RESPONSE TO DISRUPTION: PRESBYTERIANISM IN EASTERN ONTARIO, 1844.

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The pattern of the Disruption of 1844 in Upper Canada[1] poses an interesting problem that merits further investigation. If the Bay of Quinte be taken as the boundary between eastern and western Upper Canada, then only twelve percent of the Church of Scotland ministers in the eastern as opposed to forty-eight percent in the western part joined the Free Church in 1844. Expressed as a percentage of the total number of ministers who joined the Free Church in Upper Canada, the contrast becomes even more striking. Only thirteen percent of the Free Church ministers in 1844 served congregations in the eastern districts[2]. This divergence in the response to the Free Church movement in Upper Canada, and particularly the lack of support for it in the eastern areas of the province, demands further explanation.

The settlement of Upper Canada confirms what the above pattern of disruption already suggests, that an emerging regionalism was responsible for these differences in the success of the Free Church movement. The attractions of a fertile soil and a moving frontier in western Upper Canada were largely to blame for this regional diversity. These advantages, which eastern Upper Canada could not offer, drew the immigrants into the western part of the province. Among them were those ministers and settlers who were responsible for importing the disruption to Canada. Having left Scotland after 1830, when church-state relations had become contentious there, these people continued to seek an outlet in Canada for their commitment to the non-intrusionist principles they acquired in Scotland[3]. The most radical of these non-intrusionists who advocated total separation from the Church of Scotland, were the twenty-odd ministers sent to Upper Canada by the Glasgow Colonial Society after it was founded in 1826. Only five out of the sixteen society appointees, who still resided in Upper Canada, retained their connection with the Church of Scotland after 1844. And significantly enough, four out of five were stationed in the eastern districts[4].

None of the conditions --- whether state intrusion in church affairs, patronage, or jurisdictional conflict--- which gave rise to the Disruption of 1843 in Scotland existed in Canada. Though the Imperial government had supported the United Synod and the Synod of Canada financially and had conceded one-third of the income from Clergy Reserves sales to the Kirk in 1840, it never, at any time, interfered in the internal affairs of the two Presbyterian bodies. Patronage was not a part of the constititional framework of either Synod. From the very beginning, local congregations of the Presbyterian churches in the Canadas had been free to call the minister of their own choice. Indeed, in view of its own trouble-free relations with the state, there was no reason why the Synod of Canada should not attempt to bolster as it did the sagging fortunes of the Free Church party in Scotland by conveying the resolutions of sympathy and support of the years 1841 to 1843[5].

Considering the emotional commitment of its members to non-intrusionist principles it was only a matter of time before the Free Church party would find alternative justification for severing all connections with the Church of Scotland. In the absence of any clear-cut violations of church-state principles in Canada, the constitutional connection between the Synod of Canada and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland turned out to be a heaven-sent opportunity for the Free Church party in Canada to make the most capital out of what, from the beginning, was a questionable enterprise. The founding members of the Synod of Canada in 1831 had left to the General Assembly the right to determine the connection which the newly-formed Synod was to have with the Church of Scotland. Two factors, however, were responsible for making this connection a mere legal formality. First the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was reluctant to accept the offered jurisdiction over the Synod of Canada, because it was unwilling to take on the attendant responsibilities which such jurisdiction implied[6]. Secondly, in failing to throw the full weight of its influence behind the Synod of Canada's campaign for an equal share with the Church of England in the Clergy Reserves, the General Assembly forfeited what little direct authority it had left with the Synod of Canada.

The Synod of Canada in 1843, therefore, was in a position to dismiss the issues which had led to the disruption in Scotland on the well-founded grounds that they were totally irrelevant to the Canadian situation. For, in the opinion of Synod, not only had its spiritual jurisdiction never been infringed upon by the state, but its connection with the Kirk "neither implied a spiritual jurisdiction on the part of the Church of Scotland over the Synod of Canada, nor involved the latter in responsibility for any actingsof the former."[7]

Confronted with mounting evidence which indicated that total separation from the Church of Scotland would not get the unanimous support of the Synod of Canada, the Free Church party planned to sever their connection with the Synod of Canada instead. Maintaining the constitutional connection with the Church of Scotland - no matter how tenuous it turned out to be - in their opinion contradicted their profession of and their adherence to the cause of non-intrusion. The taint which this left on their own moral self-esteem, the supporters of the Free Church sought to remove at all cost.

Resorting to such a drastic course of action, however, made the task of justification that much more difficult. Not only was the need for it greater since schism was not to be taken lightly at any time, but the weakness of its case for total separation from the Church of Scotland overseas had already been fully exposed. Under these circumstances, the rationale for the planned schism was made to rest solely on guilt by association and on possible future dangers to the independence of the Canadian Church that such a constitutional connec--tion with the Church of Scotland was thought to entail. Retaining the phrase "in connection with the Church of Scotland as part of the legal designation of the Synod of Canada was, in the opinion of the non-intrusionists, tantamount to condoning the principles which the residuary party in Scotland stood for. Furthermore, the fact that local congregations of the Kirk in Canada could legally call ministers from the established Church of Scotland might, so they argued, lead to a watering-down of non-intrusionist principles in the future.[8]

Few of these Scottish immigrants who were willing to sacrifice church unity for doctrinal purity, chose to remain in the eastern parts of Upper Canada at all. Those who decided to stay nevertheless did so for two reasons. They preferred to take up previously occupied

land in the townships north of Perth to the demanding task of clearing virgin lands in the western districts of the province.[9] Or they settled in areas situated near the main communication routes such as Bytown, Prescott, Brockville, Gananoque, Kingston,and Napanee where vocations other than farming could be more easily pursued and where travelling did not present any major difficulties. Thus the success of the Free Church movement in eastern Upper Canada was largely limited to areas whose proximity to the main transportation routes tended to alter more rapidly the composition of their resident population.

