adopted expressing sympathy with the "illustrious descendants of the Royal Family," on account of the death of King William the Fourth, and congratulating Queen Victoria on her accession to the throne.

*Committee of Synod.*—Messrs. Smart, Boyd, King and McClatchey were appointed a Committee of Synod for the present year.

*Transferred.*—The Presbytery of Toronto reported that Rev. Charles Nichol had been transferred to

the church of Toronto Township, where he was installed September 21st, 1836.

*The Bible Cause.*—Rev. Mr. Smart, agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, presented an appeal to the Synod in behalf of that institution, which was approved and ordered printed in an appendix to the minutes of this Session.

*Thanks for Aid in Parliament.*—A strong vote of thanks to Col. William Chisholm, M.P.P., was passed for "his indefatigable exertions and distinguished abilities in defending and promoting the just claims of the United Synod . . . in Provincial Parliament." Adjourned to meet at Nelson, June 24th, 1838.

## APPEAL FOR AUGMENTATION.

Under date of March 28th, 1838, the Committee of Synod in session at Prescott adopted a memorial to the Queen earnestly appealing in the name of the Synod, for an augmentation of the Royal Grant so that seven members not now provided for could participate. After reciting something of the Synod's history as successor of the Pioneer Presbyterian organization in Canada, and declaring the constant Christian loyalty of their ministers to the British Throne and Constitution, as especially indicated by members of their congregations being among the first to rush to posts of danger at the breaking out of the McKenzie Rebellion, the memorialists said: "Therefore, equal in danger, in taxation and loyalty, and ever ready to uphold British supremacy against Republican institutions, we justly claim from your Majesty equal favours and equal liberties." The memorial was transmitted to the Queen by Sir George Arthur, then Lieutenant-Governor.

## SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING.

The seventh annual meeting was held in the Presbyterian Church, Nelson, commencing June 24th, 1838. Present Rev. Messrs. Smart, Boyd, King, McClatchey, Johnson, Cairns, Porter, Douglass, Rogers and Alexander Lewis (the latter having been admitted to the Presbytery of Toronto during the past year), with elders Duncan McQueen, Thomas Walker, James Curry, Samuel Rogers and John Polly. Rev. Robert Boyd, from Acts xv. 6, preached the opening sermon, in defence of the Presbyterian form of Church government, after which he was re-elected Moderator.

*Corresponding Member.*—Rev. Isaac Purkis was invited to a seat as corresponding member, and his name appears in the roll of the Presbytery of Toronto of that year as located at Simcoe. Afterwards he was on the Synod's roll as of Osnabruck.

*Address to the Lieutenant-Governor.*—A complimentary and congratulatory address to His Excellency, Sir George Arthur, was adopted. It contained the following *business* sentence: "We look to your Excellency with the utmost confidence that equal rights, immunities and privileges will be extended to us by the Government, with other religious denominations in the Colony."

*Defective Minutes.*—The only copy of "extracts from the minutes" for the year which has been found is very incomplete and fragmentary. It is evident, however, that no action was had or proposed on the subject of union.

## UNION NEGOTIATIONS REVIVED.

On the 9th of April, 1839, within the Committee room of the Legislative Council in Toronto, was held a meeting, or conference, of certain ministers, elders and members of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, with Rev. William King of the United Synod, and William Chisholm, Esq., the special friend of the latter body in the Parliament. Hon. William Morris, M.L.C., read a letter which had been addressed by himself and nine other members of the Legislature to "the commission of Synod of the Church of Scotland in Canada," urging the adoption of measures to bring about the speedy admission "of the ministers and congregations of the United Synod" to the Synod of Canada, as a step necessary "in the present crisis of the Clergy Reserve question." After deliberation, a series of resolutions were passed, of which two were as follows:

II That this meeting do strongly recommend that the admission of the said ministers and congregations into the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in union with the Church of Scotland should take place with the least possible loss of time, for this, among other reasons, that the arrangement of the details of a measure for the partition of the Clergy Reserves now before a select committee of the House of Assembly, will be facilitated by such admission. The members of that House in the present meeting having declared that they consent to keep back the special mention of the ministers of the United Synod in the plan of the above