

EXPEL THE FAITHLESS FOE:
UPPER AND LOWER CANADIAN CLERGY
DISCOURSE IN THE WAR OF 1812

by

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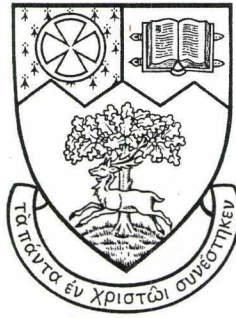
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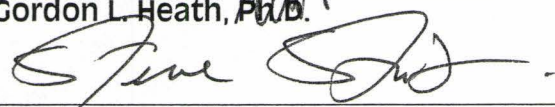
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ABSTRACT

“Expel the Faithless Foe: Upper and Lower Canadian Clergy Discourse in the War of 1812”

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For Anglicans and Presbyterians, the Revolutionary War had proven the “faithless” character of the American nation. The American Methodist focus on individualism, exciting and loud worship, lack of educated clergy, enthusiasm, and perceived adherence to the Republican ideas dominant in the culture of the United States were viewed as antithetical to the more British focus on social responsibility, sober teaching, and adherence to the British king and constitution. With the 1812 declaration of war, the churches with stronger transatlantic connections were presented with powerful proof that their suspicions were based in reality and that the need to expel the faithless national foe of America from British soil coincided with the clerical need to expel the faithless doctrines of the Methodists as well.

Whether critiquing the United States or the frontier religion that was deemed too similar in its teachings and practice, the Anglicans, Presbyterians and—to a lesser extent—Wesleyan Methodists were constructing a more British version of British North American culture in order to combat what they perceived to be the growing threat of faithless, American values. These arguments found their impetus in the mixed composition of colonial inhabitants, the dubious loyalties of the American-born farmers in Upper Canada, and the events of the War of 1812. In order to unite such disparate peoples, the clergy defined and celebrated England’s Christian character to demonstrate to that fragmented and diverse collection of inhabitants the benefits of being loyal subjects of God’s empire rather than foolish citizens of a faithless nation.

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A work of this size and scope, while possessing only one name on the title page, is best understood as the result of a collaborative effort undertaken by people who deserve to be named and credited for their role in the creation of this document. Foremost among them would be Dr. Gordon L. Heath, my doctoral supervisor and the person who first placed the notion in my head that it was one of my jobs in life to remedy the sad fact that no one had written a scholarly work on British North American religion in the War of 1812. Throughout the ensuing years, Dr. Heath made himself available to me and helped me through research, re-writes, career questions, personal struggles, and even illuminated me to the simple fact that most issues in life can be solved through hockey-based analogies. Through it all, he made sure that I had as many publishing and presenting opportunities as I could possibly want and I know that any success I have in store for me as an academic is due to my relationship with this gifted historian and friend.

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Dr. C. Brad Faught of Tyndale University provided valuable insights into the realm of British history and gave me numerous trajectories of thought to insure that this work will remain an active and exciting topic from which I can draw in the years

to come. Dr. Steve Studebaker's questions related to theology challenged me to better understand the world these people were creating by asking how it was that they saw God at work and how we, in the present age, can learn from, or dismiss, such beliefs in our scholarship.

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Each of these people has contributed to making the work what it is and I hope to repay each of you, in person, in some way. The successes within this work I share with each of you, the deficiencies remain mine alone.

This work is lovingly dedicated to the memory of my grandmothers Catherine Grannary (nee Macdonell) and Eileen Robertson (nee Christie). It was at the feet of these women—both historians in their own right—that I first fell in love with Clio.

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Introduction

A. Religious Discourse and the Creation of Community

In the mud around Fort Meigs, American soldiers built ramparts in anticipation of impending battle. The ground was soft and wet, the flies buzzed and bit, and the recent losses and fear of “savages” decreased morale and gave more than a few men upset stomachs that, while in reality were caused by nerves, were dismissed as the residuals of poor food. In order to lift their spirits, the men sang songs to remind them why they were where they were and why they were doing what they were doing. One of the songs went as follows: “Freemen, no longer bear such slaughter/ Avenge your country’s cruel woe/ Arouse and save your wives and daughters/ Arouse and expel the faithless foe.”¹ While such sentiments proclaimed the perceived British injustices that inspired the American declaration of war, the final line of that verse provides the title for this work.²

While the term “faithless foes” does not appear in any of the British North American writings of the time, that line provides an accurate description of some of the more vocal criticisms inhabitants of Upper and Lower Canada possessed as they faced an unprovoked American invasion. Even though largely populated by American-born farmers, the actions of various State militias on Upper Canadian soil from 1812–1814 transformed what could have been support for the American cause into disgust and a strong desire to expel the United States’ military effort from

¹ Howe, *Ohio*, 540.

² For a concise work on the role of emotion and the need to establish American moral superiority over and against British atrocities, see Eustace, *Passion*, chapters 1 and 9 especially.

colonial soil.³ As it pertained to religious dialogue, the Church of England and Ireland and Church of Scotland content focused on condemning America as a nation in order to convince the Upper and Lower Canadians that the continued presence of American-style religion—most notably the Episcopal Methodists—would corrupt the faithfulness of the British colonists.⁴

The pluralism extant in the colonial setting of the day bemoaned by many clergy was not reflective of a multiplicity of faiths, but of the varieties of the same faith: Protestant Christianity. While few addressed the concern as such, the “faithless foe” of Episcopal Methodism was seen to be a threat not just to the Anglican and Presbyterian understanding of Christianity, but to the way Jesus’ followers were called to understand and live out their faith. Denominations existed because of the belief that some groups had a better, or more accurate, version of the faith that needed to be defended and extolled throughout the world, and to negate that tradition was to negate the so-called Great Commission of Jesus located at the end of Matthew’s

³ For a solid and articulate treatment of this shift in mentality among the citizens of Upper Canada, see Taylor, *Civil War*.

⁴ For the sake of clarity and simplicity the remainder of this work will refer to the Church of England as Anglican, the Church of Scotland as Presbyterian. Especially as it pertains to the Presbyterians, the sending entities of these churches sometimes employed ministers from both established churches in the United Kingdom and the United States. When necessary, for the sake of clarity, this work will identify those missionaries sent from American Presbyterian groups versus those sent by the various Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. However, unless otherwise stated, the term Presbyterian refers to the Church in Scotland. The term “Methodist,” “Episcopal” or “American Methodist” will be used of the Methodist Episcopal Church that was rooted in the American tradition and formed by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury in November of 1784. Most of the itinerants came from this stream, and although the roots of it were identical with the Wesleyans, the leadership of Asbury and the democratic environment of post-Revolutionary America took it in different directions. The other Methodists in operation in the Canadas at this time will be labelled “Wesleyans” because of their closer ties with the liturgy and worship styles of the founder of Methodism. Whereas the Methodists had little use for Anglicanism the Wesleyans shared their namesake’s more nuanced relationship and cautious support of the Church of England. While terms like these are always somewhat ambiguous and open to interpretation, for the scope of this work they will suffice.

Gospel.⁵ Rather than seeing the religious fights as mere petty squabbles or the outworking of greed or pride (which, of course, they were to an extent) the desire to expel the faithless needs also to be seen as an act of faith to one's God and service to the divine mandate. Therefore, this dissertation explores the written works of religious leaders in the Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Episcopal Methodist denominations to demonstrate how the rhetoric attempted to identify those believed to be faithless or contrary to the spiritual health of British North Americans during the contest that would come to be known as the War of 1812.

In the days before the war the "faithless foe" was largely considered to be the American-style religion of the Episcopal Methodists because they were considered to be agents of Republican sympathies couching their anti-British rhetoric in religious language. The Revolutionary War of the preceding century had removed the United States from under the British crown and this was viewed as a faithless act that severed America from God's appointed empire for the evangelization and civilization of the world. Therefore, American-influenced religion had the potential to inculcate the loyal provinces of Upper and Lower Canada with similarly faithless, revolutionary ideologies and the missionaries of both the Church of England and Church of Scotland viewed such ideas as hostile. However, when war officially broke out, the idea of who constituted a "faithless foe" grew to incorporate not just American religion but also the American nation. Faced with the need to expel American soldiers, the religious concerns of the pre-war writings were understandably usurped by the immediate physical threats the invasion placed on the loyal subjects of the

⁵ In that section of scripture Christ told his followers to go to the ends of the earth and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything he commanded (Matt 28:19-20).

Canadas. The clerical writings framed the war in spiritual language and related many aspects of the contest to Christianity, faith, and belief in God in order to communicate the gravity, both spiritual and physical, of the war. Therefore, the idea of the foe being “faithless” presented the United States as a nation that was immoral and stained down to its very soul; such an enemy needed to be vanquished. With the end of the war, the subjects of British North America relaxed because the foe had been expelled. However, from the religious perspective, the quick return of commercial enterprise between the colony and the republic also meant the return of Episcopal Methodist preachers. With the threat of another American invasion waning, American Methodism once again became the primary faithless foe that needed to be expelled from the land that had recently given so much to remain part of God’s imperial kingdom on earth. In such ways does the title “faithless foe” adequately convey the British North American spiritual opinion that, at various times, viewed both the American nation as well as the American (Episcopal) Methodist missionaries as faithless foes that had no right to be on British soil. While the war did provide the evidence that the United States’ government could not be trusted, it failed to provide sufficient impetus within the colonists to expel the faithless American religion.

Religious discourse is often focused on interpreting the events of life with one eye fixed on this world and one fixed on the next. These beliefs, long-rooted in the Christian tradition, were utilized within the cultural constructs of British North America to create a unique understanding of God and practice of the faith that was both part of the traditions of Christianity as well as particular to that setting. Comparing and contrasting England and America communicated a need to build

communities around certain definable traits. It also provided, in a way that did not exist in the physical world of British North America, clearer boundaries between America and Britain because God was seen as profoundly and identifiably aligned with one of the two nations. The Anglican, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan Methodists looked to England and the characteristics they used to define the nation were designed to breed a positive feeling of mutual care that would win support for the crown and increase loyalty among the diverse population. The perceived Christian nature of the King and Constitution, the financial resources available to the people, the lack of war-mongering, and the honesty of the judicial system were all lauded and held up as communal symbols around which the people could gather and find their own personal meanings in relation to such ideas. Juxtaposed against those were the negative descriptions of the American system designed to inspire fear and concern that agents of such ideas could infect the loyal colony with irreligious sentiments disguised as faith. The pro-British churches used the violence of the American war from 1812–1815, the pandering of its politicians, lack of resources, celebration of individualism at the expense of communal care, and the similarities in sentiments with the un-godly French government to drive the people further from America and closer to each other, and England. It was not enough to define what the people were supposed to stand for, the churches also needed to establish what the people stood against. Therefore, the Episcopal Methodists were forced to contend with accusations that their styles and methods of Christianity were too closely related to a flawed cultural and political system to serve adequately the people of either province. These Methodists lost leadership and the most adherents during the war because of national allegiances that

seemed to overshadow loyalty to God's work in British North America; such events only strengthened the claims of the churches antagonistic to them and served to alienate what had been the largest denomination in the pre-war period.

Religion was arguably the most powerful tool for understanding the world, and, in the early nineteenth century, the Bible was still venerated by most as the preeminent tool of instruction and wisdom on topics as diverse as family responsibilities, farming, astrology, sex, medicine, and virtually anything else one could encounter in life. Preachers used such interpretations to understand the world, to shape the world, and, in so doing, Christianity became one of the strongest cultural influences in the burgeoning colonies of British North America. Combining the cultural significance of scriptural interpretation with something as violent and important as a national conflict that took place during the "world war of its time" the arguments gained new significance.⁶ This work is an examination of religious discourse from Upper and Lower Canadian Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Episcopal Methodists as each group sought to bring meaning to a war through a spiritual worldview that defined an inclusive community by inviting the faithful into the fold while expelling the faithless. While the song quoted at the beginning referred to England as a faithless nation, this work will utilize that idea to show how those churches with closer ties to England viewed both the American-based Methodists, and the United States in a similar light. Therefore, while England and the United

⁶ "Though George Washington left office in 1797 with a warning to Americans to avoid 'foreign entanglements,' the United States could not avoid European struggles. France and Britain were the principals in a titanic trial of strength, embroiled in a series of conflicts that can correctly be deemed the world war of the era...In what the French and British regarded as the lesser theatre of war, in North America, a showdown took shape that was intimately connected to the one in Europe." See Laxer, *Tecumseh & Brock*, 2.

States waged war in the Canadas, a religious conflict between English and American denominations was also underway as Anglicans, Wesleyans, and Presbyterians attempted to show themselves as faithful while simultaneously encouraging the colonists to reject and expel not just the faithless American nation, but also the faithless American Methodists as well.

B. Importance of This Topic

In a recent *Maclean's* article the War of 1812 was referred to as the war that defined the nation of Canada in its infancy.⁷ In the popular mind of Canadians, supported by limited scholarship, this idea has remained the dominant interpretive lens through which the war has been viewed.⁸ However, more recent works have understood any sense of nationalism as more rooted in a British, rather than a

⁷ An example of this is found in the following quotation from Macleans.ca discussing the interruption the war caused for militia Colonel Joel Stone, “Suddenly Col. Stone and his small community found themselves in the midst of the fight *for Canada*.” See Taylor, “Damn Yankees,” [n.p.]. Italics added for emphasis.

⁸ Including, but not limited to, the following works: Pierre Berton’s *The Invasion of Canada* considered one of the best popular books on the subject, the title of the book indicates the author’s notion that it was for Canada that the people fought. Mark Noll comments that the war was Canada’s Revolutionary War to remain part of the Empire. He writes, “The event that focused Canadian Loyalism and also inspired the beginning of Canadian nationalism was the War of 1812.” See Noll, *History*, 247. David G. Fitz-Enz focused predominantly on the American side of the contest, but he does make several references to Canada and Canadian patriotism. Notably: “The Canadians were formed into fencible regiments, that is, established only for the defense of Canada.” See Fitz-Enz, *Plattsburgh*, 15. Walter R. Borneman makes the following assertion about what the war meant for Canada: “Through their resistance, Canadians embarked on a completely separate journey toward independence that would take more than a century and generally lack the violence with which their American cousins had departed the British Empire.” See Borneman, *Forged*, Post-Script 7. It is also worth noting that Borneman cites Berton with similar sentiments to this author in regards to the treatment of the war as a foundational “Canadian” moment. Donald Graves, a respected 1812 historian, recently penned the following in the January 2012 issue of *Legion Magazine*: “The war was a defining moment in Canadian history, laying the foundation not only for Confederation but for the modern nation we live in today, independent and free, with a constitutional monarchy, the parliamentary system, and a respect for linguistic and ethnic diversity. That surely is reason enough to not only remember, but commemorate the War of 1812.” See Graves, “1812,” 31. Likewise, the January 2012 issue of *Canadian Geographic* went even further with the quote: “This [The War of 1812] is as important as Vimy. The whole mindset of being a Canadian really starts here, because this is where we push back the guys from the States.” See Abel, “Ghost Battle,” 39.

Canadian, identity.⁹ While such research related to colonial identity during the war has examined military records, soldiers' journals, political speeches, and government reports in order to discover ideological concerns and rhetoric, little attention has been paid to religious opinions. What focus on religion that has occurred has dealt with denominational dynamics and tensions prior to the war,¹⁰ largely influenced by George Rawlyk's term "fragmented religious ethos"¹¹ that emphasized a lack of homogeneity in the colony, especially Upper Canada. Other works concentrate their efforts on the development of religion in the years that followed in order to show how the contest undermined the influence of the American Episcopal Methodists and ushered in a growing prominence of religious institutions with stronger connections to British culture and sensibilities.¹² Most of these latter works locate their studies

⁹ Jonathon Riley's *A Matter of Honour* locates Brock's fatal charge, indeed the entirety of his military career and personal traits, within the context of British sentiments and ideas including a definable code of honour. This code, according to Riley, "mattered far more [to Brock] than modern notions of morality in an officer [and] compelled him to lead the attack [at Queenston] in person." See Riley, *Honour*, 304. Brock's ideology was not to rescue Canada but to serve England. Likewise, Alan Taylor's *The Civil War of 1812* somewhat oversells the civil war aspect of the war by downplaying existing cultural differences that existed between colonial subjects and American citizens but does state that those who lived in British North America saw themselves as British subjects, not Canadians. Although only referencing the war briefly, Nancy Christie's introduction to *Transatlantic Subjects* challenges historians, based on the work of other scholars like Armitage, to "read pre-Confederation Canadian history as an extension of British cultural, institutional, and social frameworks." See Christie, "Introduction," 9. This idea will factor prominently within the dissertation and will be examined again in the methodology and literature review sections. Todd Webb, Michael Gauvreau and Pocock each have contributed scholarly work on this topic as well as will be demonstrated throughout the literature review section of this work.

¹⁰ Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire* traces the development of uniquely British North American evangelicalism from the American Revolutionary War to the beginning of the War of 1812, but no further.

¹¹ Nancy Christie quotes Rawlyk in her article "Democratic," 20.

¹² The two most recent academic examinations of this topic are Scott McLaren's "Rekindling the Canada Fire: Print Culture and the Reconstruction of Upper Canadian Methodism After the War of 1812." And Denis McKim's "Contesting Christian Loyalty: Religion and the Meanings of 'Britishness' in Upper Canada." Both papers were presented at a combined CHA/CSCH panel at Congress 2012 in Waterloo along with a paper from this author that focused on a theology of loyalty present in Anglican and Presbyterian writings. John Grant's classic *A Profusion of Spires* does dedicate some time to the impact of the war but the two chapters that deal with the early nineteenth century treat the war fairly quickly before moving on to later developments in the late teens and early twenties. While helpful to understand the symbiotic relationship religion and society had, there is almost no attention paid to the

decades after the official cessation of hostilities so that almost no scholarly work exists that has examined and interpreted the discourse and ideologies put forward by the churches during the actual contest.

To address the lack of attention paid to religious thought during the War of 1812, this dissertation focuses specifically on the churches and the conflict. It argues that while the churches disagreed with each other over numerous theological and ecclesiastical issues, as a fragmented ideological ethos would suggest, there still existed a homogenous, though nuanced, support of the war effort against America based on an understanding of the empire as morally superior to the Republic and essential to God's providential plans for the world. In light of such beliefs, any nationalist rhetoric was intended to strengthen the colonists' attachment to England. Phyllis Airhart argues that churches were instrumental nation builders in the post-Confederation years of the later nineteenth century, and this work examines the War of 1812–1815 to see if the Upper and Lower Canadian churches' writings likewise reflected a nascent Canadian nationalism.¹³ While Airhart's paradigm is helpful, the nation the churches were attempting to build during the second decade of the century was located within the larger context of the British Empire. Therefore, while the churches were acting as nation-builders in a sense, the nation they were envisioning

opinions of the churches during the war and no comparative study either. Neil Semple's opus *The Lord's Dominion* likewise comments on the impact the war had on American-based Methodist missions but reserves little room for any recorded discourse related to the actual events of the war. His focus is on Methodism before the war and then how Methodism adapted and changed after. Goldwin French's *Parsons & Politics* spends more time on the war and his findings will be cited throughout the dissertation. However, Todd Webb's article "How the Canadian Methodists Became British" in *Transatlantic Subjects* challenges some of French's and Semple's arguments regarding the character of British Wesleyanism. However important such work is, all of them locate their ideas later on in the nineteenth century and, once again, move quickly past the war.

¹³ "Protestant leaders in many communities led the search for a national identity in the decades following Confederation." Airhart, "Ordering," 99.

and creating was not an independent or sovereign land but an Upper and Lower Canada defined by close relations to England. Such an understanding not only argues for the influential role religion played in the public sphere, but also, in the framing of the War of 1812 as one part of a global conflagration, corrects some of the various myths about the significance of the event in the development of a Canadian national identity. For the churches of British North America, the people were called to fight for something much grander than “Canada,” they were being called to do their part to insure the continued presence of God’s Empire in the Americas, a mission that superseded the realm of the Canadian colonies and carried with it global significance.

The scholarship cited in this dissertation relates to the contest itself in order to identify some of the commonly held themes and beliefs about the war from a military perspective. Because this is a religious history, scholarship related to clerical and theological developments in British North America was also consulted in order to demonstrate how the war was either incorporated or—as is the case with most work—minimized by scholars of Canadian religion. Research dedicated to particular denominations is also necessary as this dissertation provides a comparative examination of Christian groups that will draw on, and combine, the work of these scholars. Because this dissertation contributes to the field of religious studies related to times of war, research on ecclesiastical discourse during times of conflict was consulted, especially works that specifically examine religion and the War of 1812.

This dissertation is a small inroad into the vastly underdeveloped terrain of study dedicated to examining Canadian churches and war and, as such, invites more scholarly attention to areas overlooked in the present work. Notably absent is the

Catholic voice due to the decision to focus solely on Protestant denominations. The fact that French Catholics fought an influential battle against the Americans in order to support the claims of the British Protestant crown in the colonies is a subject well worth studying.

This dissertation has attempted to be exhaustive in the collection and inclusion of writings from four of the Protestant denominations that were extant in Upper and Lower Canada during the time of the war. The denominations being examined in this work include the following: Anglicans, Presbyterians, Wesleyan Methodists, and Episcopal Methodists, because these four groups contributed the vast majority of the religious writings related to the struggle. Protestant denominations present within the Canadas at that time but not considered in this work include Baptists, Mennonites, Quakers, Brethren, Lutherans, and Congregationalists. The decision not to include them was due not just to lack of sources but to the fact that these groups did not enjoy the same level of cultural or numerical significance as the previous four.¹⁴ In addition to the exclusion of these groups, the various churches present in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland likewise will not be consulted considering their distance from the theatre of war.

While the Anglicans receive the majority of the attention in this dissertation at the expense of other denominational voices, this simply reflects the reality of the availability of sources. Whereas the Episcopal Methodists were the religion of the majority in Upper Canada, the Anglicans and—to a lesser extent—Presbyterians had greater access to publishing resources and so were able to provide more printed material. The Methodist itinerants frequently sold religious literature to augment their

¹⁴ Support for this will be presented in the first chapter of this work.

salaries but they did not appear to print and disperse their sermons with the frequency of the Anglicans. Therefore, while their publications offer valuable insight into the teachings of Methodism on a variety of topics in the early part of the nineteenth century, they contain almost no commentary on the war. The Methodist writings consulted for this work are most frequently missionary society meetings, circuit riders' minutes, correspondence, and the journals of itinerants and adherents of that denomination. Therefore, while the Methodists were the numerically superior denomination, the Anglicans were the most prolific in the publication of their teachings.¹⁵

C. Scholarly Context

Military histories of the war are numerous and encompass a variety of perspectives on how best to examine the conflict. Especially in the case of Pierre Berton, non-military personnel appear in each of these works in order to explain the so-called collateral damage the war created; however, the ultimate goal of each of these works is to explain the entirety of the conflict from a predominantly military perspective.¹⁶ Other works explore what the authors' define as formative moments in the war, without exploring other aspects of the contest.¹⁷ Still others explore the war from the American side, while another collection of research focuses almost solely on

¹⁵ The truth of this statement is evidenced in the bibliography, as the section containing Anglican sermons is larger than all the other denominations combined. However, the journals and letters are much more evenly distributed and even include more Methodist letters and journals than any other.

¹⁶ Suthren's *The War of 1812*; Pierre Berton's two volume exploration of the War of 1812 *The Invasion of Canada*, and *Flames Across the Border*; Latimer's *1812*; Mahon's *The War of 1812*; Antal's *Wampum Denied*; and Casselman's edited *Richardson's War*.

¹⁷ Notably Benn, *York*; Latimer, *Niagara 1814*; Zuehlke, *Honour's Sake*; Sugden, *Tecumseh's Last Stand*.

the naval battles that defined the contest.¹⁸ With the exception of Alan Taylor and Sandy Antal, none of these works make more than a fleeting mention of religious people or opinion and those that do, restrict their work to personalities like the Rev. John Strachan without taking the larger ecclesiastical context into account.¹⁹

Research dedicated to the development of Canadian Christianity likewise does not take the war into account as an integral part of theological development.²⁰ Notable scholars in the field of Canadian religious history have explored how the early settlers' religious beliefs and practices developed in Upper and Lower Canada from the time of the American Revolution through the years around the War of 1812. However, with the exception of Nancy Christie's work on pre-war tensions between Anglicans and Methodist "enthusiasts," and John Webster Grant's exploration on the institutionalization of frontier religion in the decades before and after the war, the contest with America receives little attention. Other research demonstrates how church roles and ideas were not developed in a vacuum but were the response to, and result of, various cultural events and trends.²¹ Once again, while each of these scholars has utilized the war to explain the growing British sympathy in the colony in the later decades of the nineteenth century, no scholarship exists that examines such trends during the war.

¹⁸ Pitch, *Burning*; Dudley, *Splintering*; Reilly, *British at the Gates*; Gilpin, *War of 1812*; Quimby, *U.S. Army*; Caffrey, *Lion*. For some naval accounts, see Welsh et. al., *Great Lakes*; Gladstone, *War Drums*; Gough, *Water*; Malcomson, *Warships*; Malcomson, *HMS Detroit*; Douglas, *Gunfire*.

¹⁹ It should be noted that Alan Taylor's book does look at Quakers, Moraviantown and a few other clerical concerns but only as smaller pieces of a larger argument. His work lacks the nuance that this study will provide but he should be credited for recognizing the importance religion did play during the contest.

²⁰ Rawlyk, *Canadian Protestant Experience*; Rawlyk, "A Total Revolution"; Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*; Christie, "Democratic" Grant, *Profusion*; Westfall, *Two Worlds*.

²¹ Moir, *Church*; Moir, "American Influences"; Choquette, *Canada's Religions*; Adamson, "God's Continent" Clark, "Religious Sect;" Gauvreau, "Dividends."

Denominational literature related to Methodism provides the most fruitful field of research. However, even the concentration on this dissenting group's opinions of the war is located only as part of larger arguments advanced by the authors. Todd Webb's research on how the Canadian Methodists became British is perhaps the fullest treatment of this trend but his work focuses on the 1820s and following decades with almost no attention to the war.²² Denominational developments in the Anglican and Presbyterian scholarship focus more on the attempts of both to become establishment churches and only when they use the war to decry their American rivals is research on the contest present.²³

Almost without exception, monographs and articles dealing with churches and war in Canada focused on twentieth century conflicts with a handful of notable exceptions that come from the late nineteenth century. Gordon L. Heath's annotated bibliography of Canadian churches and war illustrates this vastly overlooked section of Canadian historiography. Scholarship related to pre-Confederation churches and war is almost non-existent, an oversight this work intends to address.²⁴

Finally, there exist only five articles dealing with British North American churches, and one book examining American churches during the War of 1812. Heath's article "Ontario Baptists and the War of 1812" proves beneficial in two important areas.²⁵ First, it locates and explains the opposing positions taken within the Baptist denomination due to its origins and strong connections with American

²² Webb, "Canadian Methodists," 159. See also Webb, "Making Neo-Britons."

²³ For work related to scholarship on Anglicans and Presbyterians see: Carrington, *Anglican*; Fahey, *In His Name*; Moir, *Enduring Witness*; Laverdure, *Presbyterianism*; Grant, *Divided*; Gregg, *History*; and McKim, "Righteousness."

²⁴ See Heath, "Canadian Churches and War."

²⁵ Heath, "Ontario Baptists."

associations before and throughout the war. Second, Heath argues against the commonly held notion that the war brought an increased presence of anti-Americanism. This supports the thesis of this work by identifying the nuanced post-war culture that, while cautious in the application of so-called American ideas, remained dependent on missionary bodies from the United States for the continued existence of certain Upper Canadian denominations. Heath correctly concludes, “While there was a trajectory established that led to increased independence from American associations, there was no significant postwar animosity between Canadian churches and the American missionaries or their sending associations.”²⁶ While the Baptist churches are not considered in this work, Heath is able to show that while American-based evangelicalism was viewed as a challenge to British patriotism, Evangelicalism was, in reality, not strong enough to supersede national boundaries entirely.

Heath’s “When Friends and Neighbours Become Enemies” examines the attitudes of Maritime Baptists as they struggled to maintain friendly relationship with their neighbouring New Englanders after the declaration of war issued by the United States.²⁷ This article focuses on the strong and cordial relationships that continued between the Baptist churches on both sides of the border during this time. Although battles made combined events and mission work difficult there is strong evidence that, as soon as the war ceased, the cross-border cooperation within the denomination picked up where it left off. Although focused on the Maritime churches, the article strengthens this dissertation’s claim that a theological understanding of God’s

²⁶ Heath, “Ontario Baptists,” 179.

²⁷ Heath, “Great Association.”

Kingdom superseded the national understanding of the British Empire or American Republic. The Baptists' desire to meet in the "Great Association" was an idea that was similarly expressed by the Methodists in Upper Canada as well.

Ray Hobbs' article serves as a brief explanation for any re-enactors who desire to portray a British chaplain with accuracy.²⁸ The sub-sections of this article discuss regimental chaplains, salary, how one became a chaplain, church ties, dissenters versus establishment, and the unique challenges the Upper Canadian clergymen faced in contrast to their British counterparts serving against Napoleon. The latter half of the article includes a brief biography of each Anglican chaplain (since only Anglicans were able to serve as chaplains) that worked in Upper Canada during the period in question as well as their salary and catalogue of their duties.

Although the various peace churches extant during the war are not explored in this dissertation, Peter Brock's "Accounting for Differences" remains valuable as he examines the culture of pacifism in early nineteenth-century Upper Canada.²⁹ Citing differing opinions within the various communities he nonetheless explains the ways in which these various groups lived out their beliefs during the war. His work explores those Quakers who enlisted, volunteered their carts for transportation, or, in one case, donated the use of a Quaker's home for a field hospital, along with the punishments the community visited upon them for such actions. His work illustrates the complex issues that arose when these "peculiar" people attempted to live out their pacifist faith during the war.

²⁸ Hobbs, "Religion."

²⁹ Brock, "Accounting."

William Gribbin examines the theological shift that took place within anti-war Christians found predominantly in New England and the other northeastern states of the union.³⁰ The traditional belief that God only protects the nations that follow his laws helped to underpin the Revolutionary War's battle against their view of an unjust ruler. However, the War of 1812 was decried by many of these people and their sermons and writings predicted a grim future for the Americans if they did not repent of their evil tendencies manifested in their support of France, their Deist president, and their involvement in an unjust war.