In contrast to that of the western region, the features that were to distinguish Presbyterianism in eastern Upper Canada for the next thirty years had clearly emerged by 1830. It resembled the established Church of Scotland in practically every detail of faith and practice. The Scottish Highlanders and Scots-Irish who settled in the eastern region during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were mainly responsible for the virtual transplantation of the Old Kirk into the frontier environment of their newly-adopted country. They appeared in eastern Upper Canada in two groups. One included the United Empire Loyalists and the Highlanders from Scotland who settled in the eastern districts in the wake of the Revolution during the last years of the eighteenth and the first decade of the nineteenth centuries. The discharged military personnel from the War of 1812 and those immigrants of Scottish and Scots-Irish stock, who, with the encouragement of the British government, established themselves in eastern Upper Canada subsequent to the War of 1812, constituted the second group.

Important as the numerical contribution of the United Empire Loyalists and the veterans of the War f 1812 was to the growth of the Presbyterian churches in the eastern districts, their greater influence was qualitative. They carried a weight in the Presbyterian councils of Upper Canada that was far out of proportion to their numerical strength. The standing which this group, as Loyalist refugees and war veterans of 1812, had in the community and with the British Government accounts for their ascendancy not only in Presbyterian courts but also in the political and social life of eastern Upper Canada. Fortunes made in banking, in lumber and flour milling, in canal building and, for the greatest part, in the carrying trade further added to their social, political and ecclesiastical prominence. Represented within their

ranks were the most prosperous merchants from virtually all the more important urban and agricultural settlements of the eastern districts.

William Morris is the most outstanding representative of this group. Like Archdeacon Strachan, the Boultons and other members of the Family Compact, Morris, who with his father's family had emigrated from Scotland to Elizabethtown, Upper Canada in 1801, was not of United Empire Loyalist stock. Like them also, Morris' active involvement in the War of 1812, in his case as a militia officer, confirmed and strengthened already firmly-held Tory and anti-American prejudices. Before the war, he had helped his father, Alexander Morris, to establish a mercantile business in Elizabethtown, later known as Brockville. In 1816, he left the then flourishing family business to his elder brother and established himself as a merchant in the newly-founded military settlement of Perth where he soon became known as "the richest man in the settlement."[10] In addition to his own mercantile venture, he held a part-interest in his father's business and owned extensive tracts of land in Lanark county and in western Upper Canada.[11]

In the early 1820's, largely because the Kirk was not represented locally, Morris joined the Rev. William Bell's Secessionist Presbyterian Church in Perth. His influence and that of other prominent Scottish merchants in Perth was instrumental in the founding of St. Andrew's Presbyterian church and in the calling of the Rev. T.C. Wilson, a Church of Scotland minister in 1830. While Morris and his other fellow merchants had always been predisposed to the Kirk, a falling-out with Bell, who had openly criticized this merchant clique for their sharp business practises, for their intemperance, and for other picadillos of a more embarrassing nature, accounts for their rather sudden partiality to the Church of Scotland at the time. As a member of the Church of Scotland, Morris had an active career as trustee of St. Andrew's, as frequent representative to Synod, as envoy of the Church of Scotland to the Imperial government in 1837 and as first chairman of the Board of Trustees of Queen's University.

Other factors, however, besides Loyalist descent, active service in the War of 1812 and business success, determined that the mantle of leadership in both political and Presbyterian church affairs should fall on the shoulders of Morris and others like him. Most important of these was the Church of Scotland's need of political means for the realization of its most cherished claims and objectives in Upper Canada. The lack

of a politically influential voice to represent the interests of the Church of Scotland thus served to confirm a natural tendency among this group to seek political office. Moreover, the great number of Presbyterian and generally conservatively-minded settlers in the eastern region afforded enough assurance of political success at the outset to make them want to realize their ambitions of leadership --- ambitions which the inexperience of their more recently arrived brethren also fostered in a lesser way.

To use Morris' career as an example once more, he owed his start in politics and his continued election as M.L.A. for Lanark county from 1820 to 1836 to the loyal support of Scottish Presbyterians. His growing political influence with the Family Compact which was signified in his appointment as member of the Legislative Council of Upper Canada in 1836 led to his emergence as chief-spokesman for the Church of Scotland in the controversy over the disposition of the Clergy Reserves. Moreover, it was Morris' influence which contributed considerably to make the negotiations for the charter of Queen's College a success[12] This general pattern of Loyalist or War of 1812 background followed by business success, social prominence and growing influence in political and ecclesiastical affairs more or less repeats itself in the life of such other prominent Presbyterians as the McMartins of Martintown and later Renfrew, the Dicksons of Pakenham, the McKays of Bytown, the Mcleans of Cornwall, and the Mowats of Kingston.

Common background accounts for the relative uniformity in political and ecclesiastical concern that existed between the greater part of the Church of Scotland's congregations and its lay leadership. In any case, the influence which the lay-elite was able to exercise over the Kirk's courts, fortified as it was by the services they rendered to the church, usually proved too powerful to overcome for the occasional opposition that happened to develop. Thus the face of the Church of Scotland in eastern Ontario largely took on the distinctive political and ecclesiastical features of its lay elite.

That the lay elite and most of the ministers in eastern Upper Canada refused to countenance the Free Church movement was, in the first place, due to the fact that they had left Scotland before 1830.

The Church of Scotland under whose religious supervision they had grown up was relatively free of such divisive issues as patronage and state intrusion. Lacking the emotional commitment to the Free Church cause that some of their more recently arrived brethren displayed, the Presbyterians of the eastern districts were better able to consider the issues in perspective. Acknowledgement and support of the Free Church party in Scotland, in their opinion, did not justify the splitting of the Synod of Canada whose affairs had always been conducted according to the most orthodox church-state principles. The residuary party with good reason therefore likened the dissenters' withdrawal from the Synod of Canada to the action of a person who instead of making "every effort to extinguish the flames when a neighbour's house is on fire", kindles his "own in order to show how much" sympathy he "feels for his own neighbour."

