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INTRODUCTORY.

Once more the Church of our Fathers has been exposed to a trial, almost too great, it would seem, for human nature to withstand. Every instrumentality has been employed to divert attention from the points at issue. The Press has been made use of to a large extent, and by the efforts of a few men, labouring assiduously towards the one definite end and purpose, it has been made to appear that the public heart has been stirred to its depths. The taking name of *Union* has been adopted as a word to conjure with, and the fearful and weak-hearted have been terrified into submission before the awful frown of this new idol.

It is by such means as have been adopted in the present case that error has been propagated. Is there any tyranny more despotic than that of a mob, whether that consists of the well-dressed, sleek, white-cravated ecclesiastics, who, as in the days of our Saviour, shout at the dictation of the few who have determined to carry their ends at all costs, or whether it is composed of the ragged and unkempt, looked down upon by sraug respectability as the scum of the earth? Against all such attacks upon the rights of free thought men who think must oppose themselves. "There are," says a well-known writer, "certain states and conditions of affairs, in which a man is bound to speak out and be antagonistic—when conformity is not only a *weakness* but a *sin*. Great evils are in some cases only to be met by resistance; they cannot be wept down, they must be battled down."

It is under such circumstances that we have, in assured trust in a higher power, endeavoured to do our duty, according to the light of our conscience. The periodical which we now present to the Church, is of very humble appearance, but so is the acorn, which gives no indication to the outward sense of the future oak, destined to withstand for centuries the shock of storms

which rend and destroy the towering poplar, rushing to maturity in a few brief summers, only to perish from decay long before the child who has seen it planted has reached the age of manhood. It will be our effort to conduct it in a spirit of calmness and yet of firmness that shall deserve respect, if it cannot command sympathy. Conscience has been sneered at by those who have left us; we shall endeavour to show all due deference to the conscientious convictions of others, whilst we follow prayerfully the dictates of our own.

We have been told that "the Church has spoken; it is for the minority to obey." We recognize no such rule in a Protestant Church. This is the rule in the Church of Rome, and it is one to which the members of that body must bow. But there are times when, and there are questions on which, one is a majority. It was neither in the whirlwind nor in the earthquake that the voice of God was heard, but in the still small voice. There has been too much of excitement, too great a clamour, too apparent a disposition shown lately in Montreal to concuss men into giving up their views and opinions,—aye, and their feelings. Now that they have had time to breathe and to reflect, there are many who, in the stillness of the night, may doubt the wisdom of the step they have taken. Let them pray for guidance now, as we trust all have done hitherto. Of one thing we are assured: God reigneth.

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THE DISRUPTION OF 1875.

Foiled in every attempt to destroy our Church by open hostility, there has been for some years past an effort made, by the use of other means, to have her removed out of the way, and to have the schism begun in 1844 completed. A large number of our ministers have, under a mistaken sense of duty, seen fit to ally themselves with a body which has not hesitated, and does not now scruple, to declare that the branch of the Church of Scotland in Canada is no true member of Christ's visible Church. Of all those, who, with such open parade, marched from the Synod of our Church to the Skating Rink in Montreal, we do not hesitate to say, and we say so with a full sense of responsibility in making such a statement, not twenty members of Synod believed that the step they took was one which would be productive of benefit to the cause of religion in Canada. How was it then brought about? is the natural enquiry. To this enquiry the answer is easy. The chief cause was the persistent efforts of a very few men, who had determined to sweep our Church out of existence, some from old antipathy to the Church to which they professed to belong, but with which they had no sympathy; others from motives which we do not care too closely to scan; others from vanity and the desire to show off before a larger body, vanity appealed to and fostered by those who were the real leaders; and others still, went with the multitude, some from weakness, others from a conscientious feeling that they must obey the fathers of the Church, even if they were not satisfied. Every effort to

extend the Church has been frowned down; weakness has been produced, that this weakness might be used as an argument for dissolution, until the people, warmly attached to the Church of their fathers, were driven in dull despair to accept almost anything, that an end might be put to the unceasing annoyance of motions for Union, which were put forward as pretexts for abstaining from missionary work either at home or abroad. Some of our ablest young ministers have not hesitated to declare in conversation that whilst voting for Union they expected *neither comfort to themselves and congregations, nor increased strength for prosecuting the work of Christ.* They found, they said, a strong feeling of attachment throughout the country to our Church, and knew that if the work was not hindered by those who ought to encourage it, that it would grow and spread rapidly, but they found a mysterious and baleful influence at work which was thwarting their best endeavours. Congregations of our Church have been handed over to the other body; incapable men have been kept in charges, for whom aid has been drawn from the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland, in spite of repeated remonstrances, both by word and letter. The wonder, to those who knew the machinery at work to destroy our Church, was not that she did not advance more rapidly, but that she was able to advance at all, or even to keep the ground she had previously won.