Gribbin's *The Churches Militant* is the only published monograph that offers a comprehensive look at the role religion played in the war.³¹ As Christians in America chose sides and developed theologies regarding the war and its role in the eschatological direction of Christianity, tensions developed not just between the nations but also between various denominations. Chief among the rival Protestant sects were, not surprisingly, the Baptists and the Episcopalians and the former did not mince words when predicting the imminent collapse of Europe and, naturally, America's need to step up and fill that gap in the name of God. This book is a valuable resource to help see the role the American churches played in the burgeoning sense of their national identity.

To conclude, this dissertation argues that the churches supported Britain in the conflict with America, but that the dominant clerical motif of loyalty to England during the war is best understood based on a theological belief of the empire's role in the plans of God for the world. From the clerical perspective, England was not

³⁰ Gribbin, "Covenant."

³¹ Gribbin, *Churches Militant*.

blessed for its own sake, but needed to maintain its Christian character in order to enjoy continued blessings and insure victory against the two-fold threat of France and America. The war provided a dramatic testing ground to display God's providential plans for England advanced by the clergy who defined the mother country as the chosen instrument for global peace and redemption.

Second, an alternative understanding of the conflict, supported by the discourse of the churches as well as some newer trends in historiography, argues that the war afforded an opportunity for the colonial churches to define what "being British" meant during a time of violent conflict both at home and abroad. The desire of certain clerics to "expel the faithless foe" came from a concern that entertaining American religious sentiment was akin to inviting divine wrath and punishment. With such an understanding, the war was viewed as proof of the ungodly nature of American democracy and of the early stages of the aforementioned punishment due to the pre-war influence of Episcopal Methodism. The need to court God's favour in order to insure military success meant that all un-Christian sentiments had to be purged from the land and part of that process meant adhering with great strictness to British cultural and governmental attributes as opposed to the creation of a new and independent country. Therefore, this dissertation argues that the War of 1812 has been unduly elevated to the status of a foundational moment "for Canada," a status it did not possess during the actual contest.

D. Research Methodology

This dissertation is an exploration of the ways in which certain ideas shaped and influenced events during a tumultuous time for the ecclesiastical groups of British

North America in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Because it explores sermons that were first spoken and then, at a later date, viewed as important enough to print and disperse throughout the land, aspects of intellectual history are needed in order to ascertain the evolution of such thoughts. Given the sources that will be consulted and the theological themes put forward, this dissertation provides a religious history of Upper and Lower Canada in order to illuminate how Christianity was understood, developed, and integrated in ways unique to that period of conflict. Finally, because all clergy worked under the auspices of larger ecclesiastical structures that constituted an important aspect of social governance and control—even though they frequently challenged and investigated what such social responsibilities entailed—elements of institutional history must be consulted in order to better understand the role the churches themselves believed they were called to play. Thus, through borrowing theories from various schools of historical research, this dissertation explains how the churches defined terms like “nation” and “empire” in ways that, as David Bell defines loyalty, rooted their arguments in both local space and connection to their parent nation of England.³²

Pocock’s plea for a new subject in British history defends the need to explore British history from the peripheries and to recognize the post-Revolutionary War conceptions of being British that were (and are) unique to the place that would come to be known as Canada.³³ Pocock argues that the existence of the Canadas provides British history with a continuous and unbroken “*outramer* in which the conflict of cultures and the creation of new sub-cultures went on as it had been shaped in the

³² Bell, “Loyalist,” 30.

³³ Pocock, *Islands*.

archipelago proper.”³⁴ The challenge presented by Pocock is an interesting one because he invites scholars of British history to write their histories from the periphery in much the same way as many British historians have: with little attention paid to the histories of fellow inhabitants of empire. He reminds his readers that New Zealand, Australia, and—one can infer—Canada, can write their own history just like “that of England, with a minimum reference to ‘the Commonwealth experience’ and with none at all to the internal development of any other ‘British’ society, as it is remembered and re-assessed by the society whose history it is.”³⁵ The way this dissertation aligns with that challenge is to offer research focused solely on the thoughts and actions of Upper and Lower Canadian clergy in order to reflect more accurately their own struggles to bring something as removed and alien as Britain to bear on the predominantly frontier world of early nineteenth-century British North America.

However, in order to defend a view of Britishness as was developed in the Canadas, a working understanding of some literature related to British nationalism is required. David Armitage’s *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* provides a solid bridge to span the gap between British history from the metropolis and from the periphery because he takes an intellectual history approach and argues, “ideology provided just such a link between the processes of empire-building and state-formation in the early-modern period.”³⁶

For Armitage, it was in the eighteenth century that, for the first time, “the Three Kingdoms of Britain and Ireland and the English-speaking islands...were all

³⁴ Pocock, *Islands*, 40-1.

³⁵ Pocock, *Islands*, 42.

³⁶ Armitage, *Origins*, 23.

members—albeit, unequal members—of a single political body known as the ‘British Empire’.”³⁷ The vastness of said empire necessitated discernible traits within which the ideologies could be formed in order to unite the disparate peoples; Armitage identified four such traits: Protestantism, commerce, naval supremacy, and the belief that the British constitution supported and defined human freedom better than any other. Therefore, Armitage concludes: “the British Empire was, above all and beyond all other such policies, Protestant, commercial, maritime and free.”³⁸ While this dissertation will challenge some of his claims, his ability to compose a more complete understanding of something as untenable and massive as the British Empire in the early modern period informed this work’s methodology as it explores how terms like providence and empire developed over time and evolved from ideologies to identities.

In her social history of the development of a Britannic identity, Linda Colley argues, “[Great Britain] was an invention forged above all by war. Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it.”³⁹ Building on Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, Colley sees the construction of the French “Other” as central to the creation of a Briton.⁴⁰ Colley’s idea of the construction of the “Other” is useful because she identifies war as an influential creator of English nationalism. This dissertation applies her concept to the British North American context to see how the war was utilized by the Britons of the Canadas. Colley’s argument that both war and

³⁷ Armitage, *Origins*, 8.

³⁸ Armitage, *Origins*, 8.

³⁹ Colley, *Britons*, 5.

⁴⁰ Anderson, *Imagined*.

religion were crucial to the construction of a national British mentality remains useful, and her examination of the citizenry's response to military events, rather than the army's, influenced this work's willingness to look beyond military history in order to explain the war. However, her use of the French as a formative "Other" must be reinterpreted in light of British North American issues. In contradiction to Colley's argument, the loyal subjects of British North America included French Catholics and American nationals and, as such, challenge her categories. Although large segments of the population would be comfortable within the non-French, Protestant paradigm, the war provides an interesting challenge to this interpretive hermeneutic and demands that, as far as British North American understandings of empire were concerned, more work is required.

Leslie Choquette's work on periphery understandings of empire in French North America explains how colonial societies exploited and expanded on imperial doctrines in ways that were removed from the metropolis but were not indicative of a new national consciousness.⁴¹ Her work within the confines of Canada (a term she admits refers to the modern moniker for the St. Lawrence Valley) and Ile Royale disprove a rigid interpretation of colonies as simply profit enterprises for the empires and asserts that the traditional vested interests of the imperial centers were "stymied on the periphery by frontier and borderland conditions"⁴² Thus, while this created cultures less in tune with their imperial origins than was often admitted, the peripheries functioned closer to a modern understanding of commercial society rather than independent nation-states working under the rubric of empire.

⁴¹ Choquette, "Center and Periphery."

⁴² Choquette, "Center and Periphery," 203.

Choquette builds on Eccles' claim that the developed areas of the Canadas "can be said to have been a metropolis, dominating the hinterland around it" in such a way that the cities, towns and, in some cases, forts, operated as mini-metropoli for their own individual regions.⁴³ These micro-peripheries created other, even more removed and smaller understandings of empire that have the potential to mire any study of this topic given the almost unending sub-categories that could be created. However, the post-war growth of Episcopal Methodists in Upper Canada shapes our understanding of the ways in which the frontier peripheries of British North America incorporated and rejected the teachings of their colonial ecclesiastical centers.

The final work related to understanding the role of the empire deals with religion in the British Army from the period being examined up to the First World War. Michael Snape's *The Redcoat and Religion* dismantles the "caricature" of the British soldier as irreligious and defends that "most British soldiers saw themselves as defined, united and elevated by a common Christianity" an argument supported through a wealth of primary information.⁴⁴ Snape is doubly useful as a methodological critic in his identification of secularization in the academy as the reason behind the scholarly ignorance of the topic of religion and war during that time. His work has influenced this dissertation in his challenge to examine religious history during times of imperial conflict in order to gain a deeper, and more accurate, understanding of the motivations of those involved. His well-defended thesis that "the British army...was not a secular institution... On the contrary, the army to a very great extent reflected the religious identity, culture and beliefs of contemporary

⁴³ Eccles, *Frontier*, 3.

⁴⁴ Snape, *Redcoat*, 2.

British society” supports this work’s study of religion during war to assess cultural trends.⁴⁵ This work plans to be the next step in exploring the world of religion and war in the history of the Britons during the nineteenth century.

Cecilia Morgan’s study of discourse related to gender in politics and religion in the first half of the nineteenth century is also of value.⁴⁶ For her, discourse analysis can borrow from the current popular trend of post-structuralism because such criticisms of the language of power (and, adversely, the power of language) can present groups not associated with the centers of power a voice. Building on James Vernon’s work, Morgan argues that languages are “multivocal” in order to illuminate the importance of studying discourse rather than strictly ideology because the former possesses greater fluidity than the latter. This is important because it demonstrates how language differs depending on the group and how defining terms like “loyalty” can be utilized by various groups to further their own goals based on their understanding of the term, a definition that might not be supported by a contrary community.

Norman Knowles’ *Inventing the Loyalists* also illustrates the tensions related to defining a Loyalist tradition.⁴⁷ His analysis of developing ideas about who the Loyalists were informs this dissertation’s fourth chapter especially because of the war’s impact on the importance of asserting and defining what loyalty actually looked

⁴⁵ Snape goes on to challenge current research when he writes, “religion needs to be recognised by military historians as being of central and even defining importance to the institutional culture of the British army and to many if not most of the officers and men who served in its ranks.” Snape, *Redcoat*, 242.

⁴⁶ See Morgan, *Public Men*. For a look at one of Morgan’s influences on discourse theory see Vernon, “Who’s Afraid.”

⁴⁷ Knowles identifies the common definition of a Loyalist tradition as: “a cluster of related ideas: unflinching devotion to the British Crown and Empire, a strong and pervasive anti-Americanism, suffering and sacrifice endured for the sake of principle, elite social origins, and a conservative social vision.” See Knowles, *Inventing*, 3.

like and what was required of colonists who desired to reap the benefits of being considered loyal. The most valuable contribution Knowles' work makes to this dissertation is the understanding that traditions, whether they are political or religious, are "shaped by the concerns and conditions of the present and involving a wide array of groups and interests from all levels of society."⁴⁸ Knowles pays precious little attention to religious discourse in the construction of the Loyalists, but his focus on the multiplicity of voices and the importance of cultural realities on the construction of ideologies will be echoed by this work and enhanced through its examination of the clerical writings on the subject.

Finally, Andrew Porter's work *Religion versus empire?: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* details the role of missions and the empire. He asserts that, despite the various motivations that lay behind imperial missionary work, historians must take the theological beliefs of these people into consideration.⁴⁹ Porter's argument that "Missionaries viewed their world first of all with the eye of faith and then through theological lenses" challenges historians to understand the theological convictions of their subjects as well as the social and cultural influences.⁵⁰ He argues that many missionaries felt stifled by imperial concerns on the mission field and that such concerns, "hindered evangelisation...[and interfered with the missionaries'] basic freedom to carry on their work."⁵¹ Thus, Porter's work offers insight into the tensions that existed as missionaries attempted to

⁴⁸ Knowles, *Inventing*, 13.

⁴⁹ Porter, *Religion*.

⁵⁰ Porter, *Religion*, 13.

⁵¹ Porter, *Religion*, 324.

balance the colonial realities in which their parishioners lived with the desires of their society, and government, leaders to utilize the churches as agents of imperialism.

Sydney Wise's article "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History" is necessary because he credits nineteenth-century sermons with shaping the intellectual landscape of Upper Canada.⁵² He asserts both that sermons are an overlooked aspect of Canadian historical record and, in defending the necessity of their presence in Canadian historiography, argues, "the clergy of the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches (and indeed those of the Catholic church as well) were well-placed to exert a considerable influence upon the political outlook and behaviour of a large part of the colonial population."⁵³ S.D. Clark's "The Religious Sect in Canadian Politics" echoes many of the sentiments in Wise's article but juxtaposes Wise's concentration on the established churches with a focus on evangelical influence over the political landscape of British North America.⁵⁴ Clark also offers an even greater emphasis of the role of the pulpit in regards to influencing the social culture of the time when he states, "in Upper Canada, the Methodists, in the two decades of political turmoil after the war of 1812–14, strongly supported radical political movements in the country in opposition to the Family Compact."⁵⁵ Such understandings of the role religion played in the forming of public life in the early nineteenth-century colony will defend the use of religion as an important and overlooked interpretive lens in this dissertation.

⁵² Wise, "Sermon."

⁵³ Wise, "Sermon," 82-3.

⁵⁴ Clark, "Sect."

⁵⁵ Clark, "Sect," 207.

George Rawlyk's *The Canada Fire* locates the central aspect of the Canadian evangelical experience from the period following the American Revolution to the War of 1812 in the "instantaneous, ecstatic and thrilling" nature of conversion and revivalism.⁵⁶ His work on ascribing these visible attributes to the invisible experience of personal conversion on the many adherents to evangelical belief is critical. In numerous journals, diaries, and even a few sermons extant from evangelical followers, his thesis is supported as the writings reflect a new understanding rooted in a personal and, more importantly for the topic at hand, individual awareness that Christ's redemptive act on the cross was wholly sufficient for salvation. This would influence many themes of nation and loyalty in a large segment of citizens in British North America because the individual conversion eclipsed any notions of religious adherence in the popular imagination of many frontier, and some urban, citizens. Because of the emotional component present in the campfire revivals, the lack of formal education of itinerant ministers, and the decrying of activities like cards, dances, and certain festivities that other clergy believed were central to decent society as sinful, a cultural conflict between established and Episcopal Methodist belief systems emerged.⁵⁷ Therefore, the war provided proof for the churches desirous of establishment that the missionaries aligned with an American-style evangelical system, for all their emphasis on personal piety, undermined the peace, stability, and safety of British society.

⁵⁶ Rawlyk, *Fire*, xvi.

⁵⁷ To be fair, there were members of Anglican and Presbyterian churches that would be considered evangelical and the Wesleyan Methodists had connections to England as strong as any Anglican. However, evangelicals in the established churches were a minority (and the rejection of evangelical church leaders in the Anglican communion will be addressed in the subsequent section of the methodology) and the Wesleyans never made significant inroads farther west than Lower Canada.

E. Outline of the Dissertation

The first chapter explores the discourse, sermons, and policies of the missionary societies of the denominations in the two years before the outbreak of the war in order to establish the tensions and dynamics that existed on the religious landscape of both Upper and Lower Canada. The motifs, biblical allusions, and emphases used by the societies, churches, and missionaries are valuable because they established the idea that national interests were reflected in worship styles and theological teachings. The reality that the colony was vast, under-developed, and possessed a porous boundary with the United States created an absence of religious stability for a large portion of the citizenry. Such isolation caused a theological flexibility that permitted an appreciation of any clerical attention, regardless of denominational affiliation, especially in the wilderness regions away from any metropolitan dwellings. James Paxton's article "Merrymaking and Militia Musters" has argued convincingly that social situations, like Sunday worship, helped interpret and reconstruct regional history to unite disparate groups together into new communities.⁵⁸ The rhetoric of the churches prior to the war not only reflected ecclesiastical attempts to define the religious landscape of the provinces, but also established tensions and magnified differences between British and republican theology. These differences took on added significance once war was declared in June of 1812.

The next chapter establishes an ebb and flow of the war and looks at how the events of the confrontation, especially in the early campaigns, impacted the ministries

⁵⁸ Paxton, "Merrymaking."

of the various churches. This chapter will not delve deeply into the rhetoric the war inspired within the churches but will look at how the actual conflict impacted the Anglicans, Presbyterians and both camps of the Methodists. This chapter will demonstrate how events within the war provided the proverbial fuel for the rhetorical fires of the churches that wrote and commented on the struggle. In addition to simply explaining the course of the war, this chapter will also dedicate time to addressing each denomination individually in order to explain in greater detail the physical toll the conflict took on the church structures, the impact on membership, or, as was the case with the Methodists, how the presence of battles and armies on the roads and in the country of the Canadas hindered ministry.

Chapter three explores how the two defining terms of a Just War, a Just Cause (*jus ad bellum*) and Just Means (*jus in bello*), were utilized by the churches to defend their assertions regarding the morality of the war and proper behaviour during the struggle. This chapter will be divided into two sections: the first will explore the Just Cause of the contest due to the defensive nature of the British North American position and commentary related to the arrival of British reinforcements in late 1814 and the subsequent invasion of American territory. The people were called to remember that it was God who had protected them and it was up to God, not God's servants, to dole out punishment. Such appeals only strengthened the claims that the empire would find blessing only in relation to the people's willingness to act in ways consistent with divine law. The second half of the chapter explores the importance of moral superiority, military and civilian piety, proper conduct in battle, and the use of natives in combat. Because victory was dependent on God, the need to honour God

was more than a spiritual matter; it was a military necessity as well. All of these arguments were framed using biblical language out of an awareness that in order to give themselves fully to the battle against America, the subjects of Upper and Lower Canada had to know that they were killing and dying for good reason. Those who were not able to fight were encouraged to pray and remain pious so that God would honour the soldiers and the entire war effort. It was personal and military morality that united non-combatants with the soldiers and reminded all persons that their own actions shaped the outcome of the war, the colony and, ultimately, the empire.

Chapter four discusses the notion of providence not just as a theological construct but also as another way of defining what the empire stood for and why its subjects were called to defend it against all foes. The people of Upper and Lower Canada were invited to bear witness to several key aspects of the empire in order to see for themselves the hand of the Almighty upon the land they were defending. The first reason was the existence of missionary agencies like the London Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (hereafter referred to as the SPG) because it was the duty of a Christian nation to spread the gospel to all parts of the world. The second was the financial stability that such a vast empire could provide for struggling colonists. Although some have placed undue emphasis on the monetary motives of the settlers and clergy in nineteenth-century Upper Canada especially, a more nuanced reading of the sources is required. William Westfall has astutely pointed out that the question being asked was not solely carnal but found its deeper meaning in the pragmatic understanding that someone needed to

“underwrite the Kingdom of God.”⁵⁹ For the churches desirous of establishment, access to Crown funds provided powerful incentive and it would be naïve to think that the motives were purely to further God’s kingdom. However, the manner in which these clergy framed the discussion revealed a desire to provide for the people of the Canadas at their most basic level. Their belief in the goodness of the empire was not esoteric but was manifest in the low taxes, governmental stability, and inexpensive land that appealed to the settlers. All these, the churches argued, provided further evidence of God’s countenance shining upon Great Britain.

The third, and perhaps most important, idea advanced by the clerical writings was the understanding that England was uniquely blessed and protected by God because of the nation’s ability to withstand the dual assaults of France and America. The victory of England over Napoleon in 1814 allowed the churches to provide proof that the empire was blessed by God and, due to this, encouraged the people to emulate imperial characteristics—as defined by the Anglican and Presbyterian clergy—in order to accrue the same blessings of victory in their own struggle. These arguments provide some of the strongest contradictions to the belief that this was a war to save Canada and display evidence that the people were being called to defend Britain. It also portrayed the empire as innocent, brave, and necessary to the continuation of peace and prosperity for the world and cast dispersions on the character of the United States by making them the “satellites of Napoleon” which is to say that they were the servants of a chaotic and violent regime. This painted a picture of America as greedy, foolish, and easily misled. Thus, the character of the nations were juxtaposed against

⁵⁹ Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 5.

each other repeatedly and the citizens and parishioners were led to discern for themselves which nation, the innocent, brave, and compassionate England or the foolish and volatile America, they desired to serve and which one needed to be expelled.

The final chapter reflects on the return to peace because the cessation of hostilities offered an opportunity to reiterate not just the blessings peace brought but also how British North America was called to go forward into the future. Peace meant the return of stability, prosperity, and order; all attributes necessary for the people to return to their spiritual disciplines. The end of the war meant the return of money and missions to spread the gospel throughout the globe. Once again, providence had brought England through a dark hour and the empire retained a colony in the Americas. The colonists were reminded that the safety of their home depended on the empire and that empire depended on the favour of God. However, the return of peace did not mean an end to the rhetoric of expulsion as the Episcopal Methodists made a quick numerical return to the province of Upper Canada. In response to the seeming resurrection of the faithless Episcopalians and their American sentiments, Robert Easton counseled the people to reject new theological and social ideas, to spurn the desire for wealth, and to embrace Christianity as the best influence over public policies, all concepts he believed would combat American enthusiastic teachings. His arguments, echoed throughout much of the discourse, introduced the character of colonial Christianity that offered definable characteristics to embrace English, and not American, ideologies.

While anti-Americanism has been frequently asserted as a dominant trend in the post-war colony, the success of the Episcopal Methodists demonstrated the strength of Evangelicalism to defend theologically the view that Christ came before King. The Anglicans and Presbyterians were not reticent in condemning the “enthusiasts” for both abandoning their flocks once war was declared and revealing that their love of nation superseded their love of the gospel. The Wesleyan Methodists, supported by Anglicans like John Strachan, began to explore the feasibility of expanding from their strongholds in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Lower Canada in order to maintain a Methodist presence in the Upper Province. These actions created a clash between the two Methodist camps and one of the more interesting aspects of the religious struggle was that the Wesleyans and Episcopalians began to apply the language of expulsion against each other.

The chapter concludes by introducing the trajectory of interpreting the war throughout the early part of the nineteenth century to demonstrate how the war was utilized in clerical arguments related to such various, but publically influential, fields as education, healthcare, government reform, naturalization, and international policy. Some have argued that such work displays a nascent form of Canadian nationalism but such a statement presupposes a trajectory away from England and towards some sort of Home Rule. In essence, such theories transform the loyalty these churches were describing into a subtle and slower-working form of the American Revolutionary spirit. The chapter argues that due to the ambiguous results of the war, and the quick return of peaceful commerce between the empire and the Republic, the religious landscape after the War of 1812 in Upper and Lower Canada was not as far

removed from its pre-war counterpart as might have been expected. While religious tensions between English and American religious groups did not abate with The Treaty of Ghent, thirty-two months of violence between British North America and the United States provided potent tales (and myths) that were utilized in attempts to “expel the faithless” influence of American-style religion in the post-war Canadas.

Conclusion

In order to understand the churches’ teachings related to the War of 1812, this dissertation asserts that while many Upper and Lower Canadian clergy remained divided on issues of church governance and theology throughout the conflict, there existed a homogenous support of the war effort against America. Such a consensus was based on a belief that England represented God’s kingdom on earth better than the rebellious American nation. Therefore, the title “faithless foe” was applicable to both the Episcopal Methodists as well as to the violent American nation. The danger from the religious perspective was that the former’s focus on individualism and the rejection of hierarchical structures were seen to be too reflective of the latter’s national policies and were deemed contrary to the peaceful, and materially beneficial traits of the British Empire, as explained by the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan Methodist clergy. In order to win people away from the numerically superior Episcopal Methodists, the other denominations wrote and preached on the evils of American governance and American-style religion and lauded the godliness of British culture, a culture best served by churches with visible transatlantic connections. With such an understanding in place, the war was seen as the violence that democracy bred

and the beginnings of the divine punishment that would spread across the land if the people continued to allow such teachings to remain.

Given the loss of members and cultural influence that the Episcopal Methodists experienced due to the conflict, their own discourse reflected the growing awareness that if they desired to remain active within the colonies, they needed to address such criticisms. Therefore, the American-based Methodists who remained in the Canadas during the war increased their pro-British rhetoric and offered a revised understanding of the empire similar to the other denominations and yet unique to their own version of the faith. They agreed that the empire was blessed by God but only so long as the empire remained faithful to God; were it to stray from its godly characteristics, it was the duty of all faithful Christian subjects to pledge loyalty first to Christ, then to King George. In so doing, the Episcopal Methodists argued for their continued presence in the colonies based on their denomination's willingness and proven ability to preach in the frontier lands that were largely ignored by the other religious groups. Citing the need for the people to have access to Christian teaching, the Episcopal Methodists did not see themselves as foes of the other denominations, or as antithetical to imperial desires in the colony, but as religious co-workers, loyal to both Christ and king.

The religious rhetoric offers a challenge to the notion that repelling the American forces throughout 1812–1815 was the beginning of the Canadian nation. Rather than attempting to create a unique nation, independent of both the empire and the Republic, the discourse of all the churches studied in this work attempted to inspire the people of both Canadas to see themselves as imperial subjects. Because

military success was seen as dependent on divine favour, England was shown to be a land divinely blessed with material and military success in order to bring about God's plans for the world. Through such teachings, the colonists were challenged to purge the colony of Republican sentiments in order to garner God's favour and their own continued success within God's chosen nation. Since the Episcopal Methodist missionaries who remained in the Canadas throughout the conflict opted for more pro-British rhetoric, the War of 1812 is better understood as a seminal moment in the creation of a more "British" British North America. The fragmented ethos of the pre-war colonies did not disappear with the war, but the inability of the Americans to achieve their military goals provided compelling evidence that the future success of the inhabitants of Upper and Lower Canada was inexorably linked to the British Empire, a term that was largely defined for the colonists by the churches in the colony. Because the motive to fight could find no higher purpose than in service to the Almighty, and because such beliefs are not formed in a vacuum, the opinions of the churches offer present-day scholars corrections to misconceptions related to the war and insights into how the conflict was viewed, explained, and ultimately defined by the people who lived through the struggle that came to be known as the War of 1812.

Chapter One

A Spiritual Border: Pre-War Theological Construction of Anglo Versus American Identities

“[we] were alway [sic] happy and cheerful, No unsettled minds no political strife, About Church Government or squabbling Municipal Councils... We had no Doctors, no Lawyers, No stated Clergy, we had prayers at home and put our trust in Providence.”¹

Introduction

When American General William Hull landed his forces on Upper Canadian soil in the spring of 1812, the language of expulsion became increasingly prominent and important. However, in the years before U.S. President Madison’s declaration of war against Great Britain such ideas were prevalent throughout much of the religious discourse. Given that most colonists in the Upper Province shared commercial and family connections with the United States and traveled frequently between the two lands, the notion of a border that separated English land from American was largely ignored as irrelevant. For the clergy with stronger attachments to Britain, such international travels presented a growing threat as the importing of American ideas regarding politics and religion challenged imperial hegemony in the colony.

An example of such a concern can be found when, in 1810, the Rev. John Strachan—then rector at Cornwall—published his *Discourse on the Character of King George*. The reasons behind the writing of the book were multifaceted by Strachan’s own account, but the content of the book set forward reasons why the inhabitants of British North America should celebrate the character and person of

¹ “Reminiscence of Mrs. White Mills near Coburg, Upper Canada” in Fink, *Upper Canada*, 20.

King George III.² Among the many flattering statements related to his monarch, Strachan wrote of his admiration for the private character of the king and his public desire that all his subjects be happy and free.³ He then went on to celebrate the British constitution's power to grant freedom and prosperity to the subjects of the empire, defended the imperial laws as the enhancers—not limiters—of personal freedom, and condemned other nations for the belief that they possessed the truest form of personal freedom before declaring, "Yes, Canadians, valuable are the advantages which you enjoy as British subjects."⁴ Strachan and others were growing concerned with what they perceived to be a lack of appreciation for the great benefits close ties to England brought to the colonists' lives.⁵ The aforementioned celebrated character traits of the king were designed to communicate to the people that the empire was strong, that their ruler was just and Christian, and that their lack of proximity to London should

² Although the reasons cited in the following quotation occurred two years after Strachan's *Discourse on the Character of King George*, the concerns were similar: "The year 1812 was one of the most critical years in the history of Great Britain. The insanity of King George III had in the previous year made a Regency necessary. In the spring of 1812 the Prime Minister, Percival, was assassinated, and was succeeded by Lord Liverpool... Year after year of war had strained the resources of the nation almost to breaking point, and the end was not yet in sight. The last thing that the British people or the British government desired was an additional foe to fight, especially an enemy so formidable as the United States of America were even in these early days of their history." See Lucas, *Canadian*, 4-5.

³ "[O]ur gracious sovereign has been able to cherish that spirit of liberty which flourishes in the British empire, when surrounding nations have fallen under the most intolerable slavery. This has been a most wonderful age of innovation—men have mistaken licentiousness for liberty. They have sought for freedom in being removed from all restraint, although it be a self-evident maxim, that it is only by the due restraint of other that I can become truly free. A principle has been adopted by many writers, and held up as indisputable, that in society we surrender part of our natural liberty to secure the rest. This principle is false—we make no such surrender—we gain every thing, we lose nothing. The laws protect, warn and enlighten us; they are continually destroying or removing whatever is offensive. In the courts of justice they distribute their blessings like the dews of heaven; they impart refreshment and vigour to all the political body, and preserve the peace and happiness of the cottage as well as the palace. We no more restrain our liberty by entering into society, than we do in building a house to protect us from the cold." See Strachan, *George*, 18.

⁴ Strachan, *George*, 40.

⁵ "[Y]ou who have come into this country voluntarily preferring it to your own, you will perceive the duty of being true to the oath of allegiance which you have taken. You have been recognized as British subjects, you have been adopted into our family and received as children.—Let then obedience and submission to the law mark your conduct." See Strachan, *George*, 44.

not hinder their loyalty but should cause the people to celebrate the vastness of the empire to which they belonged.⁶

Such arguments were attempting to contrast English and American identities in order to construct a religious boundary line that was more definable and enforceable than the physical one.