While the residuaries considered such sympathy to be "as novel as it was irrational" and generally could see little wisdom in the action of the dissenters in Canada, they regarded the disruption of 1843 in Scotland as equally unjustifiable. To be sure, in as much as the case of the Free Church party in Scotland was based on genuine grievances, it was according to residuaries in Canada worthy of support and encouragement. Yet dangerous as the leading apologists for the Kirk considered state intrusion to be to the independence and spiritual integrity of the church, it did not in their opinion warrant schism. On Christian grounds, therefore, reform from within the church was to be preferred over schism.[13]

A second feature of Presbyterianism in eastern Ontario which was responsible for the failure of the Free Church movement was its Tory outlook. In its political ramifications this penchant for Toryism was based on strong traditions of loyalty to the British crown and on a firm conviction of the incomparable worth of British institutions and laws. In as much as such political views were an expression of the Scottish nationalism of the lay-elite and members of the Kirk in the eastern districts, a strong desire for Scottish institutions --- with the established Church of Scotland foremost on their list --- constituted an additional component of their Toryism. The establishment of the Church of Scotland and the achievement of equal status with the Church of England in Upper Canada was thus important for religious reasons to be sure, but equally, if not more so, for reasons of national heritage

and constitutional right. John Mowat's letter of exhortation to William Morris, calling for renewed agitation in defence of the Church of Scotland's rights, points this out.

> The honour of our country and the moral and religious interests of our countrymen will, I think, plead my excuse with you for the trouble I am to give you in the perusal of this letter. A birthright has been transmitted to us which we must endeavour to leave to our descendants unimpaired.[14]

That the moral and religious interests of Scottish settlers in Upper Canada be satisfied was, in the opinion of most Presbyterians in the eastern districts in the interest of the government. In a memorial to the Earl of Bathurst, the request for an increase in government subsidies is justified by the additional Presbyterian settlers which it would enable the Kirk to bring under its religious supervision. The lack of Church of Scotland institutions, according to the memorialists, was "fraught with danger" both from a moral and political point of view. Not only would it undermine the moral fibre of society but in the opinion of the memorialists, the "great majority of the Protestant population in the British Provinces of Presbyterian persuasion", being "wholly destitute of religious instructions and ordinances", would of necessity "become attached to the various sectaries who resort among them from all parts of the United States." The dissemination of "political disaffection with religious fanaticism" would be "the necessary effect" should the British government be so short-sighted as to refuse to increase the financial subsidy granted annually to the Church of Scotland in the Canadas.[15]

The church-state doctrine expressed in the memorial reflects a conviction basic to the brand of Toryism prevalent in British North America during the first half of the 19th century---that church and state are mutually dependent on each other. Hence its exploitation by the lay elite of the Kirk in the interest of promoting the Synod of Canada's claim for equal status with the Church of England in Upper Canada. Briefly summarized, the Tory conception of the relation--ship between church and state was based on the scriptural teaching that the state was divinely ordained to safeguard society from the grossest contrivance of sin, namely anarchy. Thrown on its own resources, however, the state, according to traditional Tory doctrine, could not of itself survive. Besides the protection which the state affords, additional inducements were needed to ensure the practice of

good citizenship. And these, in the Tory scheme of things, could only be supplied by the Christian religion. In the Christian teaching of the individual's accountability to God and his need to be obedient to the state lay the justification for the principle of church establishment. At this point the church-state principle of the Presbyterians in the Canada's begin to take on a distinctly Scottish flavour. Mutual dependence--- of the church on state support and of the state on the church's teaching---must not be allowed to encroach on the jurisdiction intrinsic to each other's existence. According to the Presbyterians, the person who paid the piper in this case would not be allowed to call the tune.

As far as their religious outlook was concerned, the standards of faith and practice which the Presbyterians of eastern Upper Canada desired to measure up to were generally those suggested by a widely-held notion of respectability. Its meaning more often than not was defined in a negative sense by way of criticizing the sectarian religious manifestations which Upper Canada shared with all frontier societies. Professional status for ministers, authoritarian church government, and adherence to confessions and set doctrinal standards were criteria essential to their notion of respectability. This fact can easily be substantiated by the Church of Scotland's frequent denunciations of "ignorant vagrants" not only because they had "assumed the ministerial office" on "their own authority" but also for their "attempt to deceive the people and inculcate their own peculiar political and religious dogmas as the doctrine of the blessed gospel.[16]

Furthermore, and this only serves to indicate how accomodating their Christianity had become to the status quo, the standards of respectability subscribed to by the Presbyterians in the eastern districts also included the ethnic, constitutional and political prepossessions of Toryism discussed above. The fact that such "vagrants" came from the United States was as objectionable to the Presbyterians as their lack of education and principles. Their United States origin by implication made them automatically suspect in the eyes of their critics of transgressing most, if not all, of the values which such set standards of respectability demanded.

Finally, the inclination towards elitism, more or less implicit in the Tory outlook described above, was incorporated into the require--ment for respectability. It was a practice widely adhered to by

Presbyterians in eastern Ontario, that, where possible, only those persons should be appointed to fill the office of minister, who by birth and education were qualified for it. Consequently, to put the Kirk's clergy 'on a more respectable footing", as people like William Morris were constantly aiming to do,[17] they found it necessary for the Church of Scotland to achieve co-establishment with the Church of England in Upper Canada. Barring the achievement of establishment, a substantial increase in the financial support given annually by the government to the Church of Scotland in the Canadas was the minimum which a "respectable ministry" was thought to require. Whatever the government finally decided to do in the way of support, it was needed, in the opinion of the leading Presbyterians, to sustain a living standard for ministers that their social background, their ability and educational qualifications and the importance of their office demanded, to provide an adequate return on the high financial investment in and to offset the high cost of a theological education.[18]

Thus circumscribed by a Tory outlook, the Church of Scotland in eastern Ontario was guilty of a parochialism of the worst kind, a parochialism that was particularly insidious because it appeared in the guise of Christianity. Like a cancerous growth on the body ecclesiastic, it robbed the Church of Scotland in eastern Upper Canada, and in the whole province for that matter, of the strength and vitality necessary for the discharge of its religious task.