Well might the newly constituted body unanimously appoint the Very Reverend Dr. Cook, of Quebec, to the post of Moderator. It is painful, inexpressibly painful, to discharge a duty which has been forced on us; but, in spite of the natural shrinking from the task, it is one which we are compelled to undertake. Dr. Cook, as a minister of our Church, has been regarded abroad as a tower of strength. But what has he ever done? Can any man lay his finger upon a solitary act of his intended to promote either home or foreign missionary work? Learned, eloquent, persuasive, when was he ever known to fail to take advantage of a large gathering at Synod to make an eloquent speech? There it ended.

Forty years a minister in Quebec, what has he to show for his lifetime? Six poor congregations in the whole Presbytery of Quebec, which includes nearly the entire extent of the Eastern Townships, certainly the wealthiest parts of that district, where, but for him, there would have been to-day from twenty to thirty flourishing congregations of our Church. The records of the Synod show the number of charges that exist; those that should have been are known to the men whose names are held in small account, but whose labours in the face of poverty and privation far outweigh all the glittering phrases by which the new Disruption has been brought about, and their hearts are sad over the memories of "what might have been."

Why Dr. Cook acted in this way towards the Church to which he professed to belong is matter of history. A non-intrusionist before the Disruption of 1843, to him more than to any man was due the Disruption here of

1844. He has never ceased to admit that his feelings have been all with the other body, and he might well say as he saw his work of breaking up our Church approach completion, "No man has more reason than I have to rejoice." But the work is not completed. Those who remain will go on to build up the broken walls of Zion, and, with God's blessing resting upon them, will confront the clamours and misrepresentations to which they are exposed. When the dust which has been raised has subsided, men will begin to see clearly and to appreciate the self-denying conduct of the few courageous men who were neither to be cajoled nor frightened into violating their sense of duty.

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REASONS FOR THE NEW DISRUPTION.

When a Church is to be swept out of existence as a separate body, it certainly seems due to those who have been connected with it, and whose love towards it remains undiminished, that at least plausible grounds should be given for its removal. Have these been furnished?

The only taking reason is that in country places there is a waste of power, two congregations being maintained where only one is necessary. But how far is this true? We have had a somewhat wide experience in country districts, and we venture to say that a more fallacious statement was never brought forward. We have known charges kept up for years (we do not now refer to those of any one denomination in particular) in which one minister had the whole field to himself, and yet in such favourable circumstances (according to the new views of duty) there was a languor, an inertness, that not only produced no fruit, but actually deadened every effort. We have known the drowsiness of such a locality invaded by the entrance of another labourer, and the face of things change almost immediately. To use the simile of the minister of Sherbrooke, the two dry sticks produced heat and warmth by the effect of friction. What neither could do singly was done when both were placed in competition. There was a shaking of the dry bones as in the valley of vision, and the Sleepy Hollow was filled with activity and good works.

But there is another view of this reason which we must not be blind to. It has been taken for granted that the moment the paper consummation of union takes place, all divisions will be healed. What has been the experience elsewhere? In Australia, even by the evidence of Mr. Charles Innes Cameron, who conscientiously tried to make the best of it, such has not been the case. Has it been so in Canada in respect to the two branches of the Canada Presbyterian Church? Is it not a notorious fact that the adherents of each branch keep as separate now as they did before they were nominally joined? Not to speak of other cases, which we could easily do, what took place in Montreal lately? Adherents of Erskine Church, originally a congregation of the United

Presbyterians, took exception to the introduction of an organ, and seceded. According to the theory, these gentlemen would have joined any one of the congregations originally of the Free Church in which no organ is used. But did they? So far from that, they built a church almost under the shadow of the one they left, and sent for a United Presbyterian minister to Scotland. Clearly they were wrong, according to the new theory. But, unfortunately for theorists, there is in man a great deal of human nature.

But we are told that the effect of the junction will be the greater and more effectual spread of the Gospel. When the Presbyterians of the United States resolved to cast in their lot together there was great enthusiasm shown, and a large memorial fund was raised. It is but a short time since that took place, and the Committees on Missions are already at their wits' end to raise money for their work. They seem, the report states, to have reached the limit of giving on the part of the people; church building has almost ceased, so far as we can ascertain. Truly there is nothing here to justify the glowing anticipations of those who use as an argument for union the additional power to be gained.