The first part of this chapter will briefly examine the origins of the various denominations in British North America being studied in this dissertation. Next, it will show how those groups struggled with each other to create a Christian society in the Canadas and how the differences in opinion about what constituted such a society bred dissent and disagreement. Following on that, this chapter will then introduce the influence of nationalism on theology to show that the churches with the stronger British connection labeled the sentiments or “manners” of the American-based churches as destructive to British colonial ideologies. The importance of this chapter is to establish that both the United States and Episcopal Methodism (argued to be too influenced by faulty American culture to be an accurate representation of the faith) were both viewed as “faithless foes” that needed to be expelled from the land. Prior to the 1812 invasion, the majority of the rhetoric focused on the American Methodists as the primary threat to the loyal provinces. However, the condemnations against the Episcopalians were based on beliefs held by the Anglicans and Presbyterians regarding the corrupt national character of the United States. In essence, the theological

⁶ Strachan’s opinion of the empire not only celebrated the commercial advantages of such a large empire but also contradicted Armitage’s description of the United Kingdom in that the former believed the three kingdoms were equal whereas the latter—rightly—concludes that the three were united but unequally: “The inhabitants of the three kingdoms are at length placed on an equal footing, and not separated as they formerly were by absurd regulations. United under one legislature, mutual jealousies are destroyed, and the advantages of free trade and commerce are open to all.” See Strachan, *George*, 28.

arguments of the churches sought to establish a definable spiritual border that celebrated English ideas over American ones in order to compensate for the inability of the physical border to keep Republican ideas from entering British soil.

I. Origins and Growth of the Four Protestant Denominations

A. The Church of England in Upper and Lower Canada

It was Christmas Day in the year 1785, and SPG missionary John Doty was looking at the faces of those in attendance in the Sorel Church—the first Protestant Church to be built in the colony—and the faces looking back at him, like a growing number of the inhabitants of Quebec, belonged to those who had remained loyal to England in the preceding decade’s war against America. As a result of the Declaration of Independence and the subsequent conflict, these people had been forcibly removed from their previous homes after their lives had been threatened and their livelihoods all but ruined. In order to comfort the people and celebrate their new house of worship, Doty’s inaugural sermon extolled the character of those biblical heroes who had also undergone periods of loss and exile. He affirmed his congregants’ experiences and reminded them that physical exile did not necessarily equate to divine abandonment. To contrast that belief, he posited the idea that the similarities between their expulsion from the rebellious colonies to the south and the exilic narratives found in scripture could breed within the faithful a deeper dependence on, and understanding of, the God they claimed to serve.

Reading the tales of David⁷—the man after God’s own heart—he stated that “Most of you also were in circumstances very similar to his: exiled from your native homes, and from the tabernacles of your God,” before comparing the rough

⁷ The opening Psalm 43:3 was identified by Doty as authored by David.

wilderness of their new home with the barren lands of Israel, “you were here *in a dry and thirsty land where no Water was.*” By acknowledging the people’s lament, Doty was able to show how the existence of the church in which they all sat was proof that God had answered their prayers: “[You cried out to God] to cause light to spring up for his afflicted Church in darkness”⁸ as well as reassuring the loyalists that aligning with England had not been a mistake.

The Constitutional Act of 1791 provided Upper Canada as a place for loyal, English-speaking Protestants to rebuild their lives following their expulsion from the rebellious American colonies in a place where their language and religion could define the culture.⁹ Twenty-five years after Doty first encouraged the people to take solace in the thought that exile could breed faith and loss could unite the people, his spiritual descendants were re-framing the loss as a providentially inspired victory for the character of England. Although Doty had addressed the issue of Providence when he stated, “And who knows but [converting people to our faith] may be one of the great ends of Providence in sending us into this Country. It was certainly the case in former times. When Israel went into Egypt, it was, partly, to reprove an ignorant and idolatrous people,”¹⁰ John Strachan’s nineteenth-century treatise reflected concern for the empire’s wellbeing that was reminiscent of Doty’s but with the benefit of historical reflection that led him to a different understanding of the event. For Strachan, since the independence of the colonies, “the British isles have advanced

⁸ Doty, *Sermon*, 11.

⁹ The church officially opened on Christmas Day 1785; Doty received his license on 8 August 1789. In his sermon Doty stated “[Today] commences our more decent and orderly Worship; and opens the First Protestant Church in the province of Canada. This happy concurrence of circumstances is, I trust, an indication of our future prosperity.” See Doty, *Sermon*, 13.

¹⁰ Doty, *Sermon*, 11.

most rapidly in strength and prosperity” and any shame related to the war belonged to America, not England, because “[the] war... was excited by faction, and became successful through treachery.”¹¹ While Doty and Strachan both dealt with American threats, the way in which those threats were interpreted communicates the way in which British North America was evolving as a group of colonies. The defeats of the late eighteenth century were used to forge communal bonds that apparently were somewhat successful. However, as the second decade of the nineteenth century dawned, the Church of England in British North America found that upstart Methodists from the very nation that had bested the empire threatened Anglican sovereignty over the religious landscape.

One year after the Constitutional Act, Jacob Mountain was appointed as the Bishop of the two Canadas, and began to work at the advancement of his denomination in the burgeoning English colony so close to the rebellious Republican nation. Utterly disgusted with the Methodist preachers, he approved Presbyterian preachers but was unable to erect more than one structure in the first decade of his appointment. The cathedral in Quebec was completed in 1804 only after a substantial government grant; meanwhile the loss of several prominent Anglican missionaries (including the aforementioned Doty, who resigned in 1802) left the Lower Canadian mission severely weakened. With the arrival of Charles James Stewart and his appointment to St. Armand in 1807, the Lower Canadian territory had a prolific writer but, ultimately, the land would never be wrested away from the Catholic majority. Mountain found himself in the unenviable position of competing against the Catholic Bishop Plessis to be the only Bishop of Quebec, a battle he lost when the War of 1812

¹¹ Strachan, *George*, 32.

broke out and Prevost¹² had no desire to alienate the French Catholic population in order to assuage Mountain's desires.

In addition to the religious struggles of Lower Canada, the Episcopal Methodists were making serious inroads into Upper Canada, creating the need for more Anglican missionaries. Although Anglicanism advanced in Upper Canada, it did so at a very slow rate. Throughout the end of the eighteenth century, John Stuart, John Langhorn, and Robert Addison arrived in that order to serve the colony. The first at Kingston, the second at Bath, and the third on the Niagara Peninsula, of these three, only Addison would see the outbreak of the war. In the nineteenth century, the denominational leadership grew with the addition of George O'Kill Stuart (son of John) to York in 1800, Richard Pollard to the Lower Thames Region in 1802, and the arrival of a man destined more than any other Anglican to both shape and be shaped by the War of 1812, John Strachan to Cornwall in 1803.

The development of the province was moving west as York, Niagara, Sandwich and other villages along Lakes Erie and Ontario grew in size and stature. The Rev. John Stuart's 1811 letter to John Beverly Robinson stated "your capital [York] will soon be the centre of politics and bustle."¹³ Men like Robert Addison were working diligently to insure that religious institutions developed along with the needs of the colony. Anglican historian Rev. David Thomas comments on Addison's efforts: "There were several communities and eventually by Addison's influence, if

¹² Sir George Prevost (1767-1816) was both the civilian Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of the military effort in British North America for almost the entire duration of the war.

¹³ Stuart, "Letter 1811," 1.

not his actual participation, churches were built in all of them.”¹⁴ Although such an undertaking was physically and culturally, “a formidable task” history reveals, “Addison seems to have risen to the occasion” (The importance of Native missions will be important in a subsequent chapter and so the outreach of Anglican clergy like Addison to them is worth noting).¹⁵ In an SPG letter from January of 1810 the following report was made about Addison’s work among the Native populations:

July 2nd, 1810. That in the new Church, where Service is now performed, he has large Congregations; & in two country places 10 or 12 miles from Niagara, the inhabitants have erected two small convenient Chapels, where he alternately performs Divine Service on the first Sunday in every month to crowded [sic] audiences. The Communicants rather encrease [sic], being in the whole Settlement something more than 56. But he is most satisfied with his success among the Indians.¹⁶

The ethnic composition of Upper and Lower Canada was diverse and the clerical attention the Native tribes received helped adhere the people to each other.¹⁷

However, it was not just Natives that were the recipient of Addison’s impressive presence. Those who lived along the frontier also knew of him and greeted his arrival as a truly momentous occasion. Amelia Harris will feature throughout this work but her quotation related to Addison, while long, deserves to be read in its entirety because it communicates the spiritual condition that most inhabitants of

¹⁴ Thomas then continues by ascribing the existence of the churches in Niagara (Saint Mark’s); Grimsby (Saint Andrew’s); Chippawa (Holy Trinity); Queenston (Saint Saviour); Fort Erie (Saint Paul’s); and St Catharines (Saint George’s) to Addison’s influence. In addition to his work among ethnically European settlers, there was a large body of believing Indians in need of ministrations from the Anglican churchman. See Thomas, *Beginnings*, 29.

¹⁵ See Thomas, *Beginnings*, 29.

¹⁶ Letters from SPG meetings as found in de Rudolph, “St. Mark’s,” 11.

¹⁷ The Natives appeared to be willing participants “At [Addison’s] last visit to the Indians he baptized upwards of 50 [in Niagara he baptized 97 local inhabitants]. He trusts that this labour is not in vain.” Henry, “SPG Report, 1810,” 43.

British North America faced. Recalling the first time she met the Anglican minister, she wrote in her journal:

The neighborhood was notified, and all the children, from one month to eight or nine years old, were assembled to receive baptism. The house was crowded with people anxious to hear the first sermon preached in the Long Point Settlement by an ordained minister. Upon my own mind I must confess that the surplice and gown made a much more lasting impression than the sermon, and I thought Mr. Addison a vastly more important person in them than out of them; but upon the older part of the community, how many sad and painful feelings did this first sermon awaken, and recall times long past, friends departed, homes deserted, hardships endured! The c(h)ord touched produced many vibrations, as Mr. Addison shook hands with every individual, and made some kind of inquiry about their present or future welfare. The same God-hopeful smile passed over every face, and the same 'Thank you, sir, we find ourselves every year a little better off, and the country is improving. If we only had a church and a clergyman we should have but little to complain of. But it was a hope deferred for many long years.'¹⁸

This quotation is indicative of both the desire many people had for religion as well as the respect given to "official" clergymen. Harris's comments indicate she was impressed with the well-educated and solemn black-robed Anglican minister.

George Stuart of York also proved to be willing to travel beyond the borders of his town in order to serve the larger community. In December of 1810 he reported: "I have frequently preached and have baptized children in the vicinity of York at the distance of seven, eight and ten miles." He then went on to report that he was greeted with many of the same sentiments as found in Harris's comments: "The people in general are well disposed and have expressed a zealous desire that I would frequently visit them. I have complied with their invitation and wishes as often as it has been in my power."¹⁹ The vast, uncharted wilderness that was Upper Canada at the beginning

¹⁸ Talman, *Loyalist*, 31.

¹⁹ Stuart, "Letter 20 Dec 1810," 1.

of the nineteenth century was a substantial obstacle for the under-staffed Anglican Church.²⁰

In addition to the distance the inhabitants had to endure with their fellow colonists, the distance of the Canadas from the imperial centre in Britain was evidenced in multiple different ways. In 1808, the Anglican rector of York, George Stuart, lamented a year and a half delay in receiving the goods his congregation desired from the SPG.²¹ He concluded his correspondence on a positive note that also contained a gentle admonition to the Society: “I anticipate the attainment of my wishes; because it would be a token of regard from the Society, and because it would be a pleasing proof that the exertions of a few well-disposed people did not pass unnoticed. Their zeal has stimulated them to build a very decent Church for the celebration of divine worship.”²² Such delays weakened the Anglican claim that the SPG could meet the spiritual needs of the colonists and weakened claims that loyalty to the empire would result in greater stability and increased resources for the subjects.²³

²⁰ For historical interpretation of the statistics from this time see the end of this chapter as well as Vernon, *Old Church* and Westfall, *Two Worlds*, Chapter 1.

²¹ Bishop Mountain would write similar concerns and even condemnations of the SPG’s apparent disregard for the colonial church. Writing to John Stuart in 1803, Mountain told him that instead of visiting the diocese, Mountain was going to sail for England in order to plead the colonial case in person. In order to defend that decision he wrote: “Near ten years experience has shown me how little is to be expected from representations to H[is] M[ajesty’s] Ministers made by letter.” See Mountain, “Letter to John Stuart, 17 March 1803, as found in Preston, *Kingston*, 323.

²² “In hopes that you have duly received my letters of Feb 10th and Sept 1st 1807 in which I was induced request the Gifts of a set of books for the use of the new Church in York. I anticipate the attainment of my wishes; because it would be a token of regard from the Society, and because it would be a pleasing proof that the exertions of a few well-disposed people did not pass unnoticed. Their zeal has stimulated them to build a very decent Church for the celebration of divine worship.” See Stuart, “Letter 2 July 1808,” 1.

²³ However, letters celebrating the SPG’s ability to supply the missionaries were also present as the following two examples illustrate: “[Charles Cotton] acknowledges in his letter...the receipt of a box of Books from the Society, and tenders the thanks of himself and his parishioners for that valuable present. He trusts in God that those good Books will be the means of promoting an effectual sense of Religion and lasting attachment to the Church of England.” See Henry, “SPG Report 1810,” 43-4;

The SPG kept records and financed their missionaries and chaplains throughout British North America.²⁴ However, since money was always an issue, the 1810 report of the SPG clearly explained what steps were needed for the society to consider investing the time, resources, and clergy into a new endeavour:

before the Society send out a Clergyman to any new place, the people first petition the Society to do it, and signify that they are able and willing to contribute towards the Missionary's support. In general, it is required that a Church be built, a Glebe secured, a Parsonage house erected, and a subscription entered into by the people themselves, or such Engagements made as may induce the Society to establish a Mission... where the people have failed in the performance, the Missionary has been removed to another station.²⁵

Reports like this one show that the relationship between colony and centre was somewhat symbiotic and the people were expected to shoulder a substantial part of the responsibility.²⁶ Although the inhabitants of Upper and Lower Canada were dependent on missionary societies for any clerical attention, they were first called on

"The Rev. Mr. Stewart...expresses his thanks to the Society for their handsome present of Prayer Books, Bibles, and Testaments; which he assures them he can distribute to very good advantage...A new church has been built...at the Eastern part of his Mission. It was opened on the 29th of January, 1809, when the day being fine, there was a Congregation of a thousand persons." See Henry, "SPG Report 1810," 44.

²⁴ In Upper Canada: John Stuart (Kingston and Visit to Mohawk Indians), John Langhorn (Ernest Town and Fredericksburg), John Strachan (Cornwall), and Richard Pollard (Sandwich) all received 50 pounds salary from the SPG. Robert Addison (Niagara) received 50 pounds for his work and an additional 20 for his visits to the Natives. George Okill Stuart (York) received 75 pounds. In Lower Canada: Charles Caleb Cotton (Dunham), and Charles Stewart (St. Armand) each received 50 pounds. Richard Bradford (William Henry) received 65. See Anon., "SPG Report 1810," 55.

²⁵ Anon., "SPG Report 1810," 45-6. The idea that the SPG was the only institution able to provide financially for the colonists is seen in the Anglican defense of their desire to be the established church. Even as far back as 1788 John Stuart lamented about the financial and spiritual irresponsibility present even within his own congregation of Cataraqui (present day Kingston, Ontario) when he wrote: "my parish consists chiefly of New York, Loyal Refugees, a description of Men, not remarkable for either Religion, Industry or Honesty—they are careless in their attendance on public worship, dissolute in their morals, and in general, not industrious in providing even for their own families." See Fahey, *In His Name*, 17.

²⁶ While the Anglicans enjoyed the support of the SPG and the Wesleyans had the London Missionary Society, the same could not be said of the Presbyterians. They had to rely on commercial and familial connections in Scotland to insure ministers for their congregations that were not American-born. Janet Carnochan, in her work on St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake: "Different efforts seem to have been made to obtain a Presbyterian of Established Church of Scotland, in 1806 communicating with Rev. Jas. McLean of Glasgow, agreeing to pay his expenses out." See Carnochan, *Frontier*, 11.

to demonstrate, in tangible means, that their desire was legitimate and sustainable.²⁷

Such requirements demonstrate the understandable need for careful stewardship on behalf of the societies in England to insure that they were not being frivolous with their colonial resources. However, such delays and requirements also strengthened the awareness within the colonial mindset that the distance from England had disadvantages. British pride in being the masters of the Atlantic meant nothing to Canadian subjects unless supplies could make it up the St. Lawrence, and other waterways, in a convenient amount of time.²⁸

There were not enough Anglican missionaries to make it into the more remote areas with any sort of regularity so that even the efforts of Addison and Stuart could not remove the feeling of neglect that many settlers wrote about.²⁹ However, the

²⁷ The Anglicans also saw the clergy reserves and the support of like-minded businessmen as spiritually motivated: “[some missionaries] are apt to begin at the wrong end: they forget that civilization, to a certain degree at least, ought, in all cases, to precede religious instruction; or the influence of the latter will be transient and evanescent. It has been well said that ‘the Merchant must pave the way for the Missionary.’” Henry, “SPG Report 1809-1810,” 12. Such beliefs became problematic as finances became increasingly important and those who were culturally connected and financially strong also became the recipients of clerical benefits. These beliefs, manifest themselves in various ways including, but not limited to, the purchasing of pews and altars for the benefit of the church and the aggrandizement of the donors. From this was born the Free Methodist movement that supported none of these ideas out of the conviction that it set up socio-economic distinctions that had no place in the Christian church. Once again, such divisions endeared the Methodists to the poorer masses and made the Anglicans the church of the elite and wealthy. However, while the critique may have existed, it is entirely too simplistic for historians to adopt such a belief. To contrast the notion that the Anglican Churches existed for the betterment of the higher classes see the following 1810 quote from John Stuart: “The members of this congregation as a testimonial of their good disposition and zeal have erected a Gallery in the west end of the Church by means of which the soldiers of the Garrison near York and the poor class of people are accommodated and enabled to attend this Church.” Stuart, “Letter 20 Dec 1810,” 1.

²⁸ “The ‘immense ocean’ [that separated British North America from England] was then, as ever, Britain’s highway, but it was a highway that could be kept open only by strength, efficiency, and vigilance. Under the stress of war with Napoleon, British ships were wanted in all parts of the world ; and, anxious as the King’s government was to avoid any semblance of menace to the United States, the naval forces in the North American seas, whose head quarters were at Halifax, had not been sufficiently strengthened, before hostilities actually began, to give assured preponderance over American vessels.” Lucas, *Canadian*, 6.

²⁹ “Eleven years have elapsed since I entered these woods...Our first care and inquiry was, in what manner shall we have our children Baptized, Educated, and taught the true Religion of Christianity. Hope led us to believe, living under so good a Government, we shall shortly have men placed among

Methodist circuit riders were more than willing to journey into these desolate and under-populated places and, in so doing, found willing and receptive groups of people, as well as the wrath of the Anglicans.³⁰

B. The Arrival and Success of Methodism

Not only did the late eighteenth century witness the influx of defeated Loyalists, the granting of tolerance to Catholics, and the division of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada, but also, and arguably most importantly for the topic at hand, the introduction of American and British Methodists into the Canadas. In the last year of the eighteenth century, American Episcopal Methodists finally decided that the New Light power and influence over the colonies of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was so great that “the American Conference of 1799 decided it would be wise to withdraw their preachers from the Maritimes.”³¹ William Black recognized that “Faced with a constant shortage of able men at home, the bishop [Francis Asbury]...[was] not really interested in the distant and detached Nova Scotia mission.” Freeborn Garrettson had returned to New York in the 1780s and Black believed that “the preachers too could see little merit in going from the United States, where Methodism was a flourishing and accepted form of Christianity, to a country in

us for these purposes. Alas, Eleven years are now gone over, and I dont [sic] see the least prospect of these blessings...Two thousand children live without Baptism...Six hundred men and women live together without lawful marriage...for the last Ten years, [none] have heard the Word of God on a Sabbath day; as for our dead, they are disposed of in the same manner that most people dispose of a favorite Dog who dies, by placing him quietly under a Tree.” See Little, *Borderland*, 279. Quoting an excerpt from the *Quebec Gazette*, 2 Jan 1812.

³⁰ Carroll recorded a letter written by Methodist leader Francis Asbury detailing the influence the itinerants had on Upper Canadians: “for although few of them were really scholarly, yet they were all in advance of the great bulk of the people in intelligence. When this consideration is joined to the fact of their religious knowledge and character, their conversation in the several families where they sojourned—and, be it remembered, they lived among the people—must have been of incalculable benefit to those families. Their lively and instructive talk at the fireside, made their coming anticipated and greeted with the liveliest interest.” Carroll quoting Asbury in a letter dated 2 September 1811 as found in Carroll, *Case*, 6:137.

³¹ Walsh, *Church*, 126.

which they would be aliens, potentially, if not actually suspect to the authorities and people.”³² Therefore, he made a successful appeal to the London Missionary Society and they sent missionaries and funds for the East Coast Mission of British North America. Thus was born the Wesleyan Missionary Methodists and, “For the next fifty-five years, all work in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and adjacent islands, was directed by the Methodist authorities in London and/or their appointees in the province.”³³ When the American-based Episcopal Methodists left the Maritimes events were set in place that would influence the spiritual landscape of both Canadas.

In 1790, a man by the name of William Losee approached Garrettson, who had become a prominent Methodist in the state of New York, with a request to visit Upper Canada. After reviewing Losee’s plan, Garrettson, “permitted him to visit Upper Canada in the winter of 1790.”³⁴ He returned convinced of the need for Methodism to spread north into the lands known as Upper and Lower Canada. When “Losee carried a petition to . . . the New York Methodist Conference in 1790 [he] received authority from Bishop Asbury to form a Canadian circuit.”³⁵ The land was even larger and less developed than in the Maritimes and the religious institutions that existed there were concentrated in the cities, leaving the vast majority of the people with no form of instruction or spiritual guidance.

³² French, *Parsons*, 34.

³³ Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, “Introduction to Minutes,” 5A.

³⁴ French, *Parsons*, 39.

³⁵ Walsh, *Church*, 138. “Bishop Francis Asbury welcomed the invitation and the instrument to spread Methodism and when Losee returned to Canada in 1791 to establish a regular circuit the foundations were laid for the growth of Methodism in Upper Canada and, unwittingly for the future troubles over the American origin of this missionary work.” Moir, *British*, 85.

The first Methodist chapel was erected in Hay Bay, Upper Canada in 1791 (six years after the Anglican Church in Sorel) and for the next several decades the Methodist cause would enjoy great popularity in Upper and, to a lesser extent, Lower Canada.³⁶ Although tensions would arise “from those most worried about maintaining traditional order”³⁷ such conflict did little to hinder Methodism’s impact as it had in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The reason for such success was “Their simple, evangelical faith [had] a strong appeal, an appeal uninhibited in Upper Canada by the Congregationalist and New light tradition that was so effective in slowing Methodist expansion in the Maritime Provinces. As Americans, they were in a strong position when speaking to American immigrants.”³⁸ Considering that approximately eighty percent of the Upper Canadian population were born in the United States,³⁹ the proximity of American leadership gave “a distinct advantage to the Methodist cause in the early period of the settlement in [Upper Canada]; no other religious group had behind it an ecclesiastical organization so well equipped to cope with the mass movements of people on the frontier.”⁴⁰

Methodist historian John Carroll recorded a letter written by Asbury detailing the influence the itinerants had on Upper Canadians:

for although few of them were really scholarly, yet they were all in advance of the great bulk of the people in intelligence. When this consideration is joined to the fact of their religious knowledge and character, their conversation in the several families where they

³⁶ It should be noted that a form of Methodism unsanctioned by any governing body had been present in The Bay of Quinte as early as 1788 when two men, one “name Lyons, preached and taught school for a few years; the other, James M’Carty, an Irish follower of Whitefield’s Calvinistic revivalism, disappeared under mysterious circumstances after being imprisoned briefly at Kingston on charges of being a vagabond.” See Moir, *British*, 85.

³⁷ Wigger, “Heaven,” 187.

³⁸ French, *Parsons*, 41.

³⁹ Christie, “Democratic Rage,” 10.

⁴⁰ Walsh, *Church*, 139

sojourned—and, be it remembered, they lived among the people—must have been of incalculable benefit to those families. Their lively and instructive talk at the fireside, made their coming anticipated and greeted with the liveliest interest.⁴¹

It was the ability to live among the people and communicate in stories and imagery and in language that made sense to the frontier people that gave Methodism its appeal and influence among the masses. George Rawlyk argues that the Methodist mandate to always speak plainly and simply “appealed particularly to frontier settlers who lived in relative isolation and had strong ties with contiguous areas of the United States.”⁴² As the Baptists of the Maritimes had done, the Methodists were accurately gauging the needs of the people of the land and meeting those needs. Although such traits were not unique to Methodists, they did prove to be remarkably successful in the foreboding wilderness of Upper Canada. Neil Semple reports that, “[Methodist] preachers and their lay colleagues were eminently successful in attracting pioneer Upper Canadians to the Methodist fold during [1790–1812] By 1802 there were ten itinerants ministering to over 1,500 members in the province. These numbers grew to over 2,000 members and sixteen ministers serving Upper and Lower Canada four years later.”⁴³ Whatever the reasons, evangelical Methodism quickly became the dominant religion among the farmers and pioneers of the Canadas.

Just as some members of the Church of England were willing to endure traveling ministry for the sake of their charge, certain Methodists were finding the construction of places of worship necessary to properly inculcate people in their form

⁴¹ Caroll quoting Asbury in a letter dated 2 September 1811 as found in Caroll, *Case*, 6:137.

⁴² Rawlyk, *Fire*, 121.

⁴³ Semple, *Dominion*, 43 and 45. It should be noted that, according to SPG records and clerical reports from the same time, the Anglican Church never had more than six recognized and active ministers in the Canadas.

of the faith.⁴⁴ Writing to Bishop Francis Asbury in the spring of 1810, John Shea sang the praises of Methodist minister George McCracken. Apparently, McCracken had been instrumental in building up the small Society in Quebec and had even been able to assist them in “procuring a House of Divine Worship for us in the most popular part of the city...at 3000 dollars” and then bragged that, “this exertion of ours has not an equal on the Continent.”⁴⁵ Shea lauded the man appointed by Asbury to bring Methodism to the territory known as Lower Canada. He concluded his letter with a personal note to the famed American bishop:

[This letter affords me] an opportunity to render you my sincere thanks, both for myself and the Society, for sending us a Man, so fully qualified for this place; a Man whose prudence, and indefatigable zeal has rendered him self a blessing to us, both in spiritual, and temporal things. I am sorry that we cannot prevail on him to stay with us another year, as this place must allways [sic] suffer by the Preachers beeing [sic] often removed. We pray that God may direct you in your choice for us again.⁴⁶

Through this correspondence the careful reader can learn that Methodists in the early part of the nineteenth century were quite dependent on their American counterparts for spiritual guidance, leadership, governance and even their own sense of community. Behind Shea’s kind words lay the truth that the largest body of evangelicals in the Canadas was dependent on the missionary societies of the United States.

The Genesee Conference was responsible for sending missionaries north from their base in the United States. Despite Shea’s lauding of the Montreal house of

⁴⁴ In 1810, within the United States, Methodists also appeared to be making sure that their worship services were becoming less boisterous according to the following quote from Kyle Bulthuis: “Bangs called a citywide meeting at which he read passages of the Methodist Discipline that insisted on order and decorum at worship services.” See Bulthuis, “Preacher Politics,” 271.

⁴⁵ Shea, “Letter to Asbury, 12 May 1810,” 1.

⁴⁶ Shea, “Letter to Asbury, 12 May 1810,” 1-2.

worship, the road remained dominated by the Methodists who, in accord with their founder John Wesley, seemed to view the entire world as their parish and nature itself as their church. George Rawlyk is useful in explaining that the growth of Methodism in the country was not in spite of the wilderness but was actually utilized by the itinerants as an aspect of their appeal. He writes, "Like all successful evangelical preachers these dynamic 'Spirit-soaked' itinerants were amazingly successful in pulling the Christian gospel from the realms of 'ecclesiastical space' and powerfully injecting it into everyday frontier life."⁴⁷ Therefore, as the Episcopalians received supplies and itinerancy from the closer base of the United States, they were able to supersede the efforts of their Anglican contemporaries and bring their version of the faith to the more populous, although more disparate, wilderness inhabitants.⁴⁸

The extreme ruggedness of the land prevented Anglican missionaries from strengthening their rhetoric of establishment with actual praxis; thus leaving the Methodists with unchallenged ecclesiastical supremacy in the rural areas of Upper Canada.⁴⁹ However, such supremacy came with a substantial amount of risk to

⁴⁷ Rawlyk, *Fire*, 121.

⁴⁸ Nowhere is the difficulty of the terrain of Upper Canada on the church's ability to function properly better assessed than in the following quote: "From Montreal to Kingston, a distance of 200 miles, there is not one clergyman of the Church of England, nor any house of Religious Worship, except one small Chapel belong'g to the Presbyterians. The Public Worship of God is entirely suspended or performed in a manner that can neither tend to improve the people in Religious Truth, nor to render them useful members of Society... The great bulk of the people have and can have no instruction but such as they receive occasionally from itinerant & mendicant Methodists, a set of ignorant Enthusiasts whose preaching is calculated only to perplex the understanding & corrupt the morals, to relax the nerves of industry, and dissolve the bonds of Society." See Fahey, *Anglican*, 10-1.

⁴⁹ The exploration of transportation during this time done by Gentilecore and Wood illustrate the military significance of various places like Kingston and York but also focus on the centrality of the lake for the commerce and defense of the Province. It was the immense forests, more than anything else, which contributed to the regionalism of early Upper Canada. The people simply could not reach each other. "Most dominant was the forest, sensed, feared, and appreciated in varying degrees as settlement advanced; so overpowering that new settlers had to be given detailed instructions on what to do for survival when lost in the woods." See Gentilecore, "Military", 295. They also added: "much of the basic network before 1825 grew from Indian paths through the forest." See Gentilecore, "Military", 296.

personal safety. So daunting were the woods that Gentilecore wrote that those who dared to traverse them, “had to be given detailed instructions on what to do for survival when lost in the woods.”⁵⁰ The trees and weather rendered what few roads existed frequently impassable and accounts of some early settlers reference the oppressive conditions of colonial life.⁵¹ Susanna Moodie penned the following lines in a poem used to exorcise some of the depression rising within her as she surveyed the landscape. She lamented her surroundings with the following words: “Oh! Land of waters, how my spirit tires/ In the dark prison of thy boundless woods”⁵² It was in that setting that the Episcopal Methodists became influential for two reasons.