The achievement of formal union between the Church of Scotland and the Secessionist United Synod, the only other Presbyterian body in eastern Ontario, was one such task which the Kirk's narrow and ingrown outlook delayed for eight years, until it was finally consummated in 1840. There was little reason for such a delay. Accord on basic issues such as church-state relations and standards of faith and practise had never been lacking between the two bodies.[19] The prospect of church association with Dutch and especially with American members of the United Synod, however, was particularly repulsive to the lay elite committed as it was to Scottish values and Tory principles. Moreover, the stigma of disloyalty, republicanism and sectarianism which was attached to American Presbyterianism, repugnant enough in itself, tended in addition to counteract the efforts of the Kirk's lay leaders to ingratiate themselves with Imperial Government on whom the Church of Scotland's prospects for improved status in the Canadas

depended.[20]

The aim of the clerical and lay leadership of the Church of Scotland in eastern Upper Canada was to make society conform to a pattern which ostensibly a Christian ethic demanded, but which was largely inspired by the social and political conservatism prevalent in England during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The kingdom of God thus envisaged was one that stood revealed in their social and political preconceptions. Its establishment involved trading the Gospel in exchange for a voice and a place in the trans--actions of society's power structure --- in this case with the obvious intent of conserving Scottish and Tory values and institutions within it, and of preserving the social inequalities which made its existence possible in the first place. Blurring the antithesis in this manner between the kingdom of God and its earthly counterpart and between the aims and methods characteristic of each, took the edge off the Gospel they preached and reduced their commitment to it.

Nowhere was this lack of commitment more clearly revealed than in the tendency of the Kirk in eastern Upper Canada to rely on means not normally associated with the church for the discharge of its Christian responsibilities. For its financial resources the Church of Scotland in the eastern districts became increasingly dependent on the political influence of its lay elite and on government support towards the procurement of which the former was largely directed. The conviction of the leaders of the Synod of Canada in the eastern regions of the province, that the contribution which the church made to society merited government support, constitutes the basis of their reliance on outside financial assistance. To sustain the Kirk's activities and even to escape from the painful sacrifices which a frontier church demands from its adherents, the Presbyterians in eastern Upper Canada were not above reminding the Imperial government of the sacrifices that a good number of them had made as Loyalists by coming to Canada in the first place.[21]

The effect of such dependent status was that the leaders of the Synod of Canada were open to occasional suggestions from the Imperial government, not always at a spiritual sacrifice to their church. The organic union achieved between the Synod of Canada and the United Synod of Upper Canada in 1840 is a good case in point. Where the union negotiations that had been carried on intermittently during the 1820's

between the two Synods failed, Sir George Murray's dispatch of August 1, 1830 was eventually successful. Addressed to Sir John Colbourne, then Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, it promised to increase and regularize the Imperial government's grants to the Presbyterians in Upper Canada on the condition that they unite into one body. The lay elite of eastern Upper Canada, who never lacked Christian zeal or virtue when it was a matter of financial profit, took the hint.[22]

The ever-present need for additional financial resources, which their conception of the church's role demanded, moreover, kept the leaders of the Church of Scotland from supporting the Free Church proposal of 1844 to sever all connections between the Synod of Canada and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Indigenization of the Canadian church would, in the opinion of the residuaries, jeopardize its claim to its temporal possessions and to a share of the Clergy Reserves which the Synod of Canada could only legally exercize "in connection with the Church of Scotland." This loss the residuaries were by no means willing to risk. They sought to retain their connection with the Church of Scotland overseas by defining it as one of "ministerial and church communion in the fullest sense."[23]

The leadership of the Church of Scotland in eastern Upper Canada once again played a leading role in thus sustaining the connection between the Synod of Canada and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As early as 1843, the Presbytery of Bathurst declared its firm attachment to the residuaries in Scotland.[24] Their preference for things Scottish was too strong to permit the severing of relations with the Church of Scotland overseas. Then too, the Presbyterians in eastern Upper Canada had more at stake in the way of temporal possess--ions than the more recently established Free Church party. But decisive as their unwillingness to risk the loss of the temporalities and their claim to the Clergy Reserves was in persuading the Kirk's lay leaders to maintain "ministerial and church communion" with the General Assembly, the fact that the Church of Scotland in eastern Upper Canada could not afford such a loss was the consideration which carried most weight with them.

Given the lack of financial support for which their want of commitment was to blame, and the straightened financial circumstances in which the Synod of Canada in eastern Upper Canada found itself by

reason of its environment, there was no way left for the lay elite to support the Free Church proposal of total separation from the parent Church of Scotland. The ability of the Kirk to satisfy the religious needs of its own members not to speak of those of different background residing in the eastern region, largely depended on the Clergy Reserve income and on assistance that the Church of Scotland might contribute to its colonial offspring. The thin settlement in many areas of Carleton, Lanark, and Frontenac counties --- an unfortu--nate consequence of the poor soil in those areas --- simply could not, without outside financial assistance, support the religious institutions which their inflexible high church outlook demanded. The upshot of deteriorating commitment and lack of financial resources was the failure of the Synod of Canada to satisfy the demand for Presbyterian institutions which existed at Carleton Place and in the townships like Mountain, Oxford and McNab. The people in these areas were forced to look to the Free Church to supply their want.[25]

The dangers inherent in compromising the Church's position as a religious institution, in the case of the Kirk in eastern Ontario, emerged in its slow rate of growth. Not only did the ghetto-outlook of the leading Presbyterians in the area cause a decline in the kind of Christian commitment it takes to gain new adherents, but it also acted as a barrier excluding those people who subscribed to a different set of values from their own. The leading representatives of the Synod of Canada in the eastern districts, in the opinion of the dissenters of 1844, restricted the outreach of the church because they sought to impose a political and ecclesiastical value system on its adherents with which the Free Church supporters not only had no sympathy, but which they believed made the Gospel of little or no effect. The fact that the "character" of the Kirk in eastern Upper Canada was "national and exclusive" made it the "garden nursery of a lifeless moderatism" from which the Free Church party found it necessary to disassociate themselves.[26] The Disruption of 1844, seen in this context, was an attempt by the Free Church party to put the essence of the Gospel --- Christ's judgement of the individual and society --- back into the Presbyterianism of Upper Canada. The problem that they found insurmountable was how to accomplish this short of schism.