But another argument is that we must be liberal, in accordance with the liberality of those who regard all adherence to doctrine as absurd so long as a man acts up to the light that is in him. Mr. Grant, of Halifax, tells us, and he is an authority in the faith of the new departure, that he hopes to see the day when the Presbyterian may preach Arminianism and the Methodist Calvinism, if he finds it in the Bible. In the expurgated edition of the reported proceedings of the Evangelical Alliance at Montreal, the words "*without requiring to leave his pulpit*" have disappeared, although in the original report. Are our brethren prepared to follow Mr. Grant in abjuring the Confession of Faith and Standards of the Church of Scotland? Such a gross violation of decency would be branded with a very emphatic name among ordinary business men, who regard adherence to obligations as necessary to maintain their reputation. Before Mr. Grant took upon himself the vows taken by every minister of the Church of Scotland, he, presumably, satisfied himself that the Standards were in consonance with God's Word. He took the vows and signed the formula because he believed they represented his views of Scripture. He engaged to preach the Gospel, not because he had signed and vowed to teach according to a certain interpretation of the Scriptures, but he signed and vowed, we must believe, because he believed in that interpretation, and had resolved to teach men so. If he does not believe now what he says he believed then, is he entitled to hold his pulpit to teach false doctrines (that is, false according to the Standards which he professed to believe)? By what right does he use his influence as a Presbyterian minister to break up a Church whose existence he vowed to maintain, whilst he mocks the beliefs not of that Church only, but of all Presbyterian bodies? Yet he is the leader of some very young men, who are prepared to set all creeds at naught, and to despise, like Beecher, all systematic theology. "We have not so learned Christ,"

But, we are told, our attachment to the Church of our fathers is a mere sentiment. Faith in a Redeemer is a sentiment. Are we to give that up for a sneer? The love of country is a sentiment. Are we to despise and laugh at and pity the patriots who fought and bled and died for beloved Scotland, and made her, small as she is, a power on the earth? The love of home is a sentiment. When the wife of your youth, who has shared your struggles, your cares and anxieties, begins to lose the fresh tints of girlhood, when her cheek has lost its bloom and her eyes their brightness, when her hair is sprinkled with grey, and time is telling on her, is a mere sentiment to bind you to her when fresher beauties attract you? On the contrary, is his wife not dearer to every man whose heart is sound and true, and to whom his Saviour, his country, the wife of his youth, are held nearer and closer as the years roll by, in the sentiments of the highest devotion, of the truest patriotism, and of that tender love which strengthens day by day? But we reject the sentimental twaddle which urges us to seek new affinities and to break up old associations simply because they are old.

Another argument for consummating the union was: What will the religious world say? What will Mrs. Grundy say? The weakness of the cause was never more clearly shown. It was the one argument, if it can be dignified with the name, that many could not get over. We don't want this union, said many, piteously, but we have gone too far. The following extract of a letter from one of these members, who went to the Skating Rink with the multitude, shows this feeling. He says:

"The education, temper and spirit of the body as a whole are so unlike our own, that it may be possible to tie the two together, but I hardly expect them to unite.

"I can live quietly in my manse and let church courts and schemes go. But that is not Presbyterianism, and a very unpromising prospect it is to me."

Yet we are told that the union was almost unanimous, and that all went over rejoicing. This is but a sample of the utterances of the large majority of those who have been driven in by means which we shall not characterize.

THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF THE ADHERENTS OF OUR CHURCH.

In order to soothe the minds of those who entertained fears as to the validity of the legislation obtained in the Provincial Legislatures for the purpose of transferring the property of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland to a new and, at the time, a non-existent body, opinions of counsel were printed and circulated in the Synod with the object of proving that the bills were legal and workable. Unfortunately, or designedly, counsel were not asked to express an opinion as to the powers of either Legislature to pass such laws. They were simply asked to say whether there was such a variance between the bills passed by the different Legislatures as rendered them unworkable. The answers were sufficiently vague to please anybody. The following opinion was obtained from ex-Judge Badgley, whose

long judicial experience, and the fact that none of his judgments have ever been reversed on appeal to the Privy Council, makes it of the highest importance :

“ MONTREAL, June 12th, 1875.

“ SIR—I have examined, with as much care as the limited time you have allowed me would permit, the various books and documents submitted to me in connection with your inquiry as to the legal effect of the contemplated Union of the Presbyterian bodies of the Canadas and of the Maritime Provinces into one independent denomination, under the name of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, upon the rights of the opposing minority, who continue, as from the first hitherto, Presbyterians in connection with the Church of Scotland, and also as to the effect of the recent local legislation at Quebec in connection with these matters.