First, the itinerant ministers⁵³ were willing to travel through the dense wilderness and preach at farms or in small communities rather than, as was the Anglican and Presbyterian customs, building churches in the more populated areas.⁵³ Second, they were able to be itinerants rather than stationed ministers because of the close proximity of their homes in the United States. Whereas the SPG invested a large amount of time and money in the education and cost of one missionary, the Episcopalians could send multiple people into the wilderness at a fraction of the cost or

⁵⁰ Gentilecore, “Military”, 295.

⁵¹ “[M]uch of the basic [road] network before 1825 grew from Indian paths through the forest.” See Gentilcore, “Military”, 296.

⁵² Gray quoting Susanna Moodie in Gray, *Letters*, 16. Colonel Thomas Talbot wrote to some friends in England about his adventures in the rugged Upper Canadian colony. Speaking of both the exhilaration and excitement he felt at being out of the confines of England and in the country he wrote, “I am out every Morning at Sunrise in my smock frock felling and burning the Forest to form a farm. Could I but be seen by some of my St. James’s friends when I come home to my frugal supper, as black as any chimney sweeper.” See Talbot, “Letter 16 May 1801,” in Gray, *Letters*, 27.

⁵³ “Into this institutional vacuum [left by the Anglican and Presbyterians] American Methodism carried its dynamic message and its highly mobile organization. Its success was also due no doubt in part to the post-Loyalist migration from the United States which swamped the Loyalists numerically in the space of a generation. Between 1790 and 1812 the Methodist Episcopal Church sent at least seventy-six missionaries into the Canadas-not more than seven of them were Canadian-born.” See Moir, “Influence,” 448.

time. Through these reasons, the Episcopalians were able to use the geography and social composition of the Canadas to the distinct advantage of their denomination.

To read about Methodism in Upper Canada during the first decade of the nineteenth century is to be immersed in countless stories of herculean efforts done by men who frequently cited no stronger motivation for their self-sacrificing actions than the calling of God and the love of humanity. Grudgingly admitting the strengths of Methodism over his own Anglican church, T. W. Magrath made the following statement: “[The Methodists’] habits of domiciliary visitation, their acquaintance with the tastes and peculiarities of the Canadians, their readiness to take long and fatiguing rides, in the discharge of their self-imposed labours, renders them formidable rivals to our more easygoing clergy.”⁵⁴ The itinerant preachers’ willingness to go wherever people were and speak to the farmers in terms familiar to them was one of the secrets to the success of Methodist missions during that time period.⁵⁵ It is beneficial to turn to Michael Smith’s travels among Upper Canadians because he wrote candidly about the religious inclinations of the people. In an account of the various denominations he lauded the Methodists both for their numerical and territorial superiority: “Almost all the people of Canada that have come to age of maturity, are professors of religion: however, as in all other places they are of different sentiments and sectaries. The

⁵⁴ See Magrath, *Authentic*, 194.

⁵⁵ Carroll recorded a letter written by Methodist leader Francis Asbury detailing the influence the itinerants had on Upper Canadians: “for although few of them were really scholarly, yet they were all in advance of the great bulk of the people in intelligence. When this consideration is joined to the fact of their religious knowledge and character, their conversation in the several families where they sojourned—and, be it remembered, they lived among the people—must have been of incalculable benefit to those families. Their lively and instructive talk at the fireside, made their coming anticipated and greeted with the liveliest interest.” Carroll quoting Asbury in a letter dated 2 September 1811 as found in Carroll, *Case*, 6:137.

Methodists are the most numerous and scattered all over the province.”⁵⁶ This account illustrated just how effectively the itinerants had been not only in communicating to the people in order to win them to their version of the faith; but how daring they had been in pursuing them to the most remote settlements in the land.⁵⁷ The struggles and ubiquitous isolation of frontier life meant that the minister who showed up the most would most likely enjoy the adherence of the people. It was not that the people were fickle or did not care about religion, quite the opposite in fact, they realized the importance of faith and so were willing participants and recipients to whichever version of the Christian faith that manifest itself in their presence.⁵⁸

C. The Church of Scotland in the Canadas

Lacking an official missionary organization like the SPG, the Church of Scotland was more dependent on the transatlantic contacts of their members to supply adequate and approved clergy. In addition to that, the Presbyterians had a more nuanced relationship with the Anglicans in that both denominations enjoyed establishment status within the heart of the empire, a status neither could claim in the periphery of British North America. Despite the transatlantic connection and identity, the Presbyterian Church of the Canadas was supplied more frequently with American-based preachers due to the proximity with the United States and the unwillingness of

⁵⁶ Smith, *Upper Canada*, 60.

⁵⁷ “[Methodist] preachers and their lay colleagues were eminently successful in attracting pioneer Upper Canadians to the Methodist fold during [1790-1812].” See Semple, *Dominion*, 43.

⁵⁸ Writing about her time in the Long Point settlement, Amelia Harris recalled the lack of ecclesiastical influence on her community: “There was a sad want of religious instruction amongst the early settlers. For many years there was no Clergyman nearer than Niagara, a distance of 100 miles, without Roads. My father used to read the Church service every Sunday to his household and any of the Labourers who would attend. As the Country became more settled the neighbours used to meet at Mr. Bartow’s and Mr. Bostwick who was the son of a Clergyman used to read the service and sometimes a sermon, but there were so few copies of sermons to be obtained that after reading them over some half a dozen times they appeared to lose their interest. But it was for the Children who were growing up that this want was most severely felt.” Childhood letters of Amelia Harris, found in Talman, *Loyalist*, 130.

many ministers to give up the comforts of home for the rigours of colonial life.

Despite such American connections, the Presbyterian ministers never experienced the wrath of the Anglicans, who saved all their condemnations for the Episcopal Methodists. In fact, in the years before and during the war, the Anglicans and Presbyterians were close allies in their common disgust with the teachings and presence of the American-based Methodists and while the War of 1812 would be responsible for igniting tensions between the two denominations, they would not surface until after the cessation of hostilities.

In Lower Canada, the Rev. John Bethune was the first Presbyterian to settle and establish a church. A hero of the Revolutionary War, and former chaplain of the 84th Regiment, he ordained a church to be established in Montreal in 1786 before moving into a community of UEL in the Glengarry region, where his ability to preach in Gaelic was deeply appreciated. His replacement, a man ordained in America by the name of John Young, oversaw the 1792 erection of St. Gabriel Presbyterian in Montreal. In 1789 Alexander Spark took over for his ailing predecessor, Rev. George Henry in Quebec City, and by 1810 had opened St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. He, along with Bethune, and an elder of St. Gabriel created the first Presbytery of Montreal in order to appoint Young's successor—a man by the name of James Somerville. Somerville's 1803 ordination was the first in either of the provinces and the controversy surrounding it is germane to the topic at hand. First, it is a perfect example of how the distance from the metropolis of church governance was remedied within the colonies. Although not officially sanctioned, the Montreal Presbytery was made necessary in order to insure the continued existence of the Presbyterian Church

in the largely Catholic region of Lower Canada. Second, when those who did not wish Somerville to be their spiritual leader broke off and formed their own church, a Scottish-born but American-based minister destined to write heavily about the War of 1812 took over leadership.

One year after Somerville's ordination, Robert Easton, a member of the burgher Synod who had been serving in America, took on leadership of the congregation. Easton will factor significantly in this work and was the last Presbyterian missionary in Lower Canada until after the war. In 1807, the Presbyterian Church at St. Peter Street in Montreal was erected and was served by Rev. Easton until illness took him from the charge in 1822. At the cost of approximately £1500, much of the money to build St. Peter's came from American parishioners in Montreal who were said to make up the majority of the congregation. Possibly due to his church's stance "in connection with the Associate Reformed Synod in Scotland, commonly known as the Burgher Secession" Rev. Easton was originally refused a license to sanctify marriages, this issue would not be resolved until 1815.⁵⁹ Despite Easton's ministry in the United States and the fact that his church was predominantly supported by American parishioners, this Presbyterian minister would be a vocal opponent of not only Methodism, but of the Republican ideas that he believed would lead the colony to ruin.

In 1793, Jabez Collver followed John Bethune into the newly created province of predominantly Protestant loyalists known as Upper Canada. He settled in Norfolk County in a government-granted tract of 1000 acres and established a church that, while never officially endorsed due to the lack of an extant Presbytery, was organized

⁵⁹ See Gregg, *History*, 163.

in the Presbyterian style. Although applications for ministers were sent from Upper Canada, the established church of Scotland was slow in its responses. The first true attempt to send Presbyterian missionaries to Upper Canada came from the Dutch Reformed Church of the United States. In 1798, the Rev. Robert McDowall established churches in Elizabethtown and York before accepting the call to minister to the communities near the Bay of Quinte. The Niagara district enjoyed the ministry of the American Daniel Eastman from 1801 until his death in 1850. Labeled as the “Father of the Presbyterian Churches in the Niagara and Gore Districts” the battle of Beaver Dams in June of 1813 was fought just outside his manse. Although the home was not badly damaged, the time spent by the family in the cellar cowering from musket balls remained “fresh in the memories of some of the children.”⁶⁰ In addition to Eastman, Niagara and Stamford were supplied by the Rev. John Burns, who oversaw the erection of the chapel in Niagara that was doomed to be burnt by the American forces during the war because it gave the British superior sightlines. Burns was captured by the American forces when they took the region but would return following the war to serve the region. Throughout the cities and towns of Upper Canada men served somewhat unofficially in the Presbyterian style as the first official synods were not created until the decades following the war.⁶¹ Like the Anglicans, the Presbyterian ministers were too spread out over too much space but even though many of them did travel long distances to serve the inhabitants, the focus of this

⁶⁰ Gregg, *History*, 188.

⁶¹ The Presbytery of the Canadas was not created until 1818. A year later Archibald Henderson arrived from Scotland with orders to found an official Presbytery. Much to his surprise, Rev. Henderson found one already in operation. He declined the invitation to join the Presbytery he was sent to British North America to start but was successful, given his official status, in accruing a government salary in the colony.

denomination was in the construction of buildings and the ordering of Presbyteries within the larger centres of the province.

D. Statistical Information

To conclude this section, the lack of formal structure in either province in the time around the war make the gathering of accurate statistics a monumental and confusing process. In general, the religious composition of the Canadas was as diverse as the citizenry would suggest, but the closest collections of statistical information to the time under study come from Michael Smith's *Geographical View of Upper Canada* in 1812 and another study found in Gregg's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* dated from 1818. There are noticeable discrepancies between the two accounts as the former argued for a much larger total population than the latter and also put forward a different religious composition of the Upper Province.⁶² According to the 1818 statistics, in both provinces combined there were twenty-four Anglican ministers, sixteen Presbyterian and possibly as many as thirty-eight Wesleyan Methodist ministers (although that number is hard to verify). The Anglicans received income from the SPG, marriages, taxes from Clergy Reserves, Chaplain's wages for those who served thusly, and the tithes of their congregations. Two Lower Canadian Presbyterians received wages of fifty pounds annually for their service as chaplains in Quebec City and Montreal. Revs. Bell and Henderson were awarded government funds of £100/annum for their services and each minister was

⁶² Joseph Bouchette's 1824 statistical information, while not focused on the religious inclinations of Upper Canadians, does support the population counts of the 1818 work. He places the total population of Upper Canada in 1824 at 151 097 and then states, "nearly double what they were in 1811." Therefore, through reducing his number by half, one comes to the similar numerical conclusions that the 1818 census operated under. See Bouchette, *Statistical*, Appendix 2. However, Michael Smith stated in his survey that, "In the year 1811...there were 136000, not including Indians in the settled parts of [the upper] province." See Smith, *Upper Canada*, 58.

entitled to earnings from the tithes of their various congregations. The Methodists of both varieties were wholly dependent on their congregations as they were not allowed to perform weddings or receive government support. While there exists no official records, most scholarship suggests that the population of Upper Canada at the time of the war was around 80,000-100,000 people, of which eighty percent were American-born. Neil Semple makes the argument that, at the outbreak of the war, “twenty-one missionaries were preaching to a membership of about 3,300.”⁶³ Such a number would represent about four percent of the total population, a number that would not seem too impressive and definitely not impressive enough to illicit the concern of the Anglicans. Either Semple is wrong, or the statistics do not take into consideration those who might not have been official members of the Methodist fold even if they enjoyed the denomination’s ministrations, a concept that could easily apply to the isolated members on the frontier.

The 1818 estimates present in Gregg’s book argue that the population of Lower Canada was 375,000 and the population of Upper Canada was 120,000, a substantial growth from the pre-war numbers. The religious composition of the two provinces went as follows: the Anglicans comprised approximately 58,000, the Presbyterians 47,000 and both varieties of Methodists at a combined number of 37,000; the Catholic Church held the majority in the Lower Province. Once again, these statistics likely do not take into account accurately the Episcopal Methodists who would have been the numerical superiors in the Upper Province, but are

⁶³ Semple, *Dominion*, 45.

restricted to those denominations sanctioned or, as was the case with the Wesleyans, tolerated by the government.⁶⁴

However, Michael Smith, once again, recorded different numbers in his 1812 document. According to Smith, the Methodists were the most numerous; the Anglicans had six ministers and the same amount of congregations, whereas the Presbyterians had seven ministers serving ten congregations.⁶⁵ Smith's accounts do not tabulate the grand totals of individuals in each of these churches and he focused more on the composition of the Baptist Churches (not surprising as this was his denomination) but his assessment is hard to rectify with the 1818 and 1824 accounts. This only highlights the difficulty in getting accurate measurements that can be corroborated by several sources. Although two out of the three sources agree with each other, they were produced at a later date. Smith's work was from that time but he cites no source for his numbers and the gross difference in numbers makes it hard to synthesize an accurate estimate.

What can be offered is Anglican Bishop Jacob Mountain's synopsis of the larger religious dialogue that occurred during these turbulent opening decades of the nineteenth century. Seeing the explosive growth of the Episcopal Methodists in Upper Canada, a group whose leaders were "a set of ignorant Enthusiasts whose preaching is calculated only to perplex the understanding & corrupt the morals, to relax the nerve of industry, and dissolve the bands of Society" he viewed the growth of his own denomination as a necessary foil to the Methodists' dangerous influence.⁶⁶ The church was the soul of the society and as these churches attempted to reach out to the

⁶⁴ Gregg, *History*, 210-1. See also Semple, *Dominion*, 40-6 for Methodist counts.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Upper Canada*, 60-1.

⁶⁶ Quote taken from Moir, *British*, 65-6.

parishioners around them, they frequently came into conflict with fellow missionaries attempting to achieve the same goal of a Christian society but through different, and often contrary, ways.⁶⁷

II. Building a Christian Society

A. Marriage, Baptism, and Conversion in a Christian Society

Instead of an increased religious homogeneity in the years between the American rebellion and the War of 1812, the average citizen of British North America, irrespective of where he or she resided, was faced with a surprising multiplicity of ideas and a spiritually pluralistic world.⁶⁸ Nancy Christie states, “In terms of demography, the sacred landscape of Upper Canada, the Maritimes, and Protestant Lower Canada more closely reflected the American experience of extreme religious pluralism and competition, what George Rawlyk has termed a ‘fragmenting religious ethos.’”⁶⁹ It appears that this fragmentation was felt by the Anglicans, who wrote and preached about the need for people to recognize the privileged position they believed was theirs by right.⁷⁰

While it is easy to dismiss such complaints as the outworking of jealousy or loss of control there was also an element of concern that without an established

⁶⁷ John Stuart echoed such sentiments and placed the blame for a growing sympathy towards Methodism at the feet of his co-missionary John Langhorne. In an 1801 letter to the Bishop, Stuart wrote: “I am sorry to add that Mr Langhorne’s uncouth Manners and illiberal Conduct, have given the Methodists...in his Neighbourhood, an Opportunity of drawing away from him many of his former Congregation.” See Stuart, “Letter to Bishop Mountain, 11 May 1801,” as found in Preston, *Kingston*, 319.

⁶⁸ Of course the term “pluralistic” does not equate to the same idea as it does now. Even though nineteenth century Upper Canada was considered pluralistic that would mean a variety of Christian denominations not a variety of belief systems. While today’s understanding of the term implies a multiplicity of faiths other than Christian, at that point in history such an idea and use of the term would be almost totally incomprehensible and alien to the people.

⁶⁹ Christie, “Democratic,” 20.

⁷⁰ “It seems that the leaders of the church were never able to reconcile the world they wanted with the world that was developing.” See Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 97. The defensive tone is present in numerous sermons and writings from the time. Quotes contained within this paper will illustrate this claim.

English church there could not exist a stable English culture. Society was growing and taking shape but without a religious hegemony there was no one who could predict what shape the soul of the culture was going to take.⁷¹ Returning to Strachan's praise of George III allows a glimpse into what he believed was weakening British North America:

In this new country where licentiousness has already made a most alarming progress, you frequently find people living debauched lives disgraceful to themselves and pregnant with future misery. Their numbers indeed keep them in countenance, and conceal, for a time, their contemptible situation. But I might appeal to many keepers who, after living in a degraded manner for a number of years, give their paramour the title of wife not from any affection for her, but on account of compassion for their children: Excluded from genteel society, they drag out a miserable existence, and the vulgarity of their domestic regulations and manners reminds them every day of their folly.⁷²

⁷¹ Speaking to this concern was the SPG report of 1810 that argued that the point of a Christian society was to insure that the Christian message was delivered: "[Because scripture tells us that] 'salvation shall be published to the ends of the earth,' ... [we must] avail ourselves of circumstances as they may arise, to co-operate... by all human means, consistent with prudence, this most gracious design of Providence, is the object, and the duty of that venerable Society... an object more truly pious, more benevolent, more delightful, cannot possibly engage the attention of a real Christian... We are repeatedly, and strictly enjoined to do so. 'Freely ye have received, freely give.'" See Henry, "SPG Report 1809-1810," 7. The freedom to give was eschatological in scope and this theme will re-emerge in the post-war discourse as the churches celebrated the return of peace as the opportunity to get back to the Christian duty of evangelizing the world in the hopes of ushering in the Kingdom of God and the only real and lasting peace that the people could ever truly hope to achieve. An example of this is found in the SPG report from the preceding year: "When 'wars, and rumours of wars,' are incessantly sounding in our ears; when we witness, almost every hour, some new convulsion, more astonishing than the last, we cannot seriously meditate upon these things, without humbly hoping at least, that terrible as such calamities are, in their immediate consequences, they may ultimately tend, to the enlargement of Christ's Kingdom upon earth." See "SPG Report 1809-1810." Such beliefs were found in the first sermons preached by SPG missionaries in British North America immediately following the Revolutionary War. John Doty preached: "That Society whose great employment for near Ninety Years hath been with an Apostolic zeal to propagate the true faith; and who by Divine Assistance, have caused the Light and Truth of the Glorious Gospel of Christ to shine in this Western World so brightly as to pierce through every dark and angry cloud; that venerable Society, incorporated by Royal Charter for the propagation of the Gospel in these and other His Majesty's Foreign Dominions, have sent out the Light and Truth of God's blessed Word to you. THEY are the great Instruments employed by Almighty God to gather you his poor sheep, scattered in the dark and cloudy day, into one fold." See Doty, *Sermon*.

⁷² Strachan, *George*, n. III, 50.

Without an adequate Anglican presence to marry, baptize, teach, and grant spiritual solemnity to time and space, the culture was at risk of descending into immorality and chaos.⁷³

Marriage was viewed as the cornerstone of familial strength that, in turn, strengthened society. The Anglicans defended their sole right to marry the people based on the understanding that it was central to the survival and continued stability of society; to allow others to partake in that could undermine the very values they argued marriage was designed to defend.⁷⁴ This, along with the baptizing of children and the other numerous ways in which the church ministered to people throughout their lives, spoke to the understanding that society must embody Christian principles because all human interactions had spiritual ramifications.⁷⁵

Baptisms were also of extreme importance both spiritually and culturally. They were public events at which extra-familial bonds were publicly declared in the role of godparents. Strachan chose “the Honourable Richard Cartwright and Andrew Stuart Esq.” for the Godfathers of his son George and Cartwright’s wife, Margaret,

⁷³ William Westfall summarized the Anglican concern like this: “It simply would not do for the church to send out a gaggle of poorly trained itinerant preachers who excited the emotions of the people, pronounced them saved, and then passed out of their daily existence. Conversion was a gradual affair in which reason slowly overcame the passions; therefore, proper religion demanded a system in which the clergy lived with their people continuously so that they would be present to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, baptize the young, solemnize marriages, and bury the dead.” See Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 98-9.

⁷⁴ The sanctity of marriage was defended as being embodied by the king’s own attention to the issue. Strachan wrote: “And let not the dissipated, the giddy or the proud consider it a matter of small importance to give a faithful example in this the most interesting of all our relations; for, by this lesson, our affectionate king endeavours, as far as in him lies, to maintain the purity of morals in their source, for all the most valuable virtues begin at home. When marriage, that bond of happiness, that golden chain which softens and humanizes man, which expands his benevolent affections, and prepares for him, new and more endearing duties, is polluted, or even tarnished, what terrible consequences ensue.” See Strachan, *George*, 10-1.

⁷⁵ In 1814 in the case of John Backhouse and Hannah Dedrick who desired to be married and found “no pastor or minister of the Church of England living within eighteen miles of them” were therefore married by a Justice of the Peace—Thomas Bowley—as granted by an “Act of Legislation in this province passed in the thirty third year of His Majesty’s reign.” See Marriage Certificate No. 33, 1814.

was named the Godmother.⁷⁶ The performance of the sacrament were not private expressions of faith but were public declarations that literally placed a spiritual family on display for the larger congregation.⁷⁷ These infant baptisms, while central to the Anglican and Presbyterian churches, contradicted the Methodist notion that true conversion could only happen when a person was able to make the decision to follow Christ for his or her self. Freeborn Garrettson grew up within the Anglican fold but still recorded a moment of adult conversion “that led to his separation from the Church of England and his association with the evangelical Methodists.” His conviction that true faith called him out of Anglican religion factored prominently in his spiritual autobiography, so much so that “the conversion process of the narrative is not brought to a final conclusion until Garrettson joins the Methodists.”⁷⁸

That was not to say that the Anglicans, for example, did not also view conversion as a significant and important aspect of the Christian experience. In a scathing public letter to Robert Haldane, James Reid accused Haldane of abandoning the minister to an Upper Canadian congregation of Presbyterians that neither wanted him nor knew he was coming. While such a letter is useful in exploring another element of the struggles these early missionaries faced, his opening paragraphs offer insight into how Reid viewed his own conversion experience. Although, like Garrettson, Reid was a professing Christian, his 1801 encounter with a Mr. Campbell’s sermons in Dunkeld, Scotland led him to a new understanding of the faith

⁷⁶ As found in the “1812 Register of Trinity Anglican Church in Cornwall, 25 February 1812,” 102.

⁷⁷ When Hannah Cook, daughter of John and Sarah Cook, was privately baptized on 24 July 1813 the register of Trinity Anglican in Cornwall noted the oddity that the event had taken place privately, without noting why it had transpired as such.

⁷⁸ Payne, “Garrettson,” 38. “Thus Garrettson’s [autobiography], which appeared on all of the surviving book lists of early Methodism as ‘the first truly American item,’ provided an effectual model of pious autobiography for many subsequent generations of American evangelicals, both within and without the Methodist tradition.” See Payne, “Garrettson,” 32.

that inspired profound personal change. Reflecting on one of Campbell's sermons, Reid explained that he "was pleased with his manner, and became one of his most diligent and passionate hearers. Deeply impressed with the glorious views of the Gospel which he displayed, I became more desirous of obtaining a better acquaintance with religious truth, and for this purpose I applied for admission into his Church."⁷⁹ The difference between Reid's conversion and a conversion account like the one produced by Garrettson was that the former was convinced by the argument and logic versus the latter's emotional sense of needing to be saved from an overwhelming burden of sin.⁸⁰

The logic of the gospel, properly expounded and taught, was the cornerstone of Anglican and Presbyterian belief in the power of their role in society to change people for the better. Preaching on this very topic at St. Armand in Lower Canada in 1811, Charles Stewart made the statement that, despite the more emotional appeals of the Methodists, he believed reason was the greatest gift bestowed upon humans. Stewart supported this controversial claim by arguing: "Without reason Revelation is useless" but cautioned the people not to become enamoured with their own intellects because human reason faltered if it was placed "above the Revelation and the instruction of God."⁸¹ Stewart compiled a book of prayers that, while published in 1814, contained many entries that pre-dated the war. One such entry from a minister by the name of Kettlewell labeled the Methodist focus on sin as being "perplexing"

⁷⁹ Reid, *Narrative*, x.

⁸⁰ "Let us make religion the great business of our lives, and while we have time and opportunity, let us prepare ourselves by a life of virtue and righteousness, for that great account which we must one day give. Let not the pleasures and vanities of this world...make us unmindful of the great and momentous concerns of eternity." See Stewart, *Prayers*, 73.

⁸¹ Stewart, *Cornerstone*, 6.

and in need of remedy. Among many other aspects of the long prayer was the following:

O Lord our God, we offer up our humble supplication to thee in behalf of this thy servant, whose soul is disquieted within him, by his fears and anxiety, respecting the safety of his condition. Remove from him, we entreat thee, all frightful apprehensions, all perplexing doubts, and scruples about his duty. Make him satisfied and settled in a right understanding of all thy precepts, and careful in the observance of them; and dispel by the light of thy countenance, all that darkness, which obscures his soul, that he may not be unnecessarily dejected, and distrustful of himself, or dishonourably jealous of thee. Deliver him from all those offences, which make him so much a stranger to peace and comfort; and cause him to place his chief satisfaction and delight in obeying thy commandments, and in meditating on thy mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁸²

Therefore conversion was less about an emotional terror derived from a belief about sin and more about the gradual awareness of the truths contained within the gospel, extrapolated and explained by educated and rational clergy.

It was not just infant baptism or conversion narratives that raised the ire between the two faiths on the frontier but also how the people were called to utilize their leisure time. Whereas the Anglicans saw such activities as cards and dances as more than just distractions but as necessary for the promotion of true civilization, the Methodists viewed them as evidence of a debauched culture. Joseph Gatchell recorded his conversion experience in which he wrote of a profound sense of being called from a life of sin and brought, by the mercy of God, into a life dedicated to holiness.⁸³ Telling of the night he came to true religion he wrote:

⁸² Kettlewell, "A Prayer for one under Fears and Doubts concerning his Spiritual Condition; or under perplexing Thoughts and Scruples about his Duty" as found in Stewart, *Prayers*, 200.

⁸³ Joseph Gatchell (1783-1862) was a Methodist Episcopal minister. He was born in Maryland and raised a Quaker, converting to Methodism in 1800. He was stationed in Upper Canada from 1809 to 1812, and was ordained in 1811. He both travelled and was stationed in a number of charges in Upper Canada between 1812 and 1838, and after the union of Wesleyan Methodists in 1834 he helped

I only accompanied my dear sister to the meeting with the determination to go from the prayer meeting to the ballroom but in this, I am of the belief that the ever Blessed Lord overruled by His Almighty Spirit all my wicked designs but instid [sic] of attending the ball I was be divine Grace arrested in my wickedness and that same evening, I was so deeply convicted that from that evening I began to repent for all my sins and to seek the Lord day and knight [sic] by humble prayer and Faith in Jesus Christ our Blessed Saviour and what was very remarkable I was wonderfully preserved from being led away by my old and wicked companions in Sin ye I was mercifully preserved indeed for I was a Lamb among wolves but through Divine mercy I was not overcome⁸⁴

Garrettson likewise withdrew from such behaviours out of the belief that they were sinful. In fact, it was Asbury's condemnation of those actions that led him to "cry out 'How does this stranger know me so well!'" and then remove himself from the Anglican to the Methodist faith.⁸⁵

B. Church Structures and the Role of Religion in Society

It is inaccurate to argue that the Anglicans were merely pandering to gain social influence without any regard for the spiritual welfare of the people, they just believed that a Christian culture was created differently.⁸⁶ The Anglicans and Presbyterians built churches so that people could congregate and have a common building in which to be educated and given structure.⁸⁷ At the dedication of St. Paul's in Lower Canada in 1811, Charles Stewart summed up the issue concisely for his

organize the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada. He retired to Lockport, New York, and remained involved in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

⁸⁴ Gatchell, *Life*, 9.

⁸⁵ Payne, "Garrettson," 40.

⁸⁶ "The structure of sacerdotal ministry was hierarchical. Much of its authority came from its being closely linked with a stable, centralized state. Americanization shattered both these patterns. A new kind of ministry emerged, 'evangelical' in relying on informal means of persuasion and wholly separate from the state." See Hall, "Religion," 319.

⁸⁷ As was noted earlier, there is some evidence that the Methodists and Wesleyans also constructed churches at this time. However, they were less numerous than the Anglicans and they seemed to build churches after they had reached people and founded a certain amount of interest in their brand of Christianity. This was in opposition to the Anglicans who built the churches in order to bring the people.

congregants by reminding them that the building in which services were held was more than simply rocks and timber because it contained “the peculiar holiness of God’s House.” He went on to remind them that the building formed not just a social place of interaction but a spiritual one as well, with a legacy that dated back to Christ himself who taught that “‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.’ These words of Jesus Christ are a proof of God’s presence in the house of assembling in his name.”⁸⁸ Sunday worship reminded the people that every week, wherever they might find themselves, began with the worship of God to remind them that the rest of the week, no matter what might befall them, belonged to, and was sustained by, that very same God.⁸⁹

Stewart defended the belief that the church was central for personal devotion and the honouring of God against the apparently popular notion that churches were not required for the spiritual health of the land.⁹⁰ To that end, he preached: “Neither think, that places of worship are not any longer particularly holy to the Lord, and that he is not particularly present in them [like he was in the Tabernacle of the Jewish people]; or that carefully and piously prepared forms of service are not acceptable to him, and sanctified by his spirit.” While Stewart did contrast the biblical role of the temple with what he held to be the contemporary aspect of houses of worship, he

⁸⁸ Stewart, *Dedication*, 6.