Compared to the outlook of the residuaries, that of the Free Church movement in Canada was less dominated by values which tend to compromise the spiritual function of the church. The secular ideals that it did hold proved less harmful to them because they reflected values which if not currently popular, were certainly moving in that direction. Politically, the Free Church movement was associated with the liberalism that inspired the 1832 Reform Bill in England.[27] For instance John Macdonald, the most prominent member of the Church of Scotland in Gananoque, which became the centre of the Free Church move-ment in eastern Upper Canada, was a member of the Reform party.[28] Just as it helped to bring the question of patronage and of the right to appoint ministers to a head in Scotland, the liberalism of the Free Church party speeded up the process of disruption in Canada. Under the banner of democratic liberalism, the Free Church advocates were able to challenge effectively the control that the conservatively minded leaders of the Kirk in eastern Ontario exercized over the Synod of Canada. Tied in their loyalties to institutions whose representative character they considered to be of least significance to the preservation of order and stability in society, the Kirk's leaders feared that the democratic character of liberalism would undermine the stability of the Kirk in the first place --- "the most sacred, time-honoured and valuable institution of the Empire"--- and of the political institutions of Canada in the second place.[29]

The leaders of the Church of Scotland in the eastern districts had every reason to be apprehensive about the growing strength of liberalism. An examination of the controversy over the legal disposition of the Synod of Canada's temporalities, which divided the church for the first time on a pattern similar to the one eventually taken by the disruption, indicates this on the ecclesiastical side. On the political side, the influence of the Reform party had been increasingly felt in the elections of the 1830's and 1840's. This was the case not only in the western but also in the eastern part of the province, the traditional stronghold of conservatism in Upper Canada. To make matters worse, the Reform party had inundated the ranks of the Church of Scotland in eastern Ontario in the person of Malcolm Cameron, member and occasional elder of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Perth and editor-owner of the Perth Courier. The growing support for the Reform party due to the turn-over of

settlers in townships adjacent to Perth, made possible his election as M.L.A. for Lanark county along with William Morris in 1836,[30] Most Presbyterians in the eastern part of the province and particularly the leaders among them were, therefore, inclined to share the concern expressed by the Rev. T.C. Wilson, Minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Perth, that the Free Church party would foster "the fearful tendency" in both church and state "towards democracy".[31]

The concern of the Free Church for the spiritual welfare was more universal than that of the residuaries for the simple reason that their political orientation proved to be less exclusive than that of the Synod of Canada after 1844. Their Christian commitment and zeal, however, also had a religious basis. Within their Christian outlook, the more sectarian manifestations of Christianity occupied a central place. The congregations in eastern Upper Canada who tended to emphasize the subjective rather than the objective manifestations of Christianity without exception joined the Free Church in 1844 or after. Of these, the congregations at Brockville and Prescott, the first ones to break away from the Synod of Canada, had been connected with the United Synod of Upper Canada prior to 1840.

The ethnic origins of the supporters of the Free Church in eastern Ontario is of even greater significance to an understanding of the disruption than the secessionist background of some of the dissenters. Of the five congregations in eastern Ontario, that unanimously decided to join the Free Church in 1844, four of them were made up of pre-dominantly Ulster-Irish rather than Scottish members and all four included a significantly larger number of Englishmen and Americans than the residuary congregations. The history of Presbyterianism in eastern Ontario accordingly corroborates the findings of Loetscher's study of Presbyterianism in the United States, namely, that Irish, English and American brands of Presbyterianism have traditionally constituted a low-church party within the pale of Reformed Christianity.[32]

The devotion of the Free Church movement in the eastern districts to the low-church ideals of spontaneity, vital impulse, and adaptability is substantiated by the history of the Brockville and Prescott congregations. Both congregations did not let the inferior educational and professional qualifications of the Revs. William Smart and Robert Boyd stand in the way of supplying a need of long standing for someone

to administer the means of grace to them. Smart, who came to Brockville in 1811, had been brought up as a Secessionist Presbyterian. He received his theological education at the Congregationalist Seminary of Gosport in Hampshire, England. Boyd, a native of Antrim, Ireland, who came to Prescott in 1820, had never attended a seminary but was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena after studying at Glasgow College in Ireland.[33]

Perhaps it was their lack of professional training which enabled both Smart and Boyd to adapt themselves more easily to the frontier conditions of Upper Canada than the ministers of the Church of Scotland. They early worked out a schedule for the periodic visitation of congregations unable to support a minister, a practice which the Church of Scotland did not institute until 1837.[34] Smart on his own adopted some of the successful methods of American revivalist practitioners such as the protracted meetings he held in his church during the month of December in 1832.[35] Both Smart and Boyd were convinced that the success of Presbyterianism solely depended on the individual Presbyterians, on how they adapted to their new environment and not on outside assistance. They played an active role, therefore, in establish-ing the United Presbytery of Upper Canada, which was later reconstituted as the United Synod of Upper Canada, as an indegenous and autonomous Canadian Church free from the restrictive influences of overseas connections.[36]

Their preference for Christian values of a more sectarian type also emerged in their relationship with the Synod of Canada. Union negotiations between the United Synod and the Synod of Canada were prolonged by their demands, eventually granted, that congregations should continue to be free to call Secessionist ministers after the achievement of union. Soon after union had been consummated, they began to lose patience with their fellow Church of Scotland ministers who, despite the shortage of ministers, kept insisting that incoming clergymen meet professional standards to the letter.[37] In the final analysis both Smart and Boyd and the congregations they represented joined the Free Church because they expected to find a communion of evangelical interest there. The fact that it was possible for them to continue to receive their government allowance independent of the Synod of Canada no doubt facilitated their decision to sever their connections with the Kirk.[38]

