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**THE RECORD.**

**THE ACT OF THE SYNOD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA, IN CONNEXION WITH THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND—DECLARING ITS SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE—AND REUNION.**

Our friends of the Establishment Synod thought proper to annex to their proposal of negotiation for reunion, a condition that we should abstain from all proceedings "which could not be regarded as any other light than that of hostility," with an intimation that without such a pledge on our part, negotiation was out of the question. If this requirement should serve no other purpose, it may at least have, and we believe has actually had, some tendency to lead the uninformed to suppose that the members of the Presbyterian Church of Canada have commenced and are prosecuting a course of active hostility and aggression against their quondam brethren, in some way or other, which it is left to the imagination of the community to picture for itself. This vague and preposterous requirement was of course declined. No one could have expected compliance with it under any circumstances. But the very proposal of it, taken in connexion with certain other sayings and doings, on the same side, renders it proper and necessary for us to state, as we now do deliberately and emphatically, for the information of all concerned, that if there were any sense or propriety in bringing forward a requirement of that kind, in such a form on any such occasion, there has been far stronger reason on our part for doing so than any that can be adduced on the opposite side: and that if we are in fault in this respect at all, it is in having done too little rather than too much, and in having over-enthusiastically studied the things which make for peace, at much sacrifice of personal feeling, and with, perhaps, some injury to the interests of truth, to our own character, and to the prosperity of our cause. And what are the returns which our almost culpable quiescence and forbearance have produced? Were it worth while, we might give specimens of the manifold evil reports and slanders which have been circulated against us, many of which we can trace to office-bearers in the Establishment Synod; by whom we have been industriously denounced as reckless schismatics—as disloyal subjects—as men with whom christian fellowship could no longer be safely maintained. We do not know that we have yet been represented as directly in the pay of the Pope of Rome; but we do know that we are gravely charged with being parties to a plot for the introduction of tithes into the country. These and other statements equally discredit-able to their propogators, have been set afloat and circulated against us, and that too with a zeal which we have been amazed to discover, for the first time, in some of the parties who have been most active in this work. Another way in which our forbearance has been requited is this: whenever a small minority can be found desiring to maintain connexion with the Scottish Establishment, no matter how large or how harmonious the majority may be, nor how hopeless it may be for the minority to support the ministrations of the Gospel by themselves, or to muster any number to be ministered unto, that would justify the settlement of a minister over them—this minority is yet pledged and expected to keep apart, to get up for them-

selves—petitions and memorials are carried round for signatures, and the parties are encouraged by the assurance that a missionary will be sent to take charge of them; and it may be of four or five similar minorities, in contiguous congregations: whereby, if they should have only the meagre allowance of a service once in every two or three weeks, they will at least be kept from the contamination of those ministers who happen to think there are things more important in the constitution of the Church, than to commune with the state; and their weight and influence, whatever it may be, preserved on the side of an established establishment. We may well add to this, as closely connected with it, the claim which is unreservedly set up by such minorities to the Church property, as exclusively their own, and the care which they take to remind the majority in all manner of delicate and good natured ways that they are to consider themselves as mere tenants at will—trespassers and intruders—wield, however, it is intimated with characteristic good feeling and generosity, there is not the least disposition to disturb, until it shall suit the convenience of the rightful owners. In this matter we have the manifestation of precisely the same spirit of which there have been so many painful and distressing exhibitions in regard to Church and Missionary property, accumulated by individual liberality, in Scotland and in India, and which regulated by no conscientious views of christian equity as applicable to such cases, nor restrained by any natural diffidence or shame, from claiming and taking possession of what in the estimate of common justice belongs, at least, in a large proportion, to others—casts itself on the technicalities of the law, and gruffly demands and unscrupulously resolves to have whatever the letter of the law will give it.

We might also refer, in proof of the assertion we have made, and as saying very conclusively who had the strongest ground for requiring a pledge for the suspension of a minister, to the procedure of the Establishment Presbytery of Montreal, in the case of Messrs. Esso and Black, and to certain gentle hints respecting impending depositions thrown out in other quarters for the warning of our ministers, founded on that procedure. The amiable spirit and good taste which were manifested in that instance, will be duly appreciated by our readers, when they are informed that the venerable court in question, not satisfied with making all convenient speed to declare Mr. Esso and Mr. Black no longer ministers in their connexion, and then hastening with this decision to Sir Charles Metcalfe, and expediting certain measures to the same effect to the Residuary Presbyteries of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, where Mr. Esso and Mr. Black had been licensed, actually did their endeavour to invest the simple procedure usual on such occasions with all the solemnity of a deposition. There was also a peculiar felicity of expression introduced into the record of this mild and conciliatory transaction, over which certain reverend doctors must have chuckled amazingly, and the ingenuity of which tickled even our fancy, and justly entitles it to remembrance. We mean that in which Mr. Esso was spoken of as the late minister of St. Gabriel Street Church. It is true the point of this joke is somewhat blunted by the fact that Mr. Esso is still in the land of the living, and that the late Minister of St. Gabriel Street Church, is also the present minister of St. Gabriel Street Church: but no one can possibly mistake

the spirit and design of it. These things may serve to show how far the spirit of conciliation has been operative in the Establishment Synod, and with what grace they come and ask of us the pledge in question, as a preliminary to negotiation for reunion. If we now proceed to their act declaring their independence, we shall find it we apprehend more worthy of a piece with the other transactions to which we have been referring, than it may at first sight appear. We have no hesitation in saying of this act—we say it much more in sorrow than in anger—that it seems to us the more serious than an attempt to place us before the christian community in a false position, by making it appear that they have unilaterally altered and annihilated their position, while they know as well as we that their position remains precisely the same as before and at the time of the disruption.—This act is spoken of as the rescinding of a pledge, and as a step in advance, for the sake of conciliation. In advance of what, we ask? Why the very same act was passed at the July Synod, having been put to the vote and carried and duly ratified, against the act proposed by Mr. Bayne. For what purpose other than what we have indicated is it brought forward again, and made to pass through the formalities of a second enactment, and then hawked and trumpeted through the whole country, as something quite new and very important, and a great accession and ground of reunion which we must be utterly unreasonable to decline. We tell these brethren that this is not fair dealing with us nor with the christian community, and that such dealing is not the way to conciliate those who possess either sense or honesty. How could it be supposed that this act should prove more attractive to us in October than it did in July? And what renders the whole matter the more extraordinary, is the fact that the whole question of the independence of the Synod was fully discussed in the Synod of July—that all, with two or three exceptions, concurred in holding the Synod to be spiritually independent, and that the greater part of the brethren who joined in the protest avowed it as their deliberate and fixed opinion that we were independent not only in spiritual, but also in temporal things. These brethren know that we were far beyond them in our views of the independence of the Synod—that we held ourselves to be actually in possession of independence in all these respects, and yet this act is put forth as something greatly in advance—a new, decided and important step in the history of the Canadian Church. We leave our readers to judge of the candour and sincerity of such a measure, as to the circumstances and mode in which it is now brought forward, and we go on to enquire what is its actual substantial amount and value. In this respect also it greatly requires the light to be let in upon it. We readily admit that twelve months ago, or indeed any time before the publication in the newspapers of Professor Campbell and Dr. Cook's views on the subject of our independence, we should have been disposed to regard this act as meriting a great deal. But with these views fresh in our recollection, and after having learned at the July Synod how generally they are held by those who follow these leaders, we are constrained to declare that it seems to us now to mean nothing at all, and cannot be held to mean anything by the majority of those who enacted it. The only portion of it in its original form which looked like a step in advance—that, namely, which seemed designed to place proba-