⁸⁹ Although referencing the developments in England, James Reid’s views on the role of itinerancy and church structures from around this time also revealed a move from the former to the latter: “By degrees, however, the Society relaxed its operations, itinerancies became less frequent, and permanent Churches superseded them.” See Reid, *Narrative*, xii.

⁹⁰ This was not an argument that was new to the land. In 1785 John Doty explained the significance of the church: joyfully embrace every opportunity of uniting in these sacred offices of Religion, that we may be knit together in mutual Love, increasing in all the Social and Christian virtues; and that those of the contrary part, beholding our piety and god works, may reproach us no more. Let the purity and rectitude of our whole conduct be a witness of the Superior Excellency of our Faith; in all things endeavouring to approve ourselves The True Worshippers, who Worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. In a word, let us be really and truly what this house is figuratively, the Church of Christ. See Doty, *Sermon*, 12.

reflected the Anglican celebration of sound doctrinal teaching and the use of reason to convince the minds of the faithful, the wayward, and the unconverted. He saw, in such forms of worship as took place within the Anglican churches, evidence of the new dispensation of God's kingdom as well as the church structure's role within it. He followed up the preceding statement and explained: "But, do not now expect visible manifestations of the spirit, except I might say, in the form of sound words, the Gospel, 'committed unto you,' 'which is spirit,' and revelation, sufficient to teach you all things. Search that, according to its directions and dictates, and it will make you wise to Salvation."⁹¹ In that statement is one of the more obvious rejections of the enthusiastic manifestations of Methodism that their theology argued was evidence of the spirit and validation for their manners.

However, for Stewart, the true power of the spirit was in the global communication of the Gospel so that people could hear the message of Jesus and be saved. What they needed to become "wise to Salvation" was not the miraculous outpourings of supernatural events that the people of the Old Testament experienced. What they needed was the clear communication of the Gospel, the message to which all those other miracles and events were pointing. The existence of the house of worship, the liturgy, and intelligent preaching offered people access to knowledge about God that their predecessors could never have known and such knowledge revealed a less obvious, but ultimately more beneficial, spiritual power.

However, the Methodists saw the inability of such buildings to reach certain people and argued, if the institution provided the means for salvation and societal

⁹¹ Stewart, *Dedication*, 10.

reform, why were so many people living beyond its reach?⁹² In a letter from 1810, Gatchell reflected his excitement that, “the Methodist Church was in a true State of Spiritual prosperity and ware [sic] a truly Spiritual people” before stating that the spirituality of the people was reflected by their lack of concern “to please men and to become popular in the wourld [sic].” Whether looking at Methodism as an intellectual or cultural force in the pre-war days of the Canadas, the religion cannot be understood apart from the theological and spiritual convictions that its adherents used to define their faith. Gatchell completed the praise of his church’s state by commenting not that their primary goal was not just influencing the provinces but “labouring to promote the Glory of God.”⁹³ All the denominations professed that it was the love of God and concern for humanity that motivated their actions, but the way in which that love was shown created ecclesiastical rivalries as the churches struggled to save the souls of both provinces.⁹⁴

C. Religious Rivalries and Faithless Foes

The majority of the discourse related to religious rivalries is found within the various Anglican writings of the time as they launched complaints against what they perceived to be the Methodist scourge that was unduly influencing the climate of the

⁹²The theology behind such tactics is explained by Nancy Christie, “authority devolved not from one’s social betters or man-made government institutions, but was granted to each individual directly from God.” See Christie, “Democratic,” 26. This is not to say that the Methodists were opposed to education, an argument the Anglicans made, because Asbury was always very concerned with Christian teachings. French writes, “despite the tremendous task of evangelizing the frontier and the educational limitations of preachers and people, the early Methodist Church kept alive a concern for education in a Christian environment.” See French, *Parsons*, 23. It appears they were simply attempting to balance the need for education with the equally pressing needs of frontier evangelism.

⁹³ Gatchell, *Life*, 24.

⁹⁴ “[T]he first years of the new century witnessed a tremendous rise in missionary interest, through which the Christian needs of the world overseas came to be regarded with as much lively concern as had been those of the English people in the past.” See French, *Parsons*, 55.

Canadas.⁹⁵ Some of the most prominent adjectives used to describe Methodist worship of that time were enthusiastic, loud, uncouth, disorganized and emotional.

Critics like John Strachan lambasted the audacity of their services:

The Methodists are making great progress among us and filling the country with the most deplorable fanaticism. You can have almost no conception of their excesses. They will bawl twenty of them at once, tumble on the ground, laugh, sing, jump, and stamp, and this they call the working of the spirit.⁹⁶

Methodist historian Neil Semple agrees with Strachan's description, if not his vitriolic condemnation of such events.⁹⁷ He describes Methodist worship as, "boisterous and undisciplined and sometimes argumentative." As if this were not enough to irk Anglican attitudes he continues writing, "Services were frequently broken up by shouting or criticisms or by cries of ecstasy and pleas for grace from members of the congregation."⁹⁸ This type of behaviour would have been exactly the kind of thing that would strengthen Anglican criticisms that Methodism, like democracy, was a breeder of violence and a disturbance to the tranquility of the colony.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Also, there exists little Methodist writings because, as John Carroll explains: "writers among the travelling preachers were then [1810] few and far between. Then Methodist Preachers kept themselves to preaching and prayer." See Carroll, *Case*, 6:197.

⁹⁶ Strachan, "Letter, 13 July 1806," as found in Henderson, *Strachan*, 25. Nancy Christie also cites how their theology offended the Anglican respect for British institutions, "[Itinerant preachers] transplanted the ideology of equality and liberty into British North America, where their radical religious tenets found a sympathetic hearing among the American Loyalists who were largely common folk, small farmers and artisans." See Christie, "Democratic," 28.

⁹⁷ In fairness, the Methodists were rarely silent in their critiques of Anglican worship as is evidenced in this quote from 1828, "I believe but a small portion of the population... is attached to the Church of England. The progress of her establishment is very slow, compared with that of some other denominations. This may arise from various causes, as 1st—From a dislike in the people to her ceremonies and forms of worship. 2nd—From the matter and manner of preaching..." Ryerson quoting Elder William Case in, "Epochs", 491. He also criticized the hypocrisy and "anti-Christian" attitudes of the clergy.

⁹⁸ Semple, *Dominion*, 44.

⁹⁹ "[The Methodists] also received a high degree of opprobrium from [their] conservative opponents. I [Cecilia Morgan] have not found that Baptists, for example, were so constantly and consistently identified with the threat of anarchy as were Methodists." See Morgan, *Public Men*, 99.

But the Methodists saw within such actions a passion for Christ that the institutional churches failed to incite. Writing about the 1805 Hay Bay gathering in the Bay of Quinte region, Goldwin French records some of Henry Ryan's experiences, "the power of the Spirit was manifested throughout the whole encampment and almost every tent was a scene of prayer." French goes on to say that Bangs recalled that the "parting scene was indescribable. The preachers... hung upon each other's necks, weeping and yet rejoicing.... As the hosts marched off in different directions the songs of victory rolled along the highways. Great was the good that followed."¹⁰⁰ For those who were not theologically opposed to the Methodists, their brand of worship was something to behold and enjoy. Amelia Harris is again useful because she wrote about how the unique style of Methodist worship impacted her and her fellow townspeople.¹⁰¹ Writing later in life Amelia recalled:

Their sermons and prayers were very loud, forcible and energetic and if they had been printed verbatim would have looked a sad jumble of words. They encouraged an open demonstration of feeling amongst their hearers, the louder the more satisfactory, but notwithstanding the criticisms and ridicule cast upon those early preachers. They shared their poverty and entered in to all their feelings and although unlearned they taught the one true doctrine to serve God in Spirit and in Truth. And their lives bore testimony to their sincerity.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ French, "Ryan," n.l. Hay Bay, "was attended by approximately 2,500 people (about 5 percent of the total Upper Canadian population)" Rawlyk, *Fire*, 120. Such a revival, no doubt, concerned the Anglicans of the region but, from a purely strategic perspective, the existence of such a disproportionately large group of people together—organized by theological dissenters with democratic sentiments from America—had political implications as well.

¹⁰¹ "Although the Long Point Settlement was in existence thirty years before we had a resident clergyman of the Church of England [Rev. Francis Evans], yet I cannot recollect one member who had seceded from the Church. Many had died and many communed with the Methodist who did not belong to them." See Harris in Talman, *Loyalist*, 144.

¹⁰² Amelia Harris in Talman, *Loyalist*, 143.

Thus were the Methodists seen by friendly, if unfamiliar, eyes: men with an odd style but also men of sincere faith. Their enthusiasm and exuberance brought much needed relief and the promise of spiritual joy to an otherwise harsh existence.

Commenting on the equality of believers espoused by the Methodists, the Anglicans theologically defended the need for a hierarchical system because, “In all our social relations, we should be directed by justice, lenity and kindness: careful to cultivate meekness, forbearance and brotherly love; and to discharge, with fidelity, the duties *of our particular station*.”¹⁰³ John Strachan actively campaigned against this notion of the power of the individual out of his belief that stable society necessitated a social hierarchy: “It is evident that there is a subordination in the Natural World. We may extend the analogy and suppose that it is the intention of nature that the like subordination should prevail in the Modern World.”¹⁰⁴ Such “republican” beliefs were responsible for the chaos of both the American and French revolutions and had no place in the colony. He declared, in 1806, that the “Methodists did not follow the ‘rational doctrines’ of the Church of England, and therefore were suspected of ‘republican ideas of independence and individual freedom.’”¹⁰⁵ The lack of decorum and formal training opened the Methodists up to the criticism that they did not have the qualifications to properly expound the scriptures in ways that were

¹⁰³ Strachan, *George*, 15. Italics added for emphasis

¹⁰⁴ Quoted from Rawlyk, *Fire*, 19.

¹⁰⁵ Rawlyk, *Fire*, 15. However, such sentiments were not the sole property of Anglicans of British North America. In his 1811 sermon from Plymouth, Massachusetts James Kendall also attacked the lack of logic and education present within Methodist itinerants. He preached: “[Missionaries must not be] *novices*; but men of talents and information, that they may be able also to teach others. But it is said, the apostles were ignorant, that they were illiterate, that they were fishermen; but were nevertheless commissioned, and sent, to preach the gospel to all the world. They were indeed commissioned, and sent this heavenly errand. But not until they had spent several years under the immediate instruction of their divine Master. Not until their minds were miraculously endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So far from being sent, they were expressly forbidden to *depart*, and commanded to *wait*, until they were thus qualified” See Kendall, *Sermon*, 18. Italics part of the original quote

honouring to God and, as such, were dangerous to spiritual growth and social responsibility.

John Langhorn was a noted Anglican eccentric in the region but his complaints about the Methodists was that their behaviour and beliefs brought division to the body of Christ. However, Langhorn's contempt was not reserved for Methodists alone, Presbyterian ministers were also perceived as divisive and deplorable elements within the land.¹⁰⁶ Curtis Fahey writes: "Believing [dissenters] were sinful schismatics who were doomed in the world to come, Langhorn would go to any lengths to avoid coming in contact with them. He would not walk on the same side of the road as a dissenter, and he refused to enter the house of a woman who had been married by a Presbyterian minister."¹⁰⁷ Although couched in religious language, the threat of such division was that it undermined the stability of the congregations that the SPG had charged Langhorn with instructing. He so adamantly despised those not of the Anglican persuasion that he refused all contact out of the fear that it might imply his consent of their beliefs. During a storm, Langhorn was caught outside and when a local Methodist offered him a ride he simply replied: "Sir, you are a promoter [of] schism in the flock of Christ. I cannot therefore have any intercourse with you, much less accept any favour from you. Please keep at your side of the road & go your way."¹⁰⁸ Langhorn was not popular even among his own people, mostly because he was fond of chastising them for their lack of spiritual fidelity and apparently had a

¹⁰⁶ "A great part of my Parish belongs to the Lutheran persuasion, a greater has no religion at all. A number of the people are Catholics, and plenty of Presbyterians, with a few Methodists &c. You see I am in a pickle." See Fahey, *Name*, 15.

¹⁰⁷ Fahey, *Name*, 22-3

¹⁰⁸ Fahey, *Name*, 23.

penchant for writing bawdy and obscene songs about the Methodists.¹⁰⁹ Complaining to the SPG, he lamented that providence had placed him on such “a tedious piece of ground...[wherein] great opposition there is made to me” before charging that the “people here encourage [American Presbyterian ministers], and such like trash to come hither, and run after them with great eagerness.”¹¹⁰

Charles Stewart brought a more conciliatory spirit to the charged religious environment. He was so pleasant to the various denominations that Bishop Jacob Mountain felt the need to defend the man for not being as incensed as his co-Anglicans: “in no part of the world, perhaps, has the power of Religion more decidedly & more rapidly manifested itself than here. Mr. S., without any sort of cant & without the least appearance of enthusiasm, has more zeal, & more persevering activity than it has ever before been my good fortune to witness”¹¹¹ Mountain’s express use of the term “enthusiasm” illustrates the concern many had regarding how the Methodists conducted their worship.¹¹² However, Stewart’s 1808 report to the SPG asserts that while “there are many Methodists and Baptists who have Meetings in this Neighbourhood” he did not encounter any hostility from them and went so far

¹⁰⁹ In an amusing letter to the SPG, Jacob Mountain recalled Langhorn’s ability to offend most people and the aforementioned song: “[Langhorne] composed what he calls a song in order to ridicule that Society [of Methodists]. This composition, neither rhyme nor reason, both vulgar and obscene, he circulated through the neighbourhood, & even occasionally attempted to sing; & such is his weakness & folly, that he considers it as the utmost effort of human genius” Mountain, “Letter to the SPG, 24 October 1804,” as found in Preston, *Kingston*, 326.

¹¹⁰ Fahey, *Name*, 14.

¹¹¹ Little, *Borderland*, 48. Italics added for emphasis.

¹¹² For more on the concern within Anglican Churches that their ministers be perceived as staunchly anti-enthusiastic see Gauvreau, “Dividends,” 199-203 especially for the story of Nova Scotian Anglican Rev. Henry Hayden who adopted a more “effusive” manner of speaking in what Gauvreau describes as bringing more “‘evangelical’ practices into church services; in modern parlance this would be called a form of outreach to non-Anglicans.” Such enthusiasm was greeted with joy by some but the Bishop regarded it with concern and suspicion. Gauvreau reports that Bishop John Inglis’ removal of “the well-educated, and arguably quite popular, Hayden was clearly designed to prevent the emergence of an Evangelical ‘party’ in his diocese that might contest his authority.” See Gauvreau, “Dividends,” 201 and 202 respectively.

as to write: “it is fair to say they are not illiberal towards me.”¹¹³ He held that the other denominations, while ignorant, were still people of faith and were to be treated and viewed accordingly. While he agreed with Langhorn’s and Strachan’s assessment about the divisive and uneducated nature of the teachers, he did not believe that the people of the provinces were “less religious, or more unchristian” because of their influence. To counter that idea he wrote: “I find sincere Christians of all denominations; and no wonder they are divided, where they have no teachers except Methodists and Baptists, and they very ignorant.”¹¹⁴ While more gracious, Stewart still displayed the Anglican belief that his church alone could offer the best version of Christian teaching with the greatest possible social benefit to the colony.¹¹⁵

The Methodists received the bulk of the discourse because they were the most numerous and influential of the other faith groups in the Canadas. In 1806, John Strachan wrote a letter in which he stated the troubling success of the Methodists and that they were, “making great progress among us and filling the country with the most deplorable fanaticism.” He then went on to explain that their popularity was due, not to their superiority of religion, but should be credited to “the fewness of the clergy, there being only six of us in the upper province.”¹¹⁶ Strachan believed that the Methodists were all flash and no substance and would betray the people into feeling saved but not give them any teaching because they traveled from place to place. Strachan believed all that was necessary to remedy the situation was to “settle a

¹¹³ Stewart’s 1808 report to the SPG as found in Little, *Borderland*, 48.

¹¹⁴ Little, *Borderland*, 48.

¹¹⁵ Stuart would even claim that “[Americans] make the best settlers in a new country; and the most certain way of making them, and all men, good subjects is, taking care to promote the welfare and prosperity of the country they live in. This is chiefly to be done by making laws and regulations calculated to maintain industry, morality, and religion among the inhabitants.” See Little, *Borderland*, 49.

¹¹⁶ Strachan to Brown, “Letter 13 July 1806,” as found in Henderson, *Documents*, 25.

Minister among [the frontier people] to answer their doubts and remove their scruples, to accustom them to *the form of worship*, and to explain the doctrines of the Gospel, and they will soon collect around him and consider themselves his flock.”¹¹⁷ He believed that it was not their religious superiority that garnered their success but the simple fact that they were the only option.

Writing under the pseudonym of “The Reckoner” in the 22 January 1811 issue of the *Kingston Gazette*, Strachan continued to stress the idea that dissenting churches were too shocking and unorthodox—in style and theology—to retain their influence over the people for any significant duration of time. Although the point of the article was a lament on the general state of irreligion in Upper Canada, he took the opportunity to insert his belief about the extremeness of Methodist worship when he penned the following:

Men are daily found assuming professions for which they have never made any preparation. I speak not at present of self-ordained preachers, who come round filling the heads of the ignorant with the most hateful superstition, because their ignorance and folly at length appear so conspicuous as even to shock their own followers.¹¹⁸

His confidence in this assertion inspired an idea of how best to remove the people from the Methodist fold. He believed that tact was necessary to win the people over and stated “I will gradually lead my readers in favour of the Church taking care to insert nothing particularly offensive to Dissenters.” Following that, as people became more receptive to his teachings, he argued that “we can be more explicit” before stating that since the Anglican Church did not enjoy the solidarity it desired, “caution is necessary as the whole of the population not of our Church is ready to join against

¹¹⁷ Fahey, *Name*, 25.

¹¹⁸ “The Reckoner,” *Kingston Gazette*, 22 January 1811. [n.p.]

us.”¹¹⁹ Whether it was Langhorn’s vitriol, Stewart’s appreciation, or Strachan’s conniving, all three men reveal that the Methodist presence in the Canadas was an issue of concern.

Words like establishment and dissenter still carried meaning over from their European origins even as the “new world” of American influence challenged such assumptions through action as much as discourse. National allegiances grew in importance as certain churches attempted to extol what they believed to be the superior Christian character of the British Empire against their religious rivals. In so doing they applied an American versus England dichotomy to the religious landscape that would receive tremendous significance when the former declared war on the latter.

III. Christian Nations

A. England is Better Than America

The fact that missionaries were responsible for the religious education of the colony made the place of one’s birth and where one received one’s education a quick indicator about what sort of theology one would espouse. Such concerns were not only important within ecclesiastical circles but also had profound impact on the political spheres of the land. Religion’s influence over governance has been concisely argued by Sydney Wise’s statement: “Only religion teaches that the government is ordained by God, a principle that gives the state an authority that no secular sanction can give it. Only religion renders man conscious of the all-seeing eye of God and of

¹¹⁹ Fahey, *Name*, 25.

his own ultimate accountability to God.”¹²⁰ Therefore, those who traced their roots to the British Isles—be they Anglican, Presbyterian or Wesleyan—found useful ammunition against their American-based foes. The fact that the Revolution had birthed Upper Canada proved useful to garner early support for more British churches, but the later influx of American immigrants with no attachment to England rendered many of those critiques impotent. Therefore, heading into the second decade of the 1800s, England was heralded to those latecomers who had grown up in the Republic that the empire was the truest champion of human freedom based on the Christian nature of its king, constitution, and laws.¹²¹

Nowhere in the discourse of the churches is the distance between England and the colony felt more than in the need to assert England’s superiority over America. The cultural realities of British North America necessitated lengthy and frequent appeals to the character of the empire out of the fear that the inhabitants were just as prone to ally with the Republic as with England. How the clergy framed such discussions provides an analysis of empire informed by peripheral tensions that would not have been an issue to the inhabitants of London. Those living in the heart of the empire had the luxury of critiquing imperial policies and even praising certain attributes of the American experiment, this was not so for the loyal adherents of Upper and Lower Canada.

¹²⁰ Wise, “Sermon Literature,” 87.

¹²¹ Somewhat ironically, it would be the transatlantic nature of evangelicalism that would tie British North America to England as well as the United States. Rather than seeing some form of nascent “Canadianna” as evidenced in the rejection of all things American, it is better to understand, as this work will show, that the role of religion—specifically in this case, evangelicalism—as an intellectual and cultural influence necessitated connections to both the empire and the republic. It is also important to note that evangelicalism existed within Anglican circles in the Canadas as well. For more on the global influence of evangelicalism and how that influence impacted the development of Upper and Lower Canadian Christianity, see Gauvreau, “Dividends.”

James Reid's training in Scotland provides an example of concessions that could be made within the British Isles that could not translate to the colonial experience. He stated in his published letter that "[The SPG] publicly avowed, that they had no intention of forming a new sect, but wished that Christians of all divisions would join in promoting pure and undefiled Religion." He went on to offer as proof of their sincerity in this proclamation that "the Society occasionally employed Ministers, whether Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or Independents, to preach throughout the country."¹²² The political realities of the land were too tentative to allow the influence of other religious groups and even those who were Presbyterian were frequently persuaded to join the Anglican fold from the argument that the SPG could better support them.¹²³ Whereas the political backdrop of the British Isles was more set in the establishment of the church, a fact that allowed for some leniency, the same could not be said of the landscape of the colony and therefore, the Anglican Church guarded their abilities to evangelize with greater jealousy. An even starker example of this from Reid's writings follows. After completing his schooling and beginning his ministry in Aberfeldie he wrote: "we were exhorted to avoid speaking on Politics, either publicly or privately; and to confine ourselves to preaching salvation to the people—to shew no preference to any denomination of Christians, but to pay the same respect to the dissenters as those of the established church—to exhort our hearers to attend wherever the Gospel was preached in purity."¹²⁴ Other than the

¹²² Reid, *Narrative*, x-xi.

¹²³ Reid himself, while a member of the Established Church of Scotland, became a paid missionary of the SPG after a near disastrous earlier missionary effort to Upper Canada. For more on the tale of Reid see the introduction of chapter four in this work.

¹²⁴ Reid, *Narrative*, xii

kind words Charles Stewart had for the “ignorant” Methodist and Baptist preachers in his region, such beliefs or policies were not to be found in British North America.¹²⁵

John Strachan took issue with “the praises bestowed upon the United States on your side of the water” and utilized his own proximity to the American political scene in order to educate those he believed supported it out of ignorance of its true character. He explained to his reader, “A few months residence in America would greatly chastise a man’s political notions.” In case that was not enough he explained that the “frequency of their elections keeps them in a continual broil. To promote the interests of their factions they do not hesitate to fabricate the grossest falsehoods and most horrid slanders” before assuring that “I am as friendly as ever to true liberty, but experience and observation teach me to modify my improvements.”¹²⁶ British North America faced a perpetual threat of being annexed into the democratic giant to the south and, as such, dissent—be it political or religious—could have no place in the colony.

B. Personal Freedom

In order to enamor the empire to people who, for the most part, seemed uninterested in the topic, the pro-England clergy used the appeal to personal freedom as a motivator for loyalty. The respect for human liberty, it was argued, was

¹²⁵ John Strachan’s discourse on George included some positive comments regarding those he labeled as Dissenters that might argue against this statement. This will be addressed in a subsequent section of this work.

¹²⁶ John Strachan to Brown, “Letter 21 Oct 1809,” as found in Henderson, *Documents*, 26. In contrast to the cruel and pandering American politicians, examine the integrity of the King who is the same man in private as he is in public: “It is this coincidence between his public and private character, that enables our gracious sovereign to establish his throne in the hearts of his people. They believe all his professions, for his actions prove their sincerity and truth; and they willingly surrender their affections to a sovereign whose greatest ambition is to render them happy.” See Strachan, *George*, 12.

evidenced by the generosity of the empire towards the French in Lower Canada.

Strachan called people to remember that:

In this respect, the British empire is united; for with a generosity, never before equaled, these liberties were extended without reserve, to the French inhabitants of Lower Canada. This portion of a once great and gallant nation, were received as fellow subjects; every mark of subjection was carefully removed; their very prejudices have been treated with the greatest respect, and they are left in the full exercise of their religion and of all their civil rights.¹²⁷

Such a statement served the two-fold purpose of illustrating a local example of imperial benevolence along with reminding the French population—a group that always remained suspect—that they had already been the recipients of British mercy and had benefited in kind.¹²⁸

While Strachan used King George's policies towards Catholics to win sympathy over to the British side, he also included apparent sympathy for the plight of the Dissenters. To that end he penned the following:

Wishing to unite all his subjects in harmony and peace, he has gradually removed those religious disabilities which the seclusion of the Stuarts from the throne and the protection of the national church had rendered necessary. Many severe laws had been enacted against the Catholics, who were supposed the friends of the banished family, and the Dissenters, by forsaking the established church, deprived themselves of many valuable privileges which their fellow subjects enjoyed. But no sooner did these dangers diminish, than the king cheerfully concurred in lessening the restrictions. From the reign of king William to that of our present sovereign, the Catholics of England had laboured under many privations, with a silence and patience which at length excited the attention of the nation. The parliament therefore, in conjunction with the king, removed those grievous penalties which had been imposed for the preservation of the constitution, then struggling into birth. That liberal spirit of christian [sic] charity which animates our king, made him rejoice in promoting such a measure, and eager to repeal laws which were calculated (now that their cause was

¹²⁷ Strachan, *George*, 40.

¹²⁸ It must not be forgotten that Strachan's book was published in a Montreal publishing house in order to insure that it would at least have a presence in the lower province.

removed) to destroy all social and religious obligations, to poison the sources of domestic felicity, and to extinguish every principle of honour.¹²⁹

Strachan's arguments were clever in that they both displayed George's benevolence and included a warning that dissenters would enjoy certain rights under George's government so long as they posed no danger to the stability of the society. Such an argument allowed Strachan to illustrate that England had a proven record of rewarding those who remained loyal and the only ones who suffered under the rules of the crown were those who brought it upon themselves.

Another example used to illustrate personal freedom as a defining motif of the empire was the abolition of the slave trade. In his 1811 sermon, James Kendall reflected on a visible attribute of England's Christian character when he stated: "[England] has done so much in order to convey the blessings of the gospel to the pagan world; a nation, that has taken the lead in the Abolition of the African slave trade." He then went on to affirm that the spread of British civilization provided an ideal atmosphere wherein the message of Christianity had the best chance of taking root and growing. Still commenting on the abolition of the slave trade, Kendall then explained that removing the diabolical institution was done "for the express purpose of providing them with the blessings of civilization, and thus preparing the way for the better reception of the still greater blessings of the gospel."¹³⁰ English civilization and society was seen as the vehicle through which the gospel could be delivered to the world. Strachan's praise of George III presents this idea in theological language. In regards to abolition, he wrote:

¹²⁹ Strachan, *George*, 24-5.

¹³⁰ Kendall, *Sermon 1811*, n C, 33.

It was reserved for the present reign to put an end to a traffic which had long been a disgrace to the nation and to all Europe, a traffic which gave currency to the most savage opinions, which occasioned the most dreadful crimes, which put all moral law to defiance, and which substituted the dominion of force for that of reason. The blood of the innocent Africans no longer cries to Heaven against us. Commerce has been taught to respect the laws of humanity, and the unhappy negroes are acknowledged to be men. Our sovereign rejoiced in passing this salutary law; he rejoiced in the annihilation of a trade at which future ages will be astonished—a trade which outrages the principles of Christianity, and tramples on human nature.¹³¹

Stating that George was the monarch responsible for outlawing a trade which “outrage[d] the principles of Christianity” implied that America’s continued support of slavery insured that the nation remained beyond the pale of God’s delight.

Not only was freedom celebrated as a defining trait of the British Empire, societal morality was also defended as one of the surest ways in which the people could accrue the favour of God. In order for the empire to maintain its divine calling, Christian morality was to form the focal point from which all other aspects of the society—be it kings, constitutions or laws—found their meaning, their purpose, and their identity. Therefore, morality was seen as essential to the construction of the communities that created the larger society and the church, as the teacher of Christianity, was a critical element of social advancement. If the empire was so good to slaves and the French, could not the free Protestant people of Upper and Lower Canada expect even more? The freedom they were given, however, was not a license for indulgence but an opportunity to create a society of Christian morality that would please God and bring blessings upon the land.

¹³¹ Strachan, *George*, 30.

Strachan, using George III as example, explained how faith dictated culture when he wrote:

Were the British to imitate the conduct of the king, and make a point of succeeding in that imitation, where should we find a man among them unworthy of confidence, destitute of probity, or intemperate in his living? Justice and integrity would cover us as a garment; punctual in our dealings and in the performance of promises: affectionate husbands, indulgent parents, not admitting that criminal indulgence so fatal to children, but that regular and yet tender discipline which becomes the foundation of future excellence. Pious without hypocrisy, more attentive to the spirit of religion than to idle distinctions, yet careful to preserve those exterior ordinances which she retains as her outworks, but without parade or ostentation. Were we to model our lives by the conduct of our sovereign, corruption and venality would hide their heads, and all would be cheerfully obedient to the laws. Instead of pride, cruelty and oppression, christian [sic] charity would reign, each would embrace his fellow subject as a brother deserving of his confidence and friendship. As no vicious character ever had access to the king, such would be hunted from society, and the irreligious spurned as the corrupters of the public happiness. All would be convinced that he who is false to God would prove so to man that hatred to religion proceeds from levity or ignorance, from a corrupted heart or a perverse understanding. The friend of man must be the friend of religion, for religion is the most fruitful source of our enjoyments.¹³²

Thus the sovereign's religion dictated the freedom of the society and his character insured freedom for British North Americans.¹³³ For the Americans, democracy protected the people but, for Strachan, it encouraged the pandering and immorality

¹³² Strachan, *George*, 14-5.