In as much as the geographical pattern of disruption in Ontario represented the divergent set of values described above, it also had a distinct social dimension. The rigidly narrow outlook of the Church of Scotland in Upper Canada, which was dedicated to the preservation of the status quo, had a definite relationship with the upper-class status of the lay elite which, to a large extent, controlled its affairs. This was especially the case in eastern Upper Canada. Commenting on the disruption, the Methodist-oriented Kingston Herald of July, 1844, observed that 'the more wealthy here, as elsewhere, generally sided with the Residuaries."[39] Conversely, its flexibility and the more universal appeal of its Christian values, its championing of new ideas and of reform within the Church of Scotland in the Canadas indicates a mobility within the Free Church party which is generally associated with middle class status. In Bytown for instance, the Free Church movement was led by Thomas Wardrope, who came to Upper Canada as a teacher in 1833 and by such small-time merchants as J. Durie and J. Forgie as well as by Alexander Gray a local watchmaker.[40] The census of 1848 moreover indicates that the membership of the Free Church congregations of Prescott, Brockville and Gananoque were predominantly middle class background.[41]

Being largely a middle-class movement, the Free Church adherents were concentrated in the urban areas of eastern Ontario, or at least in places which were subject to the urbanizing process. In the rural communities of the interior, where the Church of Scotland had a large following, people were not inclined to resent the influence of prominent members of the community under whose leadership they had immigrated and settled in their new surroundings, on whom they often depended economically and whose political and ecclesiastical views they shared.

The divergent set of values between the residuaries and the dissenters, the social basis and the place of influence and power which the lay elite of eastern Upper Canada occupied in the Kirk's affairs for the first time emerged simultaneously in the controversy over the Temporalities Act of 1843. The primary purpose of the Act was to give the higher courts of the Church of Scotland greater control over its temporal possessions and to make their administration uniform throughout the Province of Canada. Seven members were empowered by the Act to

manage the local temporalities. Of these, three each were to be elected by the pew-holders and the elders respectively, while the local minister was the seventh member.[42]

That the need for a uniform administration of the Kirk's temporalities should occasion controversy is largely the fault of the system by which the local temporalities were administered in the Canadas. It placed the control of the temporal possessions solely in the hands of the trustees. Since wealth and status in the local community, rather than church membership, which would have placed the temporalities under the spiritual supervision of the church, was the prerequisite for trusteeship, the trustees had the means at their disposal to control the decision-making process at the congregational level if they chose to use them. That the controversy should originate in eastern Ontario, as it did, is another consequence of the existing arrangement for the disposition of the temporalities. The concentra--tion of the Kirk's lay elite in eastern Ontario, and their tendency to control the affairs of their local congregation by means of the office of trustee, was bound to lead to conflict. Their tendency to impose their narrow views on the Church of Scotland enhanced this likelihood considerably. The major incidents of Perth in 1835 and of Ramsay in 1842 were the two examples of such conflicts. In both cases the trustees successfully imposed their will on the majority of the congregation including the minister.

In the Perth case, trustees representing the wealthiest members of St. Andrew's under the leadership of William Morris and Dr. Wilson tried to remove the local minister, Rev. T.C. Wilson who had the confidence of the congregation. Wilson had condemned in his sermons the crass materialism of the prominent church members and the traffick--ing in alcohol which some of them as local merchants were involved in. He had also interfered in the management of pews, a matter that thel trustees considered to be solely within their jurisdiction. Finally, in an attempt to reduce the influence of the prominent church members, which they commanded in virtue of their trusteeship, Wilson had tried to persuade the congregation of St. Andrew's to make church membership a necessary condition for trusteeship. The Ramsay dispute of 1842 was similar in nature to the one in Perth. The wealthy trustees led by William Wylie, formerly a merchant of Perth, rejected the Rev. T. McKidd, who had been called to serve as the local minister by a

majority of the congregation.[43] Both cases are evidence of the latent hostility in the Presbyterian congregations of eastern Ontario towards the lay elite and the desire of the local ministers to curb the power of the prominent church members.

The conflicting interests and objectives of three distinct groups concerning the temporal possessions of the Church of Scotland constitu--ted the fuel which fed the Temporalities controversy. The first group, the lay leadership of the Church of Scotland was headed by the brother-combination of William and James Morris and their business associate and confidante, F.A. Harper of Kingston.[44] They tried to quash the act because it threatened to terminate the control which they exercized over the temporalities. To defeat the Act they willingly joined forces with the Free Church party despite the differences in political and ecclesiastical viewpoint which existed between them.

The congregations in which supporters of the second interest group predominated either joined the Free Church in 1844 like those in Pres Prescott, Brockville and in Gananoque, or they gave rise to a Free Church movement after 1845 as in Perth, in Beckwith, in Ramsay, in South Gower, in Oxford and in Mountain.[45] That the adherents of this second group tended to sympathize and to identify with the Free Church movement is also indicated by the reasons which they gave for opposing the Temporalities Act. Like the lay leaders of the Kirk in eastern Upper Canada they condemned the Act because it placed the control of the temporalities in the hands of the clergy. Their opposition was further motivated by convictions which were not shared by the Kirk's prominent lay leaders but which the Temporalities Act nevertheless had violated. In the opinion of the Rev. Henry Gordon of Gananoque, the Act had not eliminated those very "secular tendencies" introduced into the church by these prominent lay members, "who from national feelings and associations, were using their influence and means to promote the extension of the Church of Scotland in the Province."[46] The Act's stipulation that British citizenship be made a requirement for membership and office-holding in the Church of Scotland only served to confirm the above conviction. The Kirk's clergy in eastern Ontario, because they dreaded "spiritual democracy as the worst system of tyranny", were equally guilty, according to the supporters of the Free Church, of turning the Church of Scotland "to a beautiful variety of purposes, political or otherwise."[47] They hoped to deprive the clerical and lay

leadership of the Kirk of much of its power and thereby rid the Synod of Canada of its exclusive parochialism.