“ It is true to say that the original body of Presbyterians in connection with the Church of Scotland is general throughout the Canadas, and their special quasi corporate existence has been recognized throughout the Canadas under the general name of the Church of Scotland, as the sister Church has been known as the Church of England, from the time at least of the division of the Clergy Reserves between them and others many years ago by Imperial legislation, followed up by permitted Canadian legislation in the Act for the establishment and incorporation of the management of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in 1847, and in the Act for the Management of the Temporalities Fund of the same Church in 1858, as well as the law for the Commutation Fund Act for the stipends and allowances to ministers of that Church.

“ It is sufficient to add that these enactments were general to all such Presbyterians throughout the Canadas in connection with the Church of Scotland, nor were localized to any particular place in the Provinces.

“ It is common knowledge that secessions from this old and first established Canadian Presbyterian Church in connection with the Church of Scotland have taken place since 1844; but the seceders well knew that they could no longer participate in the rights attributed by legislation, both Imperial and Canadian, to the connection with the Church of Scotland, and it is plain to say that all who go out from her now and abandon the legislative landmarks, must leave their privileges behind to those who remain, and who choose to continue their original existing association and connection.

“ The new body, as constituted, is merely a Canada Dominion voluntary religious association, under a general provincial name and denomination, without coherence or corporate existence, entirely unrecognized by law, and subject to division, as they have separated and divided themselves from their former association. This merely nominal body the Local Legislature of Quebec has taken upon itself to invest with the temporalities and funds of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, and to abrogate those Acts of the United Province of Canada which are general in their nature, and indivisible in their disposition, under the unauthorized assumption of applying their local powers, restricted to local or private matters in the Province, or to a particular local Church or management, to general matters not assigned to the Local Legislature.

“ The Dominion Act of 1867 has not enumerated among the local subjects of legislation the General Acts for the management of the Temporalities' and the Widows' Fund of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, co-extensive with United Canada, and to that extent

it is manifest that the Quebec Act of last session is obnoxious to be set aside by the constituted authority of the Dominion Act. Other fatal objections exist, which need not be mentioned at this time, but it may be proper to repeat that ministers and others who forsake their former connection with the legally recognized Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, will reason wisely and logically in abandoning all connection with or advantages to be derived from the Temporalities and Widows' Fund Acts, attributed specially to the Presbyterian Church of the United Canadas in connection with the Church of Scotland; Acts, moreover, which the new denominational body and the Local Legislature are powerless to disturb.

"Your obedient servant,

"(Signed,)

W. BADGLEY."

Legal measures have been taken to enforce the rights of the adherents of our Church, in accordance with the above opinion.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND SYNOD.

On the 15th of June, after the seceders had withdrawn, Rev. R. BURNET, in moving the appointment of a moderator, would have liked that the Rev. David Watson, of Thorah, could have seen his way to accept the nomination. That not being the case, he would beg to move that the Rev. Mr. Dobie, of Milton, whose conduct in the chair on a former occasion received the commendation of all, should fill the office. He was sure that he would discharge with ability and zeal, the onerous and trying duties to which he now desired to call him. He had, therefore, much satisfaction in moving that Mr. Dobie be our present moderator.

Rev. Mr. DOBIE, having taken the chair, offered up solemn prayer for guidance in the trying circumstances of the Church.

Rev. Mr. BURNET was elected clerk.

Mr. BURNET moved the appointment of a Committee to draw up a letter to the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland, thanking them and that venerable body for the words of encouragement sent to this Synod, which was seconded by Rev. John McDonald and agreed to.

On motion of Mr. WATSON, seconded by Mr. MCPHERSON, it was agreed to appoint a Committee to draw up a letter to the members of the Church on its present position.

A Committee was appointed on motion of Mr. WATSON, seconded by Mr. McDONALD, to watch over the legal rights and interests of the Church, and to co-operate with similar committees in the Lower Provinces.

Rev. Mr. Lang, of St. Andrew's, Montreal, now in Scotland, was appointed to represent the Church before the Colonial Committee of the General Assembly.

It was resolved to publish a monthly periodical to represent the position and advocate the views and principles of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland.

It was then agreed that the Synod should meet at the call of the Moderator within a limited period, and the Court was then dissolved in name of the Lord Jesus, the Great and only Head of the Church and Nations, the proceedings terminating with praise and the benediction.

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