¹³³ An example of that freedom was the supplying of clerical requirements with little or no charge to the parishioners: "I take the liberty of requesting from the Society the Gift of a Bible and Prayer Book for the use of the Church, as we are unprovided and the ability of the Congregation has been excited to a degree perhaps beyond their means." See Stuart, "Letter 18 Feb 1807," 3. Even though the Anglican congregation at York remained "small, as it respects real members of the Church or Communicants" the financial gifts from the people were producing sufficient capital so that "materials of stone have been purchased to a considerable amount," however, and herein lay another example of the struggle the Anglican denomination faced, "the difficulty of engaging workmen to undertake the business has occasioned a delay in the commencement of [building the church]." See Stuart, "Letter 10 July 1804," 1. The struggle for the Anglicans was monetary, to be sure, but an even greater struggle proved to be finding adequate numerical representation from the populace.

that doomed a nation.¹³⁴ The people were shown that the Christian nature of the empire mattered because their livelihoods depended on the grace of the God of the harvest; grace they would receive as faithful and devoted subjects of a Christian empire.¹³⁵

From the Anglican perspective, the church could insure that English customs and beliefs (whatever they determined those to be) would be maintained against the growing threat of Republicanism.¹³⁶ As it pertained to the religious climate, the theological education, stability, wealth, connection to England, and civilization of the Anglican Church was held up as a bastion of hope against the faultiness associated with the Methodists and their connection to the United States.¹³⁷ However, the

¹³⁴ One of the ways in which the agents of the British government assisted the subjects of the province was in donating their own money to holy causes: "His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Gore has promised the Congregation a Pulpit to be erected at his private expense." See Stuart, "Letter 1 September 1807," 2

¹³⁵ "[Robert] Addison announced that Britain, recently the divine instrument of preserving the 'blessings of civil government' in Europe, was now to be the divine instrument of spreading the word of God through Upper Canada." See Fahey, *Name*, 26. One of the ways such nurturing took place was as spiritual education for children: "I am much gratified by [the children who have been taking catechism classes'] proficiency, the usefulness and good tendency of the office prompt me to request from this Society some few tracts explanatory of the Catechism, suitable to the ages and capacity of children below of the age of fourteen years." See Stuart, "Letter 1 Sept 1807," 2.

¹³⁶ In a letter from 1791, John Graves Simcoe, the Lt Governor of Upper Canada, wrote regarding the need for an established church in Upper Canada. Letters like this one are crucial because the sentiments carried within would be echoed thirty-seven years later when Strachan attempted to defend the centrality of Anglicanism in Upper Canada. Simcoe wrote: "I hold it to be indispensably necessary that a Bishop should be immediately established in Upper Canada. The State Propriety of some form of Public Worship, politically considered, arises from the necessity there is of preventing enthusiastick & fantastick Teachers from acquiring that superstitious hold of the minds of the multitude which Persons of such a description may pervert...It is of the most serious importance that his power & supervision over the Clergy should prevent or censure clerical offences & inculcate thro' all Ranks & Descriptions of People a sober, an industrious & religious & conscientious spirit, which will be the best security that Government can have for its own internal preservation." Simcoe went on to write: "every establishment of Church and State that upholds the distinction of ranks and lessens the undue weight of the democratic influence, ought to be introduced." The importance of maintaining imperial traits was then utilized to defend the need for the Anglicans to become the established church of British North America. In a letter to Strachan in 1809, these sentiments were explained in detail: "the Great of attachment between the Colonies and Great Britain depends almost entirely upon the progress and influence of Church Principles." See Anon., "Simcoe," n.p.

¹³⁷ The inheritors of the Anglican tradition in the Republic had been forced to make some radical departures from their counterparts within the British system. Kyle Bulthuis explains, "In the early Republic, High Church theology contained a unique historical context that differed from past Anglican

popularity of American Methodists in Upper Canada (and the prevalence of Catholics in Lower Canada) made the Anglican bid for establishment unrealistic and insured that the presence of rival denominations—so feared as agents of instability and revolution—would remain throughout the colony.¹³⁸ Ultimately, the spiritual border remained as porous and undefined as the physical one between the two lands and, just as with the physical border, most people seemed fairly comfortable on both sides.

While the Anglicans were unable to expel the Methodists from British North America, they also stood to benefit more than any other ecclesiastical group by Madison's declaration of war in 1812. While the war was destined to bring great amounts of fear and suffering to the inhabitants of the Canadas, it also underscored the accuracy of the Anglican predictions and bolstered the Church of England's arguments that American sentiments were contrary to peace better than any rhetoric ever could. With the invasion of Upper Canada in the spring of 1812, the need to expel the "faithless foe" of American religion was almost wholly usurped by the more pressing concerns of expelling American soldiers. The pre-war condemnations of Episcopal Methodists was that they were too closely linked to Republican sentiments to adequately care for the spiritual needs of the loyal British subjects of both provinces. Such condemnations were reinforced by the "faithless" actions of invasion

thought. The American Revolution irrevocably severed ties between church and state. The church thus rejected all trappings of establishment and instead acted as a sacramental haven in a lost world." See Bulthuis, "Preacher Politics," 265. Such beliefs were vastly different from the Anglicans of British North America who battled so powerfully to become the established church.

¹³⁸ "[T]he two armed conflicts [The War of 1812 and Rebellions of 1837] examined in the following pages would, themselves, play a role in transforming the cultural identity of an American-origin people living adjacent to the New England border into a distinctively 'Canadian' one insofar as it represented a synthesis of American and British values." See Little, *Loyalties*, 7. While this work will argue against the development of what Little calls a "Canadian" identity he is correct in his assessment that the War of 1812 would be a watershed in defining the values of British North American society as well as a unifying factor in weakening the regionalism that plagued the pre-war colonial culture.

that proved the lack of character present within the rebellious United States.

Ironically, while the American government provided a terrifying threat to the inhabitants of the Canadas, they were also the greatest ally the Anglicans had in their religious war to expel the faithless Methodists.

Chapter Two

Outbreak and Impact of the War

I. The Ebb and Flow of the War

The actual events of the war have been covered in numerous works from a variety of different perspectives. For the sake of this dissertation, a brief summary of the ebb and flow of the War of 1812 is necessary. The June 1812 Declaration of War issued by the Madison government was followed one month later when General William Hull crossed from Fort Detroit to land near Sandwich in the Western portion of the Upper Province to make the following declaration:

Inhabitants of Canada!—After thirty years of peace and prosperity, the United States have been driven to arms. The injuries and aggressions, the insults and indignities of Great Britain, have once more left them no alternative but manly resistance or unconditional submission...The army under my command has invaded your country, and the standard of union now waves over the territory of Canada. To the peaceable, unoffending inhabitant, it brings neither danger nor difficulty. I come to find enemies, not to make them. I come to protect, not to injure you.¹

Unfortunately for the American soldiers stationed at the strategically placed Fort Michilimackinac, their government had yet to inform them that they were actually at war. Situated between Lakes Huron and Michigan, control of the fort meant control of the two vital waterways and the ability to move troops and supplies, or prevent the enemy from doing so, throughout the Michigan and Western Upper Canadian territories. General Isaac Brock seized on this clerical error and, utilizing Captain Charles Roberts, ordered a 600 man British and Aboriginal force from Fort St. Joseph

¹ Hull, "Proclamation," as found in Brock, "Correspondence," Chapter IX.

to take the coveted military target from an ignorant and unprepared Lieutenant Porter Hanks a mere five days after Hull's landing.

That one event proved highly significant because it not only brought a large number of the Native tribes in the area over to the British side but it gave a tremendous strategic advantage to the British cause. Playing on Hull's fear of Native violence, Brock was then able to force the seemingly incompetent American general to hand over Fort Detroit by mid August of 1812. What had begun as an American invasion had quickly turned into a sizable and embarrassing loss of American territory to the British. The local Native tribes, impressed by the British daring and early successes, began to side with England and Brock, in turn, used the well-known fear of presumed Native excesses to strike terror into the hearts of his enemies. Throughout September, Native attacks on Forts Harrison, Madison, and Wayne further demoralized the United States' military and, other than a brief skirmish at Fort Erie when two British schooners were captured in early October, the conquest of the Canadas was proving to be trickier than initially expected.

On the Niagara Peninsula, following the Battle at Fort Erie, Brock correctly understood that the Americans were attempting to garner a foothold on the British side of the river. United States regulars and New York militia, under the leadership of General Stephen Van Rensselaer, charged the heights of Queenston on 13 October 1812 with disastrous results. Despite possessing greater numbers and the fact that the British were spread thinly along the border so that Brock would know when and where the first assault was coming, the artillery made it almost impossible for the American invasion force to cross the river successfully. In addition, American law

stated that militiamen were not required to fight beyond the boundaries of their state and so, when the American vanguard either dove into the freezing waters of the Niagara or faced the merciless barrage of the British artillery, the soldiers preparing to launch from Lewiston, NY simply clung to their constitutional rights and refused to leave the state.

Eventually they landed and took the heights away from the British before turning the artillery upon the town of Queenston. By then Brock had shown up and led the charge to take back the heights with the help of some Mohawks who were placed in the woods alongside the American position in order to scare the militia and regulars with their terrifying war whoops. The plan worked and the Americans were repulsed from Queenston in yet another failed military campaign. However, British celebrations were not heard because the charge to take back the heights overlooking Queenston took the lives of Brock and his next in command, Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonnell.²

The remainder of the year saw a few more skirmishes around Fort Erie and the American forces repulsed again at Frenchman's Creek. By the time 1812 ended, the Americans had gained no land, captured only two schooners and had lost the Michigan territories to British North America, as well as the respect of some of their former Native allies, many of whom had decided to defect to the British side. As

² "In a few moments after this excess of joy [at the victory at Queenston] was turned to the deepest and most sincere sorrow, in reflecting on the irreparable loss we had sustained in the person of our much lamented general. The victory was acknowledged to be far too dearly won; his remains were taken to Niagara, and on the 5th were interred in the Cavalier Bastion at Fort George, together with his aid-de camp Lieut. Col. McDonald, who expired the day after the action; the two coffins were taken from the Government House, at 11 o'clock A. M., and exhibited one of the most grand and solemn processions ever witnessed in Canada. The States troops, to their honor be it said, fired a salute on the occasion." See Merritt, *Journal*, 18.

winter closed out the year, British North America not only remained British, the territory had actually gained in size significantly.

The beginnings of 1813 saw an American attempt to return Fort Detroit to their soil. After a minor skirmish forced the British out of Frenchtown, in the Michigan territory, the defeated English rallied and counterattacked on 22 January with a collection of Native allies. Almost 400 Americans were killed in the second battle with dozens more killed later by the Natives in what came to be known in many American newspapers as the Raisin River Massacre. Those newspapers sponsored by Madison's Republican government used the defeat to promote their floundering military effort by highlighting the Native savagery and the death of the prisoners to enflame the passions of the wary citizenry. In April 1813, the Americans had their first real taste of victory when a small flotilla of sixteen warships, under the leadership of Commodore Isaac Chauncey, captured York, destroyed the small battery and sent General Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe running with only two militia officers to negotiate the surrender. Before retreating, Sheafe ordered the destruction of the warship *Sir Isaac Brock* and the destruction of the magazine; the explosion occasioned by the latter killed American Brigadier-General Zebulon Pike and was viewed by the American forces as a deliberate and malicious act. The six-day capture of York was embarrassing for the British and revealed severe deficiencies in their defenses. However, it was his actions during the occupation that would help launch John Strachan to an almost celebrity status in the post-war culture of Upper Canada.

The spring months also saw the destruction and loss of Fort George in Niagara and the subsequent retreat to Burlington Heights gave the sought after foothold in the

Peninsula to the Americans. Shortly after that, Laura Secord made her famous trek through the woods to warn Lieutenant James Fitzgibbon of an impending American invasion. With the information, Fitzgibbon bravely captured the invading army using the ruse of superior Native forces in what came to be known as the Battle of Beaver Dams. Despite British victories at Stoney Creek and Forty Mile Creek and the sinking of American ships *Hamilton* and *Scourge*, 1813 proved to be a disastrous year for the British cause.

On 9 September 1813 Oliver Hazard Perry did what was thought to be impossible: he beat the British on the water. Defeating the British fleet on Lake Erie made the defense of Western Upper Canada almost impossible and insured the return of the Michigan territory to the Americans. However, arguably one of the most devastating results of the maritime loss took place when Prevost's army retreated along the Thames Valley. The legendary Shawnee warrior, Tecumseh, viewed Prevost's actions as cowardly and ordered his men to turn and face the advancing American forces. Without British support the Native fighters were quickly overwhelmed and Tecumseh was killed in the melee, although his body was never found. With Lake Erie firmly in control of the United States, and the feared Native confederacy waning with the loss of Tecumseh, the American military machine set its eyes upon the capture of Lower Canada. In a somewhat ironic twist, British North America was saved in 1813 largely by the actions of French *Canadiens* as the Americans were repulsed in late October at the Battle of Chateaugay. With just over 1600 French Canadian Regulars, militia, and Mohawk warriors, Charles de Salaberry repelled an American force of over 4000 men and, together with the following

month's victory at Chrysler's Farm, thwarted the Americans' St. Lawrence Campaign and, arguably, saved British North America for England.

In the cold month of December, the American forces abandoned Fort George and burnt Newark on their way back to the United States. Not wishing to allow the Americans to regain their Niagara foothold, the British forces captured Fort Niagara in a night attack, burnt Lewiston and the surrounding towns, and began to lay waste to the east side of the Niagara River in retaliation for the burning of Newark. Thus ended 1813 with the American military firmly in control of Western Upper Canada but unable to break into Lower Canada or maintain their holdings on the Peninsula. Even with the late losses, 1813 proved that America was not a nation to be considered lightly and 1814 dawned with more than a little concern on the British side as to whether or not the year could be survived.

More of the same back-and-forth skirmishes greeted the two combatants in the beginning of 1814, but the spring abdication of Napoleon proved to be a turning point in the North American contest as well. Throughout the spring, the Americans had another naval victory at Sackett's Harbour, captured Fort Erie, and beat the British at Chippewa. However, in late July the nighttime Battle of Lundy's Lane proved to be the most violent, bloody, and confusing of all the battles in the war. As soldiers got turned around and lost their bearings in the confusion of battle and were rendered almost blind due to the darkness and blinding gunpowder, they frequently shot at their own men. When it was all over the casualties surpassed 1600 dead, wounded, or missing combined between the two sides and both sides claimed victory when, from a military perspective, the worst battle of the entire war achieved no significant goals

for either side. A month later, the British besieged Fort Erie for two days and a few weeks after that, reinforcements from the Napoleonic War arrived and set fire to the American capital in Washington. September of that year saw the British siege at Fort Erie fail and the British reinforcements besiege Fort McHenry (sometimes referred to as the Battle of Baltimore). It was during the shelling of the Fort and the ubiquitous presence of British artillery rockets and mortar that proved ineffective to destroy the Fort that inspired the composition of the “Star-Spangled Banner,” the song destined to become the American national anthem.

With British redcoats wreaking havoc on the eastern seaboard, American delegates traveled to Ghent, and on 24 of December 1814 signed the Treaty of Ghent that, once ratified by both governments, signaled the end of the War of 1812. However, it would not be until February of 1815 that the people fighting the war in North America would become aware of the treaty and, by that time, General Jackson had prevented the British regulars from entering the city of New Orleans. That engagement would prove to be the last major event of the War of 1812 and, due to the stipulations of the Ghent Treaty, neither nation gained any new land, and the border remained as it had been prior to the war. Although only two nations were represented at the Treaty of Ghent, three nations had taken part in the War of 1812. In order to court Native support, the British had promised to grant lands so that the various Native tribes could create a sovereign and independent nation free from the harassment of American settlers. This was not to be so and despite many complaints over the decades that followed the war, the dream of a Native confederacy died in

Ghent. Although a strong case could be made that it died in 1813 when its greatest advocate, Tecumseh, met his end in the Thames Valley.

Beginning in July of 1812 and ending (unofficially) in January of 1815, the War of 1812 covered a vast expanse of land with comparatively few casualties. It produced larger than life figures and horrendous battles but the ambiguous nature of its conclusion insured that both sides would interpret the causes, battles, victories, losses, and outcomes of the conflict for years to come.

II. The Impact of the War on Methodism

It was once reported that hidden among the trees of a dense forest somewhere on the border between Upper Canada and Vermont stood a Methodist Church. Far from any well-traveled path and obscured both by nature and a purposefully non-descript design, this house of worship may have been plain in appearance, but what happened within the walls of that tiny edifice was anything but normal. For that building was both a church and a political statement and when people gathered there on Sunday mornings they did so in direct defiance of the laws of two governments that were at war with each other. A line painted the length of the church's floor let the British and American Methodists know exactly where their country ended and the other one began. In spite of the war, worshippers from both sides of the border gathered in that building—under the leadership of Rev. Samuel Draper—to be taught the word of God, to commune with each other, to break bread and gather as fellow believers of Christ. While their governments might have called them traitors, their spiritual unity superseded political enmity.³

³ This is a paraphrase of an account found in John Carroll's biography of William Case. In it he wrote, "The idea was conceived and carried into execution of holding a Quarterly Meeting in this building, to

Whether or not such a church actually existed during the War of 1812 is a matter of debate. John Carroll wrote about this “smugglers building” and its use by the Methodists as a border church much later in the nineteenth century. However, what that story does provide for present-day scholars is a type of microcosm of the strange and strained relationships within Methodism at that time. Carroll’s account spoke of a Love-feast shared by the two sides, charitable and vigorous hand-shaking, warm greetings, and high attendance by people who were, in his words, only “nominal belligerents.” Within such descriptions one can gain a better understanding of the complex and diverse attitudes that existed within the minds and hearts of those who shared cross-border connections with American co-religionists during the war.

A. Nathan Bangs and Lower Canada

Neil Semple stated simply: “[the] war significantly disrupted Methodist operations in the Canadas.”⁴ The most obvious impact was the inability of the American itinerant preachers to get into Upper and Lower Canada once war was declared. Joseph Gatchell wrote about this from an Upper-Canadian perspective. When the war was declared he penned the following remark in his journal, “in July [of 1812] as the war had comenced [sic] before my Con[ference] year had ended we ware [sic] under the necessity of holding our own Conference in Canada.” He went on to describe how the missions were going to continue without Nathan Bangs

accommodate brethren in Canada, who by the war had been cut off their accustomed public means of grace. Here they could meet with their Yankee brethren, without leaving their own territory. A large company assembled in the house—the Yankees on the south side of the line, and the Canadians on the north—and yet in a compact congregation. The Presiding Elder was the Rev. Samuel Draper, an earnest and ‘wide awake man,’ and one with a tender remembrance of Canada. ‘He and the Circuit preachers were present, and such a season of refreshing had not often been enjoyed. No one crossed the line, yet they passed very closely on both sides, and never was there a heartier hand-shaking than on that occasion—nominal belligerents, but real, heartfelt friends and brethren. The Love-feast, I judge, was a great occasion—one that could not be forgotten.’ See Carroll, *Case*, 6:183.

⁴ Semple, *Dominion*, 45.

supervising Lower Canada, “we agreed to appoint Elder Ryan to preside in our Conference [sic] he being the only presiding Elder in the Province at that time.”⁵ The voluntary nature of Methodism made getting ministers for the Canadas nearly impossible. Abel Stevens wrote in his biography of Nathan Bangs, “Mr. Asbury found it difficult to get men to supply the work in Canada, in consequence of the threatened rupture between the United States and England . . . Considering Canada as Missionary ground, Mr. Asbury would not appoint any but volunteers to it; and under the circumstances he found it difficult to get any to volunteer.”⁶ Without itinerants, one of the core strengths of Methodism was severely weakened.

The building mentioned at the beginning of this section was erected, according to Carroll, because the Methodists in British North America “had been cut off from their accustomed public means of grace. [In the building] they could meet with their Yankee brethren.”⁷ Nathan Bangs had championed the cause of Lower Canada and volunteered to be the presiding elder of the circuit at the Genesee Conference only days before being forced to turn back when war was declared. When war was declared, the Methodists of Lower Canada were put in an unenviable position. Unlike the British Wesleyans, the Canadian circuits were so connected to America that both Upper and Lower Canada had joined the Genesee Conference in

⁵ Gatchell, *Life*, 28.

⁶ Stevens, *Bangs*, 202.

⁷ Carroll, *Case*, 6:183. A comment on the use of Carroll as a source is required. Obviously his work was located later in the nineteenth century and that opens it up to credibility issues. This work will use him sparingly for this reason but it should be noted that his chronological distance does not negate his work out of hand. When Thaddeus Lewis wrote of his own life and used sources from earlier on in the war he made the following comment: “Accordingly, I wrote what is contained in the first six Chapters in A. D. 1825, and although I kept in some way, though very imperfectly, by diary, scraps, or notes, so that a history of my life might be written therefrom; yet I did not intend, until about a year, ago, to have it placed before the world until after my death.” See Lewis, *Autobiography*, iii. While provenance of sources is incredibly valuable and necessary, Carroll’s scholarship is well regarded and has provided valuable insights into the early nineteenth-century Canadian Methodist culture and experiences and, as such, remains valuable as a source.

1812 and became an established part of the Episcopal Methodist Church.⁸ However, when hostilities commenced between the two nations everything changed.⁹ Writing from his home in New York after the war, Nathan Bangs recorded “I have often thought of the...brethren in Canada, especially during the unhappy contest between the two countries; and I still feel a great desire to visit them; but I know not that Providence will ever open up the way.”¹⁰ Bangs had been appointed as Superintendent of the Lower Canada circuit at the Genesee Conference in 1812 but on his way to Montreal

news of the declaration of war against Great Britain reached the city of New York, where I then was with my family. This, of course, cut off all friendly intercourse between Canada and the United States...Here I halted until Bishops Asbury and M’Kendree returned to the New England Conference. They both decided that it was not expedient for me to proceed further. My mission [to administer the Lower Canada circuit] was therefore abandoned.¹¹

Without their appointed leader, the circuit was in danger of collapsing due to lack of attention and direction.

Unfortunately Bangs’ story was all too common as the war proved to be extremely disruptive to Methodist missions in Lower Canada.¹² As the months turned

⁸ “The ceaseless activities of the circuit preachers between 1790 and 1812 resulted in a considerable victory for Methodism in Upper Canada.” See French, *Parsons*, 47.

⁹ “In 1812 the Lower Canadian Methodist district joined the Upper Canadian district as part of the Genesee Conference, which met on the American side of the Niagara River one month after war was declared. The bishop proceeded to make circuit appointments to the Canadas, but American preachers had already been ordered out of the provinces and no Canadian-born preachers attended that Conference. The bishop’s circuit plan existed on paper only, for no Methodist preacher remained in Lower Canada and eight of the thirteen still in the upper province located, that is, ceased to itinerate, before the end of the War. Thus the work of the American Methodist virtually disappeared during the war and there is no indication that the preachers who remained in Upper Canada were under any suspicion for their previous American connection.” See Moir, “Influence,” 449. I would disagree with that final statement as Ryan, for one example, found it incredibly important to assert his Britishness during and after the War of 1812.

¹⁰ Bangs, “Letter to Dougall, 6 June 1815.”

¹¹ Stevens, *Bangs*, 200.

¹² “[T]he bishops and preachers of the American division of the Conference thought best not to cross the line; but they turned aside to Lyons, where the Genesee Conference was organized two years

into years and the fighting became increasingly bitter between the two lands, the American Methodists began to despair of any kind of reunion with their Canadian counterparts on this side of eternity. C. M. Hurlburt wrote to James Dougall that he felt “desirous to hear from you & the Society there” but feared that any report from his beloved “Hallowell Brethren” would be postponed until both groups could meet on “Canaans happy shore” and lamented the schism that had ripped him from his work in Canada, “Oh James James my heart burns when I think of meeting you all in the kingdom of glory.”¹³

After the cessation of hostilities, several churches in Lower Canada were relieved to have their own version of the faith preached to them again and began to question their old allegiances to their American “fathers.” These churches had a growing sense that Lower Canadian Methodism would have to distance itself from the Americans if it was going to have a chance of rebuilding after the cataclysmic war.¹⁴ To that end, a Methodist chapel in Montreal constructed their own version of what transpired with Mr. Bangs’ aborted role as Lower Canadian superintendent:

before, and held the session there. None of the brethren laboring on the Canada side, most of whom were British subjects, went over.” See Caroll, *Case*, 6:141. “Genesee Conference’s plan to meet at Niagara in July 1812 was thwarted by the war. When it met at Lyons, New York, the missionaries from Canada could not attend.” See Semple, *Dominion*, 45.

¹³ Hurlburt, “Letter 25 May 1816.”

¹⁴ One of the ways in which this rebuilding was seen was in the systemizing of the camp meetings and moderation of worship that began to transpire in Nova Scotia during the war and grew in Lower Canada after the war. The Wesleyans’ appreciation of solemnity in their worship is evidenced by a letter from a Mr. Bamford of Nova Scotia to Rev. Robert Smith of London in 1814. Bamford wrote, “our little conference held last month [June 1814] was conducted with much peace and harmony and many persons appeared [content] waiting upon our Blessed Redeemer.” See Bamford, “Letter, 1814,” 1. Christopher Adamson argues that the more moderate version of Methodism would not present itself until late on in the century due to the union with the more reserved Wesleyans. His thinking is fairly indicative of the field. He writes, “Union with the priestly Wesleyans [in 1832] also meant the tempering of revivalism. Wesleyan clergy promoted a less exuberant, more refined style of worship, endeavoring to restrain the outbreaks of popular emotion which occurred during camp meetings.” See Adamson, “Continent,” 438.

Mr. Bangs who was to be stationed at Montreal being not yet arrived. Having heard of the declaration [of war], wrote to Montreal to know whether he would be obliged to take the oath of allegiance to his Majesty, and being informed that this would be required of him, he in consequence declined coming; thus were we abandoned by our Preacher who thought it most proper to adhere to his political principles rather than administer the word of Life to the Church of Christ in a foreign Province.¹⁵

It is worth noting that while the church bore no ill will towards the man, they firmly believed that his political proclivities negated his ability to effectively serve the people. Whereas Bangs' report cited Asbury as the reason he did not complete his duties, the Montreal Methodists believed the reason was political.¹⁶ The closing of the border prompted Asbury to recall Bangs and left Lower Canada to the care of Henry Ryan.

B. Henry Ryan and Upper Canada

Although Nathan Bangs was a kind of Methodist hero it was "Henry Ryan [who] played a more powerful role than Bangs in early Canadian Methodism."¹⁷ Ryan reported that "At the Genesee Conference the Bishop [Asbury] gave me the charge of Lower Canada."¹⁸ The truth was that Ryan was selected to oversee the Upper Canadian circuit only, but once Bangs did not make it to his post, Ryan stepped in. Henry Ryan did his best to maintain a certain level of normalcy for those who remained by organizing "a Conference at the time and place where and when the session of 1812 should have been held, namely, at Warner's meeting-house, near St.

¹⁵ "Petition, 11 November 1815," 3.

¹⁶ Further to that idea is the following conclusion offered by John Moir: "The Canadians would have liked the famous American, Nathan Bangs, as first president [of the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist Church, established in 1828], but he was an alien and 'too democratical.'" See Moir, "Influence," 451.

¹⁷ French, *Parsons*, 43.

¹⁸ Ryan, "Letter 9 October 1815," 1.

David, July 23rd; and he held one each succeeding year of the war.”¹⁹ Throughout the war and through the loss of ministers to the militia, disease, battles and desertion, Ryan seemed to hold the circuits together by little more than the sheer force of his will. Traveling as much as 4,000 kilometers annually with no support and little pay, he would be revered (and later reviled) by Methodists for his efforts throughout the war.²⁰ Writing in 1879 John Carroll recorded:

The war referred to prevented regular intercourse between the authorities of the Church in the States and the ‘Two Canadas,’ from 1812 to 1815, and caused the return of some preachers of American origin, and the retirement of some others. Mr. Ryan resumed the charge of the work over a good part of Lower Canada as well as his trust in the Upper Province, supervising it from end to end with tireless energy, performing very much the work of a Bishop, as well as Presiding Elder, calling out preachers to supply the Circuits, and holding no less than three several Conferences, the one published for Niagara, said to have been adjourned to Beaver Dam; one at the Bay of Quinte, and one in Matilda.²¹

Ryan could do little more than slow the hemorrhage of people from the Methodist fold. The war not only consumed most people’s lives, but it also threatened to vanquish Evangelicalism from the places where it had enjoyed the most support until June of 1812. Most who remained attempted to keep their heads down and wait out the storm while quietly distancing themselves from their Yankee roots, or “like Henry Ryan, loudly proclaimed their loyalty and their British citizenship.” However, it was noted that, “Despite Ryan's efforts to keep the evangelical flame alive, membership in Methodist societies was cut in half by the end of the war.”²²

¹⁹ Carroll, *Case*, 6:197.

²⁰ It should be noted that, at least before the war, Bangs appeared to have great esteem for Ryan: Bangs Liked Ryan: “Give my love to Br. Ryen [sic], and tell him I should be glad to answer his letter...I feel a union with him which I trust is cemented by the love of Jesus Christ.” See Bangs, “Letter to Dougall 1 Sept 1806.”

²¹ Carroll, “Mutations of Methodism,” 556.

²² Adamson, “Continent,” 435.

However, Ryan was not always seen as some kind of Methodist hero. After the second year of the war Joseph Gatchell angrily wrote, “to conclude this year [1813] was among the most unfortunate of my life.” He was not referring just to the war but to the treatment he received at the hands of Ryan who, “did not act towards me with that Christian and Godly conduct” that Gatchell believed was necessary in a leader. He charged Ryan with usurping, “two [sic] much authority.”²³ Gatchell’s complaints just further enforced the idea that the Methodists who did remain were isolated, unsupported, and had no recourse to higher ecclesiastical authority in times of dispute. A Methodist by the name of Ninian Holmes, provides another example of an isolated minister in that, as Carroll would later say of the man, “[he] remained in that western country [along the Thames in Upper Canada], in which he was the only Methodist Minister.” Holmes, it was recorded, served the region for the duration of the war, “till he was superseded by Mr. Hickock in 1815.”²⁴

C. The Weakening of Methodism

With only a handful of preachers to oversee the combined territories of both Canadas, no access to funding other than what the Canadian churches could provide, and battles raging throughout his provinces, Ryan could only hope to keep the

²³ Gatchell, *Life*, 29.

²⁴ Carroll, *Case*, 6:155. In the following eulogy, John Carroll extolled the virtues of an itinerant who remained in the Canadas during the war by the name of Ninian Holmes. What is written may represent a fairly hagiographical perspective of the man (as most eulogies do), but it also shows that Methodists had a history of clergy who were logical and who employed sophisticated arguments for the faith. Carroll wrote: “As a minister of Christ [Holmes’] manner was easy and natural, and in the pulpit remarkably solemn. Much impressed himself with his awful charge, he rarely failed to infuse the same spirit into the minds of his hearers. He possessed a remarkable faculty of arresting attention—not so much by the splendor of his style, as by brining them into the immediate presence of God. His ideas were generally clear, and so well arranged that the mind was not fatigued in following him.” Carroll, *Case*, 6:158.

Methodist cause alive until the war ended and the American preachers could return.²⁵

What information can be gathered about the next three years can be categorized as tales of woe and lamentation as the British North American mission fell into spiritual disrepair.²⁶ John Carroll wrote of an itinerant who fell away from his vocation because the war separated him from his spiritual mentors in America. Carroll lamented:

Edward Cooper...had been received into full connexion at the Conference in July, 1812, and elected to deacon's orders; but as he could not reach the seat of Conference, he never received ordination. About the second year of the war he was found in Kingston, in a backslidden state, pursuing the business of a pedlar, but still with a warm side to Methodism...poor impulsive Irishman, we know not the cause of thy fall, nor thy ultimate fate.²⁷

As was the case with Edward Cooper, the war caused numerous Methodists to settle down into other industries. While these decisions may have weakened the sustainability of Upper Canadian Methodism, they did not always spell spiritual ruin for those who decided to settle. Unlike those who retired from itinerancy during peaceful times these men were not spiritually conflicted to as great a degree; they were simply forced to re-evaluate their place within the colony due to the war. One such man, Peter Conover, was written about by Carroll:

²⁵ "The religious life of every denomination was disrupted during the War of 1812. A number of churches were burned down by the Americans or used as hospitals. Because of their institutional ties to the United States, the Methodists, Baptists, and the Dutch Reformed congregations suffered the most. The Albany Classis stopped sending missionaries; several Baptist congregations on the shores of Lake Erie were permanently dispersed; and most Methodist itinerants, including the presiding elder of the Genesee district, William Case, withdrew during the war. Those who remained either kept a low profile or, like Henry Ryan, loudly proclaimed their loyalty and their British citizenship. Despite Ryan's efforts to keep the evangelical flame alive, membership in Methodist societies was cut in half by the end of the war." Adamson, "Continent," 435.

²⁶ Carroll calls this period "non-historic" due to the difficulty in ascertaining reliable records. See Carroll, *Case*, 6:148.

²⁷ Carroll, *Case*, 6:149.

we think from all that can be learned, [Conover] desisted pretty early in the course of the war. He married and settled in the township of Trafalgar, near the River Credit, where he followed the occupation of farming, and where he continued to reside until he died. He was much esteemed among those who knew him. For a time he preached as a local preacher.²⁸

The war took an obvious toll as Semple writes: “not only were there insufficient preachers, but the fledgling societies were themselves broken up as members joined the militia or did other war-related work.”²⁹ Because their adherents formed such a large part of the general population of Upper Canada, issues like militia involvement provided a unique struggle that only the Methodists had to face.³⁰ Because the Methodists were not permitted to serve as chaplains, the army remained beyond the sphere of influence and actually aided the Anglican clergy in their ability to win people back over to their fold.

In addition to the loss of people and the inability to serve the military, the roads and backcountry that had formed the Methodist itinerants’ routes around the land were also the same roads utilized by the armies. Depending on the events of the war, these roads could, at anytime, be transformed into enemy lines. Whereas the Anglicans did have to contend with the occasional loss of a building to enemy incursions—notably York and Newark—the itinerants dwelt under a constant state of uncertainty which further complicated their mission and minimized the amount of people willing to place themselves in such danger. As America claimed more land and enjoyed more military success, the American Methodists in the Canadas

²⁸ Carroll, *Case*, 6:164.

²⁹ Semple, *Dominion*, 45-6.

³⁰ A Brief example follows: “I [was greeted by] Bro. Strong & Bro Webster (the person who had lately been taken out of the army).” See Bennett, “Letter 6 October 1815,” 2. This shows that, at least for Webster, the army had limited their ability to participate in their Christian community.

experienced the exact opposite in their attempts to reach the British North Americans with the message of Christ.³¹

In light of such tensions, Carroll recorded many other stories of Methodists who remained both loyal to their denomination's mission in the Canadas as well as to the British crown. However, the war exacted an awful price on Upper Canada and, in the words of Michael Smith, "no preaching is heard in the land. All is gloomy—all is war and misery."³² Not only was the land physically devastated by the conflict, but, from an evangelical perspective, a spiritual wasteland had developed as well.³³ While the "demon of war" was despised and railed against in Methodist writings,³⁴ there existed no dominant pacifist theology within the denomination at the time. In fact, John Carroll knew that the 103rd militia regiment had a Methodist preacher on its rolls. While the regiment awaited marching orders, "a Mr. Webster, was found to be a Methodist, and a very capable local preacher, [he] was invited by Messrs. Shea and Langlois the two leading members of the society to preach to their little congregation,

³¹ In the spring of 1814, Lemuel Greene pleaded with the Genesee Conference, "that each Conference Annually give it in special charge to the Preacher in their Respective Circuits and Stations to press upon the Attention of the Members of the Church the necessity of contributing to this fund either now by voluntary Donation, or hereafter by Testamentary bequests as may best suit their Convenience." See Green, "Letter, 5 April 1814," 1-2. This statement showed a marked interest in the survival of the circuits during the war and a concern over the instability of financial givings. Both of these examples heighten the tension within the denomination that simultaneously allied the preachers with the poor farmers and artisans which they served and threatened their ability to continue in that service. It would be Methodism's inability to sustain and rebuild itinerancy in the post-war era that would contribute greatly to the shift in identity within the denomination.

³² Smith, "Upper Canada," 46.

³³ Although Smith was a Baptist, he appreciated the Methodists and it seems from his writings that he felt their absence keenly.

³⁴ "Such as those above mentioned were the activities and prospects of Methodism in Canada at the close of 1811. Alas, that they were destined, not only to be obscured, but greatly retarded for a time by the fell demon of War." See Carroll, *Case*, 6:138.

which he did to good effect.” The land was so destitute of preachers that when Mr. Webster left with his regiment in 1813 he “left them without a preacher.”³⁵

The itinerants of the Methodists, like the nation in which they resided, were fighting an uphill battle against formidable opposition. The aftermath of the war was felt within the ranks of the denomination decades after the Treaty of Ghent was signed as some saw the war as an opportunity to rid the land of “American-style” religion. Methodism was destined to survive and thrive in both Canadas after the war but, like most survivors of war, it would never be the same.

III. Impact on the Anglican Church

While the volatile nature of the frontier interfered with the Methodists’ ability to serve the Canadas, several of the Anglican churches built in towns that experienced American occupations also found their ministries compromised. This section will explore how the war damaged the Anglican Churches of St. Mark’s on the Niagara Peninsula and St. James Church in York. The American invasion was not only responsible for the damage done to these churches, but their leaders, the Revs. Robert Addison and John Strachan respectively, achieved new prestige due to their actions in the conflict.

A. John Strachan and the Occupation of York

Rev. John Strachan arrived at York in the same week that America declared war on Great Britain.³⁶ Such a dramatic beginning to his ministry seemed to foreshadow that both Strachan and the muddy, isolated, under-populated village of York were destined to catapult each other to a new level of fame and prestige. Noted

³⁵ Carroll, *Case*, 6:193.

³⁶ The United States of America officially declared a state of war between itself and Great Britain in the afternoon on 18 June 1812.

Strachan biographer, J. L. H. Henderson, makes the following comment: “John Strachan arrived in York at the same time that war came again to British North America. That war was to bring the missionary and schoolmaster to a prominence he had not known before.”³⁷ Strachan was a prolific writer during the war years and he mailed out sermons, letters, societal commentaries, reports on the war and ideas about strategy to insure that his opinion was well-known and widely-read throughout the land; especially after the American capture of York. He was nothing if not forthcoming with his opinions and critiques of various characters and events that occurred during the war with America.

Prior to the invasion of York, Strachan actively corresponded with men of influence and power. He wrote military leaders to give his insights regarding the war and was sure to remind them of his position and offer any service he could to aid them. Strachan wrote to Sir George Prevost to make the following offer: “I beg leave to add that I am ready to exert myself in any way consistent with my Clerical character to contribute towards the defence & security of the Provinces.”³⁸ He then closed the letter by bringing to the mind of the new Governor General of Upper Canada an earlier encounter that apparently saw the clergyman receiving praise. He wrote: “I hope that your Excellency will pardon this interruption. I was unwilling to depart altogether from your recollection or lose an opportunity of returning my thanks for the notice with which your Excellency honoured me at Quebec.”³⁹ Prevost was the man who would be making the decisions that would affect the entire colony and Strachan desired to have his voice heard on such matters.

³⁷ Henderson, *Strachan*, 16.

³⁸ John Strachan, “Letter to Sir George Provost,” October 1812, found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 13.

³⁹ John Strachan, “Letter to Sir George Provost,” October 1812, found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 13..

Strachan's days of teaching in Cornwall also added to his power. When he sent a letter to the influential John Richardson explaining the events that had taken place at York, he was sure to explain that the man delivering the letter was of certain importance both to Strachan and the Province.⁴⁰ He wrote, "This [letter] will be presented to you by my adopted son Mr. John Robinson our temporary Attorney General."⁴¹ John Robinson was a barrister (also destined to increased acclaim due to the War of 1812) who had been schooled by Rev. Strachan in Cornwall. The clergyman had situated himself neatly in the seats of power throughout Upper Canada and, just as importantly, the ears of those seats were willing to listen to him.⁴²

Strachan even maneuvered himself into becoming a liaison on military matters. After recommending Lieutenant Colonel Neil McLean of Cornwall and Joseph Anderson to Colonel Nathaniel Coffin, the bishop made the following plea: "may I request to communicate to me the conditions of that approbation and the number of men required to enable them to retain their respective rank, that I may give them early notice for a little time is of the greatest consequence to them in procuring volunteers."⁴³ It is possible that such an offer extended from a civilian (and a minister nonetheless) to a military leader could have been seen as presumptuous, but Strachan did have a history of interactions with men in high-ranking positions. Only a few

⁴⁰ Although John Richardson became one of Canada's first novelists and a fighter in the War of 1812 he was only sixteen at the time of Strachan's letter. It is most likely that the grandfather whom the boy was named after was the intended recipient. The Richardsons were part of the prestigious and influential Askin family.

⁴¹ John Strachan, "Letter to John Richardson," 10 May 1813, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 37.

⁴² To this end it must also be noted that Strachan was responsible for the education of a young man by the name of John Ridout who was the son of the Surveyor General of Upper Canada, a man of "great Respectability" according to Strachan. See Letter 25 June 1813, Spragge, *Letter Book*, 40. This is not to impugn the man's integrity or to imply that he only taught children of prominent citizens. There is no evidence that this is the case, but it is another example of Strachan's ability to become entrenched in the spheres of influence that existed at the time.

⁴³ John Strachan, "Letter to Col. Coffin," 19 March 1813, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 17.

months before war would be declared, Colonel John Harvey informed Strachan of his intentions to build a militia to defend the province. He wrote, “Finally, Steps are now taking to introduce from the Ranks of His Majesty’s Army a Loyal disciplined & brave Militia Population as Settlers on Lands to be granted discharged Soldiers”⁴⁴

John Strachan was in the confidence of some of the most powerful people in the land.

The man’s beliefs regarding the seriousness of the war led to him to become increasingly despondent and critical of the British war effort during 1812. While Major-General Isaac Brock and Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Bishoppe both enjoyed praise from the outspoken minister, the majority of the military leadership inspired only accusations of incompetence to flow from Strachan’s pen. Norma MacRae writes that, for Strachan, “Brock soon became the epitome of British heroism...and Brock’s sudden death was a great blow to him.”⁴⁵ Strachan eulogized Brock in front of the congregation of St. James York in which he praised the man as “an Officer of the greatest bravery and most promising talents and...[i]n all his actions he was independent and honourable”⁴⁶ Bishoppe, like Brock, was seen by Strachan as a man of vision and courage. In summarizing the man’s abilities as a military leader Strachan wrote the following: “Col. Bishoppe was not one of those cool phlegmatic men, who are content with barely doing their duty: who never conceive, far less execute any daring enterprise: he was for ever casting in his mind how he might annoy the enemy.”⁴⁷ The perceived passivity of the British military (with the exceptions of Brock and Bishoppe) was, in Strachan’s estimation, an invitation for the

⁴⁴ Colonel John Harvey, “Letter to John Strachan,” 9 February 1812, Spragge, *Letter Book*, xx.

⁴⁵ MacRae, “Religious Foundation,” 93.

⁴⁶ MacRae, “Religious Foundation,” 94.

⁴⁷ Bethune, *Memoirs*, 45.

Americans to invade. In a letter to John Richardson, Strachan made the following comment: “We are not much pleased with the languid manner in which the war is carried on, forbearance will never answer our present enemy, it is founded upon a most fallacious idea of the American character, & the situation of parties in that country, & it will, should the war continue, be highly detrimental to this Province and perhaps prove its ruin.”⁴⁸ Strachan was dedicated to the cause of victory in Upper Canada and there are numerous letters in which he details his profound frustration at the lack of action taken by Prevost.⁴⁹ Strachan was convinced that early victories were needed to bring people together in the cause and such beliefs were put to the test when, in April of 1813, the war literally landed on the Anglican’s doorstep.

Although he had married Ann McGill of the powerful Montreal-based merchant family, Strachan’s arrival in the village of York was not a desirable placement for a man attempting to become influential. Strachan had only gone there from Cornwall when promised a sizable pay raise and the chance to run the school as he saw fit.⁵⁰ Strachan was destined to become an influential man within Upper Canada and it should be noted that the origins of his fame could be traced, in large part, to his actions during the war. When the Americans occupied York, Strachan helped draft the capitulation papers, campaigned for prisoners’ rights, attended to the wounded, chastised the American General Dearborn both for the lack of character

⁴⁸John Strachan, “Letter to John Richardson,” 30 September 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 15.

⁴⁹Sir George Prevost, Governor General of the Canadas and commander of the military forces, 1811–1815.

⁵⁰“York, at this time, was a little town of a few hundred inhabitants; the houses all of wood, and of very unpretending dimensions...[i]n 1812 it might be regarded as a quiet little parish...quite within the compass of one man’s pastoral ministrations.” Bethune, *Memoir*, 44-5. Strachan would also comment that the physical terrain left something to be desired and that the land was swampy and infested with mosquitoes and flies.

displayed by his men and for his administrative tardiness,⁵¹ and almost got shot when he tackled two American soldiers who were attempting to take a plate from the Sheriff's house. Strachan's reputation was built upon such stories and as they spread throughout the province he found himself discussed by the Upper Canadian cultural, political, and military elite; few things would have pleased him more. The Americans remained in York less than a week and, while they did burn several buildings, the destruction was relatively minor. The town of York bounced back quickly from the occupation and the only long-lasting impact of the war was the increased prominence of the Rev. John Strachan in the world of Upper Canada.

B. St. Mark's and the Niagara Peninsula During the War

While St. James received only minor violence and suffering, the same could not be said of St. Mark's in the Niagara Peninsula. Throughout the course of the war, that region was frequently lost and won back by both sides and, as such, was the theatre for more battles than any other part of British North America. An example of how the American incursion was weakening development of the spiritual field of the Canadas is evidenced by the following quotation from Robert Addison in 1813. Commenting on the war's interference in his clerical duties he wrote to the SPG that, "the Baptisms are so few [26 recorded] is owing to the distress of the times" before going on to explain exactly how the Americans had treated the people of his region: "The enemy after taking Niagara, sent most of the respectable inhabitants as prisoners

⁵¹ "[I] affirmed that the delay was a deception, calculated to give the rifle-men time to plunder, and after the town had been robbed they would then perhaps sign the capitulation, and tell us they respected private property. But we were determined that this should not be the case, and that they should not have it in their power to say they respected private property." Strachan, "From 28 April 1813 as found in Bethune, *Memoirs*, 48.

of war into the states, 2 or 300 miles into the interior.”⁵² British religious organizations like the SPG and London Missionary Society were financed and designed to bring greater religious sentiment to the colony but the American interference was preventing such from occurring. Cyril de Rudolph recorded in his journal a conversation he had with Addison in January of 1814:

Jan 7th, 1814. That, during the last half year, the Enemy being in possession of Niagara [Addison] cd. not perform his duties as usual. The Town & Church were burnt & the Enemy have crossed to the other side of the River. It is not possible, [Addison] says, to describe the horrid scenes he has witnessed. He has reason however to be very thankful. For tho he has been plundered, made prisoner of war, & harassed till he was dangerously ill, yet his house which is about 3 miles from th town has eecaped [sic] & affords an Asylum to several sufferers who fled from the flames. They hope for happier times & to see the Church wch. was fortunately built of Stone, repaired.⁵³

It was in the hindering of the spread of the Gospel and the withdrawing of people from their homes and, as was the case with Niagara, the wanton destruction of homes and the looting of the land that the American presence was seen to be a scourge on the peaceful lands of Upper Canada and helped aid the British cause.

In July 1814, in the aftermath of the American success at Fort George and their continued dominance of Lake Erie, Addison remarked “This part of the Province is again the seat of war. A battle was fought six days since within ten miles of [my] residence, in which the British Force was obliged to retire.” His despair was not only due to the loss but what he believed such a loss meant for him and his people. He lamented: “in consequence the whole country is open to the Enemy, & nothing is to be expected but scenes of wretchedness & desolation.”⁵⁴ The death and destruction

⁵² Addison, “Report to the SPG 14 October 1813”

⁵³ Letters from SPG meetings as found in de Rudolph, “St. Mark’s,” 11.

⁵⁴ Letters from SPG meetings as found in de Rudolph, “St. Mark’s,” 11.

that the war occasioned became ubiquitous in places like Niagara even though many other areas were spared such hardships.⁵⁵ For those regions that were repeatedly the seat of war important battles that occurred during the contest became an almost second calendar through which the other events of daily life were compared and measured. In writing on the death of a parishioner, Addison noted that the funeral of “Our Dear Friend Mrs. Nabb” took place “On the day in which the Engagement between Sir James Yeo & Com. Chauncey took place on the lake.”⁵⁶ The realities of the war made death a much more common occurrence in the lives of the people and it was in this arena that the clergy were called not just to perform the ceremonies but to weigh in on the importance of dying for one’s country. Located on a tablet at the north end of St. Mark’s Anglican is the following quotation: “In memory of Captain M. McLellan, aged 43; Charles Wright and William Cameron, in the 25th year of their age, of the 1st Regiment of Lincoln Militia, who gloriously fell on the 27th day of May, 1813; also Adjutant Lloyd, of the 8th King’s Regiment of Infantry.” Beyond simply naming those who had been members of the congregation that gave their lives in defense of the land was another poetic interpretation of what that sacrifice meant to the larger identity of the land. At the bottom of the tablet an inscription reads: “As lurid lightning’s dart their vivid light/So poured they forth their fires in bloody fight/They bravely fell and saved their country’s cause/They loved their constitution,

⁵⁵ Another example of how life was interrupted due to the war can be found in Lieut. John Le Couteur’s journal dated 17 February 1813: “[Capt. Henry Alexander Stewart Dobbs RN, a prime Sailor and Gentleman, having invited our Rector, the Reverend Mr. Stuart to attend for the occasion, He was united in marriage to dear rattle, Mary Cartwright, the daughter of Colonel Cartwright and niece of Wm. Robinson...The happy couple were to have gone to Montreal for their honeymoon but a rumour of an Attack coming to ear this morning.” See Graves, *Le Couteur*, 159.

⁵⁶ Addison, “Minutes for St Mark, 29 Sept 1813.”

KING and LAWS.”⁵⁷ It is important to note that the words King and Laws are capitalized because the defense of the British Empire was defined by those two ideas. It was in such sacrifices that the Anglican clergy were able to bring some measure of peace to those who lost people during the fighting and, in so doing, add a deeply personal element to the term empire.⁵⁸ There would be few family members that would negate the legacy of their departed relative by de-crying the very reasons that their loved one died to defend; if anything, it aligned the person’s memory—and the family—with a view of empire that needed to be seen as a cause worthy enough to sacrifice anything to maintain.⁵⁹

C. Rebuilding St. Mark’s

While such commentary lamenting the various ways in which the war interfered with ministry remains extant in large quantities, this section will focus on the rebuilding campaign of St. Mark’s in the years following the war.⁶⁰ St. Mark’s

⁵⁷ As found in Thomas, *History*, 60. This tablet is still present at this church and can be viewed as you enter into the church. Another longer quote from the memorial to a fallen sailor: “Sacred to the memory of Captain Copeland Radcliffe, of his Britannic Majesty’s Navy, who fell while leading on his men to board one of the enemy’s schooners at anchor off Fort Erie on the night of the 17th August, 1814.” As found in Thomas, *History*, 62.

⁵⁸ The following 1819 sermon by Bishop Mountain does explain the need for such events and the importance of funerals: “True, [eulogies and death ceremonies] are empty honors to the party that receives them, and it must be very needless to say that we discard the idea of their efficacy, or their influence upon the state of the departed spirit. But it is proper to shed over such occasions the drapery of Sorrow, and, especially in the case of high public characters, to give them a certain dignified solemnity of mourning.” See Mountain, *Calamity*, 9.

⁵⁹ “Sacred to the memory of Capt. Copeland Radcliffe, of His Britanic [sic] Majesty’s Navy, who fell whilst gallantly heading on his men to board one of the enemy’s schooners at anchor off Fort Erie on the night of the 17th August, 1814. ‘One is erected at request of brothers and sisters by his nephew, the other by Capt. Dawes, R. N., at request of his mother. We cannot but drop a tear to the memory of a brave young sailor. Another near this,’ Donald Campbell, Islay, Argyleshire, Fort Major of Fort George, died 1st Dec. 1813. Interred on west side of Garrison Gate at Fort George’...In the church altogether are fifteen tablets, two in the vestibules and three on the outer walls. It may be noted that seven are to military and naval heroes, four to clergymen; four women’s names are here handed down.” See Carnochan, *Frontier*, 8.

⁶⁰ Janet Carnochan offers the following reports as examples of such interferences: “During the time of the occupation of the town by the Americans from May to December, the notices go on in St. Mark’s Register, but it may be noted that there are no marriages except those of two Indian chiefs, thus

offers a poignant case study because it had suffered damage when the American militia burnt the town during their retreat in the cold winter month of December 1813. This is an aspect of special importance not just because of the effect that the destruction had on the inhabitants but also due to the significance Anglicans placed on the importance of their buildings.

Given that orchards throughout the Peninsula had been ordered burned or cut down in order for the British soldiers to get a clear shot at the enemy, or that crops had been used to feed the various armies or that even fence railings had been used for firewood, the first order of business at the conclusion of the war was to go about rebuilding the infrastructure that had suffered and been destroyed by the violence.⁶¹ Compounding the difficulty of such efforts was the so-called summerless year of 1816 when frost touched many regions every month due to the eruption of Mount Tambour in Indonesia. Thomas Vercheres, in his travels throughout the Niagara region in 1815 reported “everywhere I saw devastation, homes in ashes, fields

recorded, ‘Mohawk chief Capt. Norton, to his wife Catherine, I think on 27th July, 1813, when she was baptized, and Jacob Johnson, another Mohawk chief was married to his wife Mary on 21st Aug. this year. Buried, July 17th, Col. C. Bishop, died of his wounds.’ As this brave young soldier was buried at Lundy’s Lane, Mr. Addison must have been called on to ride all these miles to perform this service. The next item gives us another, glimpse of warfare. ‘On the day on which the engagement between Sir James Yeo and Commander Chauncey took place on the lake, our dear friend Mrs. McNabb was buried in Mr. Servo’s burying ground, supposed to be 29th September, 1813.’ This, history gives as the 28th Sept., but it is evident that during this exciting period some of the entries have been made from memory. Here is an entry which shows that though Parliament had been removed, Niagara was preferred as a burial place to York. ‘10th June, 1816—Buried, George Lane, Esq., Usher of the Black Rod.’ ‘Married, 1817, Rev. Wm. Samson, minister of Grimsby, to Maria Nelles, Buried, 1819, James Rogers, innkeeper,’ and the remark, ‘a bad profession for any but very sober men.’ ‘Sept. 23rd, 1822, Poor old Hope, Feb. 23rd—Baptised, Agnes Strachan, daughter of Hon. Dr. J. Strachan, Rector of York, and Ann his wife.’ Here may be seen the names of most of the Regiments that have been quartered here, 41st, 8th King’s, 100th, 99th, 70th, Sappers and Miners. Of these we still find traces in buttons picked up at Fort George with these numbers. Rev. Mr. Addison was military chaplain for many years.” See Carnochan, *Frontier*, 4.

⁶¹ “The future culture of [Hemp crops in the Eastern Townships], however, ought to be looked forward to as an object of national importance, as well as individual benefit; for unquestionably, this country, at no distant period, may supply Great Britain with a very great proportion of the Hemp required by her for the equipment of her Navy, &c to the advantage of the Colonists, and of the Government at home.” See Stewart, *Townships*, 6. Note the advantage is to England and the colony.

trampled and laid waste, forts demolished, forests burned and blackened, truly a most pitiful sight.”⁶² The coming and going of both American and British forces, along with the various Native tribes insured that “Niagara had suffered more devastation than any other location in the war”⁶³ so the resources at the disposal of men like Robert Addison became literally matters of life and death in the newly discovered peace of Upper Canada.⁶⁴

As before the war, the churches that received sponsorship from England stood to benefit the most from the poverty of the local inhabitants.⁶⁵ However, Britain was also struggling through the beginnings of a depression due to the toll of the Napoleonic struggle and money remained an elusive but vital aspect of the spiritual climate in the newly peaceful colony. Previous to the war, the congregation had paid for the church out of their own pockets, a cost of approximately 1200 pounds. However, Addison wrote to the SPG in 1817 that “Our Church is in bad condition for very cold Weather, and we have for some time been expecting that Government would assist us in repairing it; as it was used for military purposes before the Enemy

⁶² Habermehl/Combe, *Addison*, 69.

⁶³ Habermehl/Combe, *Addison*, 69.

⁶⁴ The Lower Canadian churches noted the ravages that their Upper Canadian counterparts had undergone due to the war, but still found the fact that the war had failed to wholly undermine the economy as evidence of more providential blessings. John Bethune reminded his people that throughout the war God’s providence had “prospered your industry; and that events calamitous to many others, have been beneficial to you.”⁶⁴ Specifically referencing the misfortunes of the Upper Canadians, Charles Stewart instructed his people to be thankful that the war had barely touched their part of the colony: “We must consider the kindness of providence to us here, in sparing us from so many evils and ravages of war, which it was reasonable to fear would have visited us; and under which our friends in Upper Canada have severely suffered.” See Stewart, *Providence*, 13.

⁶⁵ However, despite close British connections, these churches also suffered setbacks as the following quote shows. After the death of the Duke of Richmond the hopes of rebuilding the land seemed stalled: “the benefits to be derived to us here, from having a Representative of Majesty so near the grade of Royalty itself...the views which he had actually embraced of the interests of these Provinces, and his real desire to draw out their latent resources, and to promote their welfare in every point—all these concurring circumstances of advantage produced, certainly, in the minds of the thinking men, a feeling that his arrival had been auspicious for us, and that his government would be pregnant with happy consequences...Vain anticipations and fallacious hopes!—A single stroke of Providential visitation puts to rout the pleasing images which we had conjured up.” See Mountain, *Calamity*, 12-3.

burnt it.” The lack of funds by that time prompted him to report that the future of the church was in jeopardy and “if we find that no help can be had from that Quarter, we must try to do without it” before expressing the fear that the “poverty of my hearers” would insure that the congregation would be “unable to get it into any tolerable state for some time.”⁶⁶ The Anglican focus on sacred space and the belief that the church, as a visible structure, was an essential component of British society necessitated the impetus for the quick return of normal worship in a comfortable and amenable building.⁶⁷

However, over a year after Addison’s previous comments, St. Mark’s had yet to fully recover from the damage it endured during the war which meant that it also had not returned to the pre-war glory the church had enjoyed in the region. Colonel William Claus wrote to Rev. Dr. Stuart asking again for assistance from the SPG and detailed the kind of damage that the Americans had visited upon the structure. He shared that he was “Anxious that something should be done towards rebuilding our church which, in the winter of 1813, was unfortunately destroyed by the enemy at the time our town was burnt,” and admitted, like Addison, that if the people could fix the church they would but that he believed “during this season it is hardly possible to attend [to the repairs of the church].” Building on the significance of the church as a structure he reminded Stuart that it had been used both “for the purpose of storing provisions” and “as a hospital for the wounded” but that, at the time of his appeal, “Nothing whatever has been done or likely to be done. It is not even

⁶⁶ Addison, “Letter 10 January 1817.”

⁶⁷ “[A]ll good Christians [should] frequently attend the public worship in the house of God...In a word, public worship is the great instrument of securing a sense of God’s providence and of a world to come; and a sense of God’s providence and a world to come is the great basis of all social and private duties.” See Stewart, *Prayers*, 47.

weatherproof... We are deprived of our all and have barely the means of covering for ourselves and families, to which war must be attributed the melancholy state the church remains in.”⁶⁸ The fact that the war was blamed for the “melancholy state” of affairs in the area communicated that the church structure, through its ability to store supplies and offer shelter for the wounded and even because it was targeted for destruction by the invaders, had proven its worth and had suffered for the cause of loyalty.⁶⁹

The significance of that should not be overlooked because it communicates the significance of the church as a structure that could serve the colony not just as a spiritual sanctuary but also as a physical refuge as well. In February 1819, *The Niagara Spectator* commented on the role the church played in the larger community and how the war, and subsequent inability to repair those damages, impacted the community:

On Christmas Day, by the generous loan of a stove and quantity of wood the Episcopal Church by Mr Addison our clergyman was enabled to provide Divine Service in this shamefully neglected building, which yet so strongly marks the ravages of the late war. Mr Racey’s conduct, we trust, will excite a feling [sic] in those who ought to attend to the respectable appearance and comfort of their place of worship—a place that should be the first ornament and great object of the town. We must, however, do justice to the Clergyman and Church Wardens, who, we are assured, strongly represented to our late Governor General, Sir J.C. Sherbrooke, the miserable and shattered state of the Church, and the probable cause of its deformity; having formerly been occupied as a barrack by our troops and in consequence destroyed by the enemy. We can scarcely hesitate to add, that, from the knowledge we have of the liberal and amiable character of His Grace the Commander of the Forces, but he would,

⁶⁸ “Letter 18 January 1818,” as found in Thomas, *History*, 60.

⁶⁹ “The churchyard is very interesting and also unique, for here may be traced the rifle pits constructed during the war. The church was used by both armies, for after the battle of Queenston Heights it was used as a hospital for our wounded, then by the Americans as a barracks, and again by our own commissariat. What an eventful history!” See Carnochan, *Frontier*, 6.

on a proper application, adopt such means as would make it more fit for the reception of its congregation, and who are literally from the losses they have sustained by the late war, unable to defray the expence [sic].⁷⁰

Even more than in the days before the war, the province of Upper Canada was dependent on outside revenue in order to grow and thrive. The contest with America had drained what little resources the people had which, in turn, inspired greater and more urgent correspondence with their British connections. In order to receive the desired assistance, the people of both Canadas needed to assert how their region had been impacted by their loyalty in the preceding war and why their region was vital to a continued imperial presence. The desire for the church to be the “great object of the town” demonstrated the importance of the structure to community identity and how the continued dilapidated state of St Mark’s caused shame within the parishioners and the people of the Peninsula.⁷¹

The fact that it was damaged and required money to fix was only necessary because of the war and not due to the lack of concern displayed by the parishioners. Addison wrote, “Our congregation are too poor to expect much from them. From their living within gunshot of the enemy’s lines they suffered the loss of all they possessed, burnt out and plundered of everything, and they had not yet recovered their misfortunes from the late unhappy events.”⁷² The people had lived in a war zone;

⁷⁰ “February 1819,” *Niagara Spectator*. [n.p.]

⁷¹ Other accommodations were attained as the following shows: “Before the church was built, the congregation [of St. Mark’s Anglican in Niagara] seems to have met in the Court House, near the site of the present one, and in the interval during and after the war in the Old Indian Council Chamber, afterwards used as an hospital, lately burned down. This last, with the buildings known as Butler’s Barracks, was not burned with the rest of the town, as the British troops were reported to be entering, and they were thus saved.” See Carnochan, *Frontier*, 5.

⁷² Letter dated 20 September, 1820. As found in Thomas, *History*, 60. See also, “Jan 10th, 1820. The Church which had been so dilapidated during the War that it could not be used in cold weather will

more significantly, they had remained loyal throughout their time in the war zone and had proven, in pre-war times, that they were dedicated to St. Mark's and willing to invest in the church. However, in the scarcity of post-war British North America, the people were too strained to attempt a legitimate rebuilding campaign and so the London based SPG was called upon to assist. Despite the need for the church, and the proof that the people of the town lacked the ability to pay for the repairs, it still took until 1822 for the reconstruction to be completed and another six years more for the consecration; thirteen years after the cessation of hostilities, St. Mark's returned to the Niagara Peninsula bearing the scars of the war but, like the land in which it was built, able to continue on.

IV. Impact on the Presbyterian Church

A. Presbyterian Establishment Tensions

Finances and access to crown resources would instigate a new dimension related to which church could rightfully and legally be considered the established church of the colony. As John Moir correctly summarizes:

Coming controversies over co-establishment in the Canadas first cast a seemingly innocent shadow in 1819 when the Presbyterian congregation of Niagara-on-the-Lake petitioned Lieutenant-Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland for financial assistance in obtaining a minister. The American invaders had burned their church in 1813 and had wasted the property of members of the congregation, so that they now asked for charity... The petitioners did not care where Maitland might find the money, but suggested that the Clergy Reserves fund was one possible source.⁷³

From such a seemingly "innocent" position was triggered a new contest that had been noticeably absent before and during the war. However, the war itself was the reason

soon be thoroughly repaired as the Lieut. Governor has appropriated 500 [pounds] for that purpose." See Letters from SPG meetings as found in de Rudolph. "St. Mark's," 12.

⁷³ Moir, *Presbyterianism*, 88.

for the change in the alliance between the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches that had seemed unshaken throughout the contest. With the threat of another American invasion waning as the years went by, and with the contest held aloft as an example of Presbyterian respect and deference to the crown, the Churches of England and Scotland in British North America discovered new rivalries as the former continued with the position that it alone was due the rights of establishment. However, the latter, stating the reality of the United Kingdom and the evidence of past actions in the conflict with America, did not understand why co-establishment was not a possibility in the colony as it was on the island from whence the colony was born.

The Presbyterian Church was the established church of Scotland and, citing the Constitutional Act of 1791, argued that, as a Protestant Church, there existed no legal barriers that could keep it from accessing crown funds for the sake of ministers, rebuilding, or anything else that an established church might desire. The clerical landscape was changing again as former allies, left without national enemies to the south, began to find new foes within the confines of their own colony. At stake, as always, were interpretations related to how the church was called to serve the empire and how the imperial laws were to be applied within British North America. While the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches never balked at the notion of an established church, their arguments were focused on how an established church was supposed to function to serve the empire. Unfortunately for the Anglican case, the Kirk of Lower Canada had already received some, albeit less than the Anglican, money to support the work of the church. However, it would not be until 1823—and therefore beyond the chronological scope of this work—before the Presbyterians would lay claims to

establishment based on legal arguments. For the task at hand, it is important to note that in the few years following the war it was not legal precedent but definable praxis that the church used to defend its loyalty.

Like the Episcopal Methodists, the Presbyterians argued that the actions of their adherents during the war provided powerful, and oft-repeated, examples of loyalty that overshadowed legal claims or arguments. From the battered St. Andrew's Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake to the Fortress of Quebec City, the Presbyterian claims for support were based not on legal rights as the established Protestant Church of Scotland but on the more applicable traits of "need, respectability and political loyalty"⁷⁴ Although they did not appeal to the crown, their use of transatlantic connections provided another example of how this denomination's larger identity was as part of the kingdom across the Atlantic.⁷⁵

B. The Importance of Transatlantic Social Connections

The following excerpt from a letter of John Bethune's near his death, demonstrated his awareness that local "gentlemen" were needed for their transatlantic connections in order to arrange a proper and suitable replacement for him. He wrote: "there are private Gentlemen in Lower Canada who are acquainted and connected with Clergymen in Ross and Inverness shires and who will gladly give you every assistance in their power, if you apply to them."⁷⁶ Such statements reveal, once again, that local realities were still informed and, to a certain extent, defined in relation to

⁷⁴ Moir, *Presbyterianism*, 89.

⁷⁵ The following shows how St. Andrew's, like St. Mark's was forced to look for other venues due to the destruction occasioned by the war. Nancy Carnochan writes, "A collection at Divine service to repair windows and building as far as necessary for comfort of congregation (supposed to be school house). In the Gleaner lying before me for 1818, published in Niagara, is an advertisement of 'annual meeting of Presbyterian Church, to be held in school house. The accounts of moneys received and expended in building school house will be produced.'" See Carnochan, *Frontier*, 12.

⁷⁶ Reference from a letter dated 1815, as found in Bethune, *Memoirs*, 3.

the larger imperial network. Given that the clergy were educated in Scotland but that no missionary organization existed for the Presbyterian Church in British North America, the impetus for such connections was to be found in local merchants who had maintained cultural ties to the homeland. In the pre-war context, the Presbyterians had been happy to receive Scottish-born and trained ministers from America, but the same could not be said after 1815. Concerned that courting American ministers would offer ammunition to their Anglican rivals, and because men like Robert Easton and Alexander Spark had generated as much anti-American rhetoric as any other clergyman, inviting leaders from the United States was not a practical consideration.

Therefore, although not as connected as the Anglicans or Wesleyans to the crown from a bureaucratic perspective, the business and familial relationships present within Lower Canadian Presbyterians demonstrates that they too viewed their church as supplied through the empire. Arguably, because they had to work so much harder without the benefit of official imperial channels, their desires could be seen as even stronger than those denominations that were supplied, and paid, by missionary societies. The two churches, while similar, had struggled for existence under very different financial circumstances. Janet Carnochan's late nineteenth-century research on the churches correctly assesses that "St. Mark's had an immense advantage, with a settled clergyman, with a salary from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of \$200." Noting the financial support the SPG offered to the Niagara Church, she then contrasted the Anglican experience with the neighbouring Presbyterians: "St. Andrew's struggling under a load of debt for many years, with many breaks from the confusion and distress caused by the war, could only have been kept alive by the

strenuous exertions of its members.”⁷⁷ The Presbyterians of the Canadas had to work hard to support their church within the colony and insure that it maintained an ecclesiastical identity rooted in the Church of Scotland from whence it had come.

Like their pre-war concern reflected in most writings, Bethune, only days before his death, wrote of his concern for the future of his congregation upon his death:

After my decease, you will have recourse to a priest of the Church of Rome to baptize your children. Nay. Some will have their marriages solemnized, though at the expence [sic] of changing their religion... In this state of destitution, the Catholic Church will make a plentiful harvest from amongst you. You cannot be ignorant of the arts and circumvention of that Church, on all occasions, to make Proselytes. You must therefore be sensible, that these arts will be exerted to the utmost, when such favourable circumstances, as I have mentioned, combine to give them effect. All things considered, I do not blame the zeal of that communion. Did I believe that all religious denominations, except my own, shall finally be *damned*, I would strain every nerve, to rescue as many unfortunate wretches as I could out of the fire, and place them in safety within the sacred sanctuary of my own Church. This tenet of excluding all, except her own Members, from the happiness of a future life, by which she expects to bully others into her communion, is the most presumptuous and unchristian of all the religious principles of the Church of Rome... [there] never can be cordial love and friendship in any civil society, so long as this detestable tenet is believed by a great number of its Members.⁷⁸

His awareness that the only clerical support his people could expect would come from priests revealed that, despite the Catholic Church’s support of the British position in the war, their claims to loyalty did not mean that they were seen as religious partners. The example of the post-war Catholic and Presbyterian rivalry demonstrates that the war did very little to create sustainable partnerships between the various denominations. With the removal of the American threat from the colonies, certain

⁷⁷ Carnochan, *Frontier*, 9.

⁷⁸ References from a letter dated 1815, from Bethune, *Memoir*, 1-2.

rivalries were minimized—notably between the Anglicans and the Wesleyans—but this did not occur with the Catholics or the Episcopal Methodists.

To conclude, the Methodists suffered most in the war not just because of their close ties to the enemy American nation but also because their ministry to the frontier, a ministry that made them the most popular version of Christianity in the colony, was overshadowed by the presence of hostile armies. The loss of American missionaries, reliable administrators, and faithful adherents due to battles and militia duty devastated the denomination throughout the conflict. The Anglicans fared much better even though St. Mark's of Niagara and St. James of York experienced the wrath of American armies. The efforts of rectors Robert Addison and John Strachan to serve their government and their churches throughout the contest catapulted both men to prominence as well as offered their denomination clerical war heroes to be celebrated. While the Presbyterians faced similar challenges as their Anglican allies, the post-war reconstruction of St. Andrew's in Niagara-on-the-Lake divided the two denominations over the issue of establishment. The Presbyterians, as the established church of Scotland, believed they had the same rights as their English counterparts in the colony, a tenet that was vigorously challenged by the Anglicans. While the war against America had united the Scottish and English churches, once that national foe had been removed, the two groups began to view each other with increasing suspicion. In short, the expulsion of the American foe lent emphasis and credibility to the religious sentiments of expulsion in British North America, even though the definitions of who constituted such an ecclesiastical foe evolved in the post-war Canadas. Therefore, the continuing denominational conflicts that followed the

cessation of hostilities shows that the religious war both outlasted, and was influenced by, the War of 1812.

Chapter Three

A Just War: Morality as Military Necessity

“[E]ngaged in promoting a just cause, in discharging the duties assigned him by his Government to perform, he is neither turned to the right nor to the left but proceeds with boldness and intrepidity to the execution of his purposes...the Christian alone that can possess that steady courage or firmness of mind so essential in war”¹

Introduction

As noted earlier, on 18 June 1812, the government of James Madison declared war on Great Britain. Citing maritime rights, crippling trade embargos, the impressments of American sailors into service on British vessels under the often dubious charge of desertion, commercial restrictions, the use of natives to destabilize the western frontier lands, and national disrespect, Madison rhetorically posed the question, “Whether the United States shall continue passive under these progressive usurpations and these accumulating wrongs.” In that statement an important theme was being introduced that forms the backdrop of this chapter. The understanding of Britain’s pre-war “progressive usurpations” allowed for an opening military strategy of invasion while still claiming a defensive—therefore just— position.² In the penultimate paragraph of his war speech, Madison declared: “[we] shall commit a just

¹ Strachan, *Legislative*, 12.

²“In Massachusetts the Federalist-controlled legislature voted overwhelming against an ‘offensive war’... The Kentucky legislature railed against both Great Britain and France... [and the South Carolina legislature called for] a ‘triangular war’ against both Great Britain and France.” See Borneman, *1812*, 48. Because there existed vocal opposition to the war by both political and religious leaders, the President was forced to explain his actions in ways that could calm criticism and show that his actions were not contrary to the will of God or the ideals of the citizenry.

cause into the hands of the Almighty Disposer of Events.”³ The justness of the cause was not simply a matter of national pride but was a spiritual necessity to garner favour from the “Almighty Disposer.” In essence, the implication of moral wartime standards was, from a religious perspective, not merely for the sake of propaganda but was a military necessity.

In order to support the government’s choice to engage in war, the churches of the United States had to show that Britain, without an official declaration, had been engaged in military assaults against the States that necessitated—and legitimized—recourse to arms.⁴ This involved numerous, and often anecdotal, tales of British treachery and violence that were published throughout the land, and in sermons, in order to quell the growing distaste for the venture.⁵ However, once Hull landed his

³ A series of Madison’s speeches can be found at <http://www.famousquotes.me.uk/speeches/presidential-speeches/presidential-speech-james-madison.htm>. Downloaded 28 August 2011.

⁴ It is difficult to simplify the causes of something as complex as a war into one, or even several, motives. Historian Louis Hacker does agree that the Americans were less than forthcoming with the true reasons for their attack on Upper Canada. However, he thought that it was Canadian, and not western, land that whetted the American appetite. He writes: “While some Westerners no doubt advocated the conquest of Canada so that their British rivals would be driven from the fur trade with the Indians, the chief preoccupation... must have been with those vistas of boundless Canadian lands.” See Hacker, “Desire,” 50. Hacker makes the argument that the American west was not desirable land at this time because the settlers lacked the technology to make the vast prairie-land viable. Therefore, while expansion may have been their goal, the direction they desired to go was north and not west. Julius Pratt argues against Hacker based on the latter’s inability to provide sufficient evidence to prove his assertions. Pratt argues that since many Americans made no bones about using the war to rid the fur trade of British traders, it is unlikely they would conceal their desire for land as if it were more sinister. He writes, “Was it more wicked, and hence more to be concealed, to covet Canadian lands than to covet the profits from Canadian furs? Yet the fur trade again and again creeps into war speeches and war articles.” See Horsman, “Conquest,” 55. Pratt argues that it was the fear of Indians and the even deeper anger that the British were spurring them on that is easier to prove through primary sources and logical reasoning.

⁵ One example of such dissent is found in Brown Emerson’s sermon on the cause and effects of war: “Here is the criminal source of all wars. In every war there is an aggressor; and if the invaded power act strictly on the defensive, the invader is answerable for all the evil that may ensue. If war proceeds from such a source, must it not be distressing and lamentable to the benevolent mind?” See Emerson, *Sermon*, 6. Note his use of the word “criminal” when discussing the American instigation of the conflict. However, an example of some of the tales used by American religious figures is the following quote from Baptist Spencer Houghton Cone: “I have been listening... to a farewell address delivered by the Rev. Jn Hargrove to the Balt[imore] Volunteers who have rec orders to march tomorrow morning.

army on British North American soil, the reasons why no longer mattered and John Strachan asserted “on our part, the war is just” and provided the only answer required to contradict any American justifications or objections for a colonial war effort: “To prove the truth of this, there is no necessity for me to examine the reasons listed by our enemies for the war, but simply to state, that *all defensive wars are just.*”⁶

This chapter will be divided into two sections based on Just Cause and Just Means, categories that are essential to the development of a Just War. The first, Just Cause, will examine clerical writings that linked America to France to show how the

The address was a very animated one, and produced many a burst of indignation and revenge coming from the lips of an old Revolutionary character, whose only son was press'd on board an English frigate, and in an attempt to escape found refuge in a watery grave. When I beheld the tears of bitter anguish rolling down the venerable cheeks of a disconsolable grey headed old man...I must confess my feelings were too agonizing for feeble words to describe.” See Cone, “Letter 27 Sept 1812.” A substantial amount of energy was invested on the American side to explain the various motivations that led to the declaration of war in order to assure the citizenry of the United States that theirs was a just cause. This was of special importance as those in the northeastern states were opposed to the conflict and condemned it as unjust and dishonourable. Presbyterian minister, and Federalist Congressman, Samuel Taggart officially denounced the justness of the intended war within the halls of congress when he asserted “No one pretends that the war in which we propose to engage is purely defensive. No hostile armament that I know of is upon our border, menacing invasion, or endeavoring to effect a lodgement on our soil. No hostile fleet is hovering on our coast and menacing our cities with either plunder or destruction. None of our cities are besieged, nor is our internal tranquility threatened by a foreign invader. As it respects any disturbance from the foreign enemy with whom we contemplate to be at war, we may both lie down in peace, and sleep in safety in the most exposed situation in the country without anyone to disturb our repose. We contemplate the invasion of a foreign territory, to which no one pretends we have any right, unless one to be acquired by contest. It is to be a war of conquest upon land, undertaken with a view to obtain reparation for injuries we have sustained on the water. In the first place, although our honor is said to be concerned in it, and that it is a war which cannot, consistent with honor, be avoided, I can see nothing very honorable in it...we are disposed to select that nation alone for our enemy with whom we have the greatest interest in being at peace, and who is able to do us most harm in the event of war.” See Congressman Samuel Taggart As found in Polner & Woods, *Dared*, 11-2. Strachan agreed and in a letter to Prevost, wrote: “We hope that under your Excellency’s auspices, this *unprovoked war* will cover our insidious enemy with disgrace.” See Letter to Sir George Prevost as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 13. Italics added for emphasis. See also Eustace, *Passion* and “Beauty and Booty” for more evidence of the American penchant for using purposefully emotive language to stir sympathy or create emotional arguments deemed more valuable than rational assertions.

⁶ Strachan, *Legislative*, 6. Italics added for emphasis. However, Strachan did show awareness of the American complaints related to impressments but offered the following retort: “The law of nations expressly condemns sending arms or military stores by way of merchandize to either of the dates at war, as a breach of neutrality, and even common provisions in to a place besieged; how much more detrimental is it to one of the belligerent powers to be deprived of her subjects, and those the very persons who must defend her: What is the use of ships of war without sailors to man them, and where shall sailors be found if a neutral state encourages them to desert. The British require only their own men.” See Strachan, *George*, n XIII, 66.

former was influenced by the latter and, as such, needed to be defeated in order to maintain liberty in the colony and throughout the world. British North Americans were free to fight against the American encroachment because theirs was the more righteous cause. The third part of the first section will look at the discourse following the British victory over Napoleon and the subsequent arrival of battle-seasoned reinforcements to the colony. The opening discourse on the wrongs of an invasive war was altered to defend the British attack on the American eastern seaboard.⁷

The second part, focusing on Just Means and proper conduct during the war, explores the clerical discourse related to the need for military morality and the use of Natives in the war. This part will explain how clergy responded to the growing concern that employing the Native allies betrayed England's Christian conscience. It will also look at the various ways used to describe a "Christian soldier" in order to insure that the people did not lose their morality in the violence of the conflict. The War of 1812 did not suspend the pre-existing religious tensions but gave them new, and more serious, dimensions, especially as it pertained to the England versus America dichotomy. In the religious discourse, the "faithless foe" of American Methodism was relegated to a secondary concern from mid-1812 until the conclusion of the war by the even more aggressive invasion of the American nation. In the second contest between England and America in less than forty years, the battlefield was once again employed not just to see which nation would rule in the Americas but also to prove which nation truly had God on its side.

I. Just Cause

A. America Too Close to France

For Presbyterian Robert Easton “the very critical time, and hasty manner of delaring [sic] war, together with the sudden disappearance of all its ostensible causes in the negotiations for peace” produced a feeling of suspicion related to the declarations of war made by the American government. Citing the removal of the Orders in Council, Easton saw much more sinister machinations at work and went on to declare that “the authors of this tragic-comedy were actuated with motives, which they durst not avow, and that patriotism had less share in their conduct than blind devotion to the despot of France.”⁸ Joseph Clark likewise saw in the declaration the violence of the French revolution visiting upon the shores of the new world. He chided:

The vast southern continent, breaking away from its antient [sic] government, is now experiencing all the horrors of a revolutionary state. Heated by party rage, these miserable inhabitants are rushing on mutual destruction. Indeed, the general relaxation of the restraints of religion, which have taken place within the last half century, seem to have *let the world loose upon itself*, and rendered man, every where, the foe and scourge of man!⁹

Such writings bound France and America together as ideological allies, even if there was never any solid evidence that the two shared a military alliance as well.

Alexander Spark also saw in the American motivations a decidedly French influence. Preaching in 1814 he asserted “it clearly appeared that the *ostensible* cause of the war, was not its *real* cause” but that the war in British North America was a costly diversion that threatened to destroy England for the aggrandizement and material success of both France and America. He wrote:

A diversion was, therefore, wanted in favour of this expedition, something that might attract the attention of England, and withdraw a

⁸ Easton, *Reasons*, 6.

⁹ Clark, *Sermon*, 4. Italics part of the original quote.

part of her force from the scene of operations in Europe. To form this diversion, and thus to second the views of the Ruler of France, was undoubtedly the real motive, which induced the Government of the neighbouring States to become our enemies, and to carry war into this remote corner of the British dominions.¹⁰

Because the Orders in Council were repealed with plenty of time to avoid warfare in British North America, Spark saw in this the devious desire of the Americans to ally with Napoleon with no regard that such an act could destroy England, God's bastion of freedom, peace, and order in the world.

John Strachan went even further to combine the two nations by stating that the American Revolution had inspired the French counterpart. Arguing that the largely illiterate French populace had little access to the philosophers credited with inciting the revolution, Strachan went on to identify those he believed were actually responsible: "the soldiers who had served in the American War did more on their return [to laud American democracy and freedom] than all the philosophies together... The American was therefore the chief cause of the French revolution."¹¹ Because there were no French living in Upper Canada, with the possible exception of "a few who lived over against Detroit on the Canadian side of the river, or who had come across from Brock's Detroit when war broke out"¹² the importance of placing America alongside the French was of even greater importance. The fact that Upper Canada was predominantly peopled by those born in the United States meant that rhetoric calling into question America's motivations was necessary.¹³

¹⁰ Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 13. Italics part of the original quote.

¹¹ Strachan, *George*, n XI, 64.

¹² Lucas, *Canadian*, 16.

¹³ In August of 1812, the Rev. Robert Addison of St. Mark's Anglican Church in Newark on the Niagara Peninsula recorded the impact the declaration of war had on the members of his parish and the people of the town. Writing to the SPG Addison penned: "Aug 11th, 1812. [The people] were all in bustle & confusion from the declaration of war by the American States." See Letters from SPG

Strachan contradicted Hull's 1812 proclamation by dismissing the Republican ideology as arrogant and retorted: "They mocked our attachment to the best of kings; and tho' born to the most exalted freedom and independence, they reproached us with being slaves."¹⁴ The Americans were threatening the nation that set people free and dared to call themselves liberators.¹⁵ To Strachan, nothing could be further from the truth and he consistently espoused the belief that England gave America no motivation to engage in war, especially if Upper Canada was designated as the battleground.¹⁶ Strachan admitted that he, along with other leaders of the land were "indeed astonished at the measures taken by the United States to embarrass and destroy the illustrious Nation of which we form a part."¹⁷ Not only did such a statement show unity with the empire but also a belief that the American attack was considered an "astonishing" affront to the peace of both lands.¹⁸ Strachan chastised

meetings as found in de Rudolph. "St. Mark's," 11. His land was destined to see more battles and suffer more privations than almost anywhere else in either province and the minister himself would be taken as a prisoner of war.

¹⁴ Strachan. *Thanksgiving*, 37. Strachan would go on to condemn the American position as arrogant and assuming when he wrote: "[America has] threatened with unblushing arrogance to subdue this fine colony." Strachan. *Thanksgiving*, 37.

¹⁵ Strachan condemned the idea that the republic was the surest defender of human liberty and championed England's system of governance: "Our wise and brave ancestors had judgment to perceive and courage enough to vindicate the national rights of man; at the same time they generously submitted to the reasonable and high prerogative of supreme executive power... They have succeeded in establishing a Constitution of Government, the wonder and envy of surrounding nations; they have shewn the world that British subjects are free men in the best sense of the word and that rational liberty is no way incompatible with prompt obedience to legitimate authority... we in this remote Province are blessed with an exact epitome of its government, as far as suits our infant state; and enjoy the invaluable privilege [sic] of its mild and equitable laws; which secure to us and our posterity all the civil and religious rights and free born British subjects" See John Strachan, "A Sermon on Ecclesiasticus 4:3," as found in MacRae, "Religious Foundation," 84. Her note that follows this sermon states that it is not dated but she believes that it was written shortly after the death of Isaac Brock. However, MacRae then dates it to August 1812, several months before Brock's demise.

¹⁶ Those American presumptions were also lambasted by Presbyterian Robert Easton, who was appalled that such motivations were considered sufficient to warrant the invasion and offered his own interpretation of such beliefs which, he argued, "can be viewed in no better light, than as a rude attempt to force a contented child out of the fostering arms of an indulgent parent." See Easton, *Reasons*, 7.

¹⁷ Strachan, *Legislative*, 3-4.

¹⁸ To the residents of Upper Canada, William Hull distributed a proclamation in order to explain the actions of his army. Noting the fact that America had been "driven to arms" by the aggressive actions

the American politicians for believing they had figured out how to properly legislate liberty and stated that the United States had “borrowed all that is valuable in their institutions from Britain” before concluding that any of their so-called innovations were, in reality, “poisoned or deformed by their crudities” that was reminiscent of “the cruel tyranny in France.”¹⁹

In his sermon to the Legislative Assembly at York one month after Hull’s landing, Strachan went on the offensive against the American invasion. Citing the belief that Napoleon was the common enemy of all freedom-loving people, he stood aghast at American temerity in invading. He preached:

We expected that a Nation fighting for her own existence, resisting the most formidable tyrant that ever lived, and triumphantly arresting his progress, would at length obtain their favour, and that if they had not the magnanimity to assist in the contest, they would at all events abstain from weakening her means of victory and defence. We looked for peace, we persuaded ourselves that the similarity of manners, habits and opinions, the warm connexions [sic] which still subsist between the two Nations, the tender recollection that they once stood in the relation of parent and child, would have taught the States moderation, and induced them to excuse any little faults on the part of the British, till a time of tranquility should arrive, when they might be satisfactorily arranged. But no good came; the darkness increased²⁰

of Great Britain, he went on to write: “The army under my command has invaded your country and the standard of union now waves over the territory of Canada. To the peaceable, unoffending inhabitant, it brings neither danger nor difficulty. I come to find enemies not to make them.” Hull, like many of his countrymen, was confident that he would find little resistance from the people of the Canadas out of the belief that they were offering the people greater freedom by removing British rule. Believing that the empire was “separated by an immense ocean, and an immense forest” and since the people had “no participation in her councils, no interest in her conduct” they would not pose a threat. He concluded his proclamation with an encouragement for the people to not only remain neutral but to actually volunteer for service in his army on the grounds that: “The United States offer you peace, liberty, and security. Your choice lies between these and war, slavery, and destruction. Choose, then, but choose wisely; and may he who knows the justice of our cause, and who holds the fate of nations, guide you to a result most compatible with your rights and interests, your peace and prosperity.” See Hull, “Proclamation.” Hull’s words echoed the official American discourse that their nation was the truest champion of liberty and stated that one of the collateral benefits of the war was to wrest the inhabitants of the Canadas from the tyranny of England.

¹⁹ Strachan, *George*, 22.

²⁰ Strachan, *Legislative*, 4.

As the two nations met in a violent struggle for the second time, Strachan believed that any bond of unity between England and America had finally, and irreparably, been severed.²¹ The invasion proved, to his mind, that all that was good about Britain had failed to grow in the minds of the rebellious colonies and proved that their principles and ideals as a nation were the harbingers of darkness. Such language placed spiritual imagery upon national events and showed America as a land of darkness—especially when coupled with the anti-religious revolutions of France—attacking England, the one nation capable of standing against the onslaught of tyranny and darkness to maintain the existence of light in the world.²² The spiritual language displayed a certain *gravitas* to the events that, while dramatic, were not outlandish in their scope.²³

One of the tools of religion is to equate temporal events with the deeper spiritual power that undergirds them. In the case of the American invasion, charging that they were under the influence of French thinking was a moral challenge because France had, quite literally, attacked the church and attempted to destroy it in their country.²⁴ Implicit in such dialogue was the question: “What hope did the people of

²¹ “The only nation from which [Britain] might have hoped for kindness, sympathy and gratitude [had chosen to side against England and] deserted the cause of humanity and joined the tyrant.” John Strachan, “Sermon from 3 June 1814,” as found in MacRae, “Religious Foundation,” 92.

²² “Every gentle method has been tried with our enemy, every reasonable offer of accommodation made and a spirit of conciliation manifested with such perseverance, that even the most timid and moderate have found their patience exhausted. We were spurned and yet we remained tranquil, we sought for peace and they have given us war.” See Strachan, *Legislative*, 6.

²³ “The revolution in France has been the scourge of the world since its commencement. This dreadful convulsion was accelerated, if not entirely produced, by the rebellion in America.” See Strachan, *George*, 32.

²⁴ The churches did not supply the only rhetoric that challenged the American assumptions about the loyalty of the colonists. Isaac Brock’s response to Hull provides another source that used the threat of Napoleon’s France to strengthen British North Americans’ fidelity to England. Looking to the brief history of the colony, he proclaimed