The best means of accomplishing this, in the opinion of the non-intrusionists, was to entrust the temporalities to ordained deacons who had to be communicant members of the church and be elected by a majority of the congregation to qualify for the office. Not only would such an arrangement do away with minority rule of a select few, but, in the opinion of the Free church adherents, it would subject the actions of the persons in charge of the temporalities to the scrutiny of the church courts.[48] The relationship between the liberalism and non-intrusionism of the Free Church movement, which sought both to subject the Church courts to the will of the people and to maintain Christ's spiritual headship over the church, including its temporal possessions, thus was one of mutual support.

There were yet other reasons for the Free Church opposition to the Temporalities Act. The attempt to regulate the property of the Church of Scotland by an act of the legislature was open to the charge of Erastianism. Further, the Act proposed to make permanent what, in the opinion of the Free Church party, was an undesirable connection with the residuary party in Scotland. Finally, they questioned the legality of the Act because it had not been ratified by the congrega--tions of the Church of Scotland in Canada.[49]

The Presbyterian clergy of eastern Upper Canada, who wished to reduce the influence of the prominent lay leaders without endorsing the democratic principles of the Free Church party, constituted the third group in the controversy. They tried to steer a middle course between the two sides without sacrificing their own convictions as to who was legally entitled to control the temporal and spiritual affairs of the church. Persuaded as they were that ministers have been commissioned "from on high, and not by the will of the people" to exercize full authority over all aspects of the church, these clergy--men mainly from eastern Upper Canada, who dominated the Committee of Synod which drew up the terms of the Act, placed the temporalities under clergy control.[50]

The compromise solution which they attempted to achieve fooled no one, least of all the lay elite and the Free Church party, because it left the temporalities under their control. The combined opposition of the latter, which forced Synod to abandon the Act, constituted a

major defeat for the likes of Rev. T.C. Wilson and Rev. P. Campbell, who had sought to extricate their fellow-ministers from the horns of a dilemma --- how to curtail the excessive influence of the lay elite without descending to the degrading depth of "spiritual democracy".

In conclusion, the settlement pattern of Ontario must be held responsible for the lack of success which the Free Church movement enjoyed in the eastern districts of the province, Scottish nationals and other settlers imposed the conservative values in politics and religion on the Synod of Canada that had been tried by fire and the sword in the American Revolutionary War, the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812, and had not been found wanting. Tied to the conservative values of a passing age, the Kirk in Upper Canada was not equipped to meet the challenges of a changing society. In eastern Ontario, few challenges had to be met because society there changed very little after 1830. Life and the constant adjustment which it requires by-passed the Church of Scotland in the eastern areas simply because it by-passed eastern Upper Canada.

Those Scottish immigrants who brought with them to western Upper Canada their middle class values --- their Liberal orientation in politics and their evangelical outlook --- were responsible for injecting new vitality, flexibility and aggressiveness into the Synod of Canada. Challenging the political and ecclesiastical dominance of the upper class lay elite on the basis of wealth acquired by exploit--ing the new economic possibliities of a moving frontier, they saw the need for broadening the appeal of the Synod of Canada and for giving its lay membership a greater voice in the affairs of Synod.

The centre of gravity for this rising middle-class was Toronto, which was rapidly establishing itself as the dominant metropolitan centre in Upper Canada. The leading Free Church advocates like Peter Brown, the father of George Brown, and editor of the Banner, which was the self-appointed organ of the Free Church party, demanded a westward shift of power, to bring its focus nearer to the newer, richer settle--ments of western Ontario where the new staple wheat provided an economic basis for a changing society. The increasing frequency with which ministers from western Canada were chosen as moderators of the Church of Scotland and the marked tendency of the Church of Scotland during the 1830's to hold its synodical gatherings in or near Toronto indicates the growing influence of western Upper Canada and particularly of Toronto in

the affairs of the Synod of Canada. It is thus more than a mere coincidence that the Disruption occurred in 1844, the same year the seat of government was moved from Kingston to Montreal despite the efforts of the prominent lay Presbyterians to prevent the move. The Disruption of 1844 thus marked the declining importance of Kingston as a centre of Presbyterianism. It corresponds to Kingston's diminishing role in the economic and political life of the province which received its final confirmation in the loss of the seat of government.

Notes

1. For the sake of convenience and to avoid confusion "Upper Canada" is used to denote Canada West after the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841.

2. Three out of a total of twenty-five ministers in eastern Upper Canada joined the Free Church, while twenty out of a total of forty-two ministers in western Upper Canada joined the Free Church in 1844. Thus out of a total of twenty-three ministers who joined the Free Church, only three came from eastern while twenty came from western Upper Canada. See Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in Connection with the Church of Scotland. September 18-24, 1844

3. Ian S. Rennie, "The Free Church and the Relations of Church and State in Canada, 1844-1854" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Dept. of History, University of Toronto), pp. 38-9.

4. The Glasgow Colonial Society appointees who remained loyal to the Church of Scotland during and after the Disruption of 1844 were George Romanes of Smith Falls, P.C. Campbell formerly of Brockville and Professor of Classics at Queens University, John Smith of Beckwith township, Lanark County, John McLaurin of Lochiel township, Glengarry County, and Robert McGill of Niagara.

5. Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in Connection with the Church of Scotland for the years 1841 to 1845.

6. The newly-formed Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in Connection with the Church of Scotland in 1831 expressed their desire "to submit to you the determination of the precise relation which the Synod shall have to your Venerable Body" in a Memorial addressed to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Minutes, June 8-13, 1831. Also see the Declaratory Enactment of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Minutes, August 1-8, 1833.

7. Minutes, 1843.

8. Robert McGill, "Report of the Synod's Committee to negotiate on the Subject of Reunion with the Seceding Brethren", unpublished manuscript, Synod Papers, 1843-1845.

9. Jessie Buchanan Campbell, The Pioneer Pastor. Some Reminiscences of the Life and Labors of the Rev. George Buchanan. (2nd edit. Franklin Pa. Derrick Press, 1905), p. 44

10. William Bell, "History of the Presbyterian Church in Perth" (unpublished manuscript) see Synod Papers, 1818-1835.

11. Alexander Morris Papers.

12. The biographical sketch of William Morris has been compiled from the William Morris Papers, Rev. William Bell's Diaries, the Synod Papers, 1818-1845, and from the following secondary sources: Edward Marion Chadwick, Ontarian Families: Genealogies of United Empire Loyalists and Other Pioneer Families of Upper Canada (Toronto: Rolph,

Smith and Co., 1894), II, 468, Henry Morgan, Sketches of Celebrated Canadians (Quebec: Hunter, Rose and Co., 1862), pp. 429-432.

13. The best exposition of the views of the residuaries is found in the Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in Connection with the Church of Scotland for 1844, and in the Draft of an Answer to the Dissent and Protest of Certain Ministers and Elders Who Have Seceded from the Synod of Canada in Connection with the Church of Scotland (Kingston: Chronicle & Gazette Office, 1844), p. 13 from which the quotations are taken.

14. Letter from John Mowat to William Morris, Kingston, Upper Canada, September 27, 1837.

15. Synod Papers, 1818-1835.

16. Synod Papers. 1818-1835, see "Memorial to His Majesty on the subject of the Clergy Reserves" which was drawn up by a Committee of Synod at Williamstown in September, 1935.

17. Letter from William Morris, Perth, Upper Canada, March 20, 1826.

18. Synod Papers, loc. cit.

19. The Presbytery of the Canadas, constituted on January 8, 1818, the predecessor of the United Presbytery of Upper Canada and the United Synod of Upper Canada, adopted the following motion: "That the doctrines, discipline and worship of the Church of Scotland would be recognized by us." The Rev. William Bell, who had come to Perth in 1817 as an ordained minister of the Secession Presbytery in Edinburgh and who was the originator of the above motion, always defended his right, and that of his fellow ministers "to be considered as belonging to the Church of Scotland in as much as they only dissent from the errors, innovations and abuses that had crept in" to the Church of Scotland. Further the Rev. Henry Leith, sometime minister of the Kirk's congregations at Cornwall and Osnabruck testified before the Select Committee of the British House of Commons in 1827 that there existed no differences between the Secession Church and the Church of Scotland in Upper Canada which would prevent their being united into one church. See Isabel Skelton, A Man Austere: William Bell, Parson and Pioneer (Toronto. Ryerson Press, 1947), p. 188, Presbytery of the Canadas, Correspondence, 1819-1856, Letter from Rev. William Bell to Rev. Archibald Henderson, Perth, Upper Canada, November 13, 1823 William Gregg, History of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada (Toronto. Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Co., 1885), p. 386-7.

20. Letter from William Morris to Rev. Henry Esson, Perth, Upper Canada, December 18, 1827. I have always insisted on the settlement of our clergy, not as a boon or favour, but as a Constitutional and National claim of right, take American Presbyterians into your connexion now and the Ministers will no longer be binding."

21. The Synod of Canada used the following opening statement to preface their demand for an increase in the annual financial subsidy of the British government: "That your Memorialists have observed with peculiar satisfaction, that the loyalty and respect for the institution of the Empire, which have eminently distinguished Your Majesty's Subjects, members of the Church of Scotland in their native land, have suffered no diminution in this the land of their adoption, and that amidst many attempts by seditious and designing men to contaminate their principles they have remained faithful to their King and true to their country." Synod Papers, loc. cit.

22. Synod Papers, 1818-1835, 1835-1842

23. This is how the Temporalities Act of 1843 defined the Synod of Canada's connection with the Church of Scotland overseas. Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in Connection with the Church of Scotland, Minutes, September 18-24, 1844.

24. Presbytery of Bathurst, Minutes, September 22, 1843.

25. Ibid., February 13, 1832; January 9, 1833; May 10, 1843.

26. Kingston Herald, August 27, 1844.

27. Rennie, op. cit., p. 11.

28. T.W.H. Leavitt, History of Leeds and Grenville Counties, 1749-1879 (Brockville: Recorder Press, 1879), pp. 126-7.

29. British Colonist, August 12, 1843, letter from Rev. P.C. Campbell, Kingston, Canada West.

30. Synod Papers, 1842-1845 W.S. Wallace, The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography (Toronto: Macmillan, 1946) p. 106.

31. The Banner, November 24, 1843.

32. Lefferts A. Loetscher, The Broadening Church: A Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church since 1869 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), p. 1.

33. Gregg, op. cit., p. 191-2, 362.

34. William Smart, "Biography of Rev. William Smart, Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Brockville, 1811-1849", unpublished manuscript, United Church Archives; ---------, Diary of the Minister of Brockville, 1822-1848, unpublished manuscript, United Church Archives, Synod-Papers, 1835-1842.

35. Christian Guardian, January 11, 1832.

36. Skelton, op. cit., p. 184.

37. Presbytery of Bathurst, Minutes, January 12, 1843.

38. Synod Papers, 1839-1842, see terms of union.

39. Kingston Herald, July 30, 1844.

40. Memorial Volume of Jubilee Celebrations of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Knox Church, Ottawa, (Ottawa: Thorburn & Co., 1894), p. 11.

41. Census of Canada 1848.

42. Synod Papers, 1843-1845, copy of the Temporalities Act.

43. Synod Papers, op. cit., 1818-1835, 1843-1845, see Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Commission held at Perth by appointment of Synod on October 21, 1835, and Presbytery of Bathurst Extracts concerning the Ramsay Case, December 11, 1842 and January 11, 1843.

44. Letters from William Morris to F.A. Harper, Perth, Upper Canada, December 27, 1839 and February 12, 1841.

45. Synod Papers, 1839-1842, letter from Rev. Henry Gordon to Professor P.C. Campbell, Kingston, Canada West, March 9, 1842.

46. Ibid.

47. Kingston Chronicle and Gazette, February 14, 1844.

48. Synod Papers, 1839-1842, 1843-1845, letter from Rev. Henry Gordon to Professor P.C. Campbell, Kingston, Canada West, March 9, 1842, and letter of resignation from the Synod of Canada from Rev. Robert Boyd, October 30, 1843.

49. Ibid.

50. Kingston Chronicle and Gazette, February 14, 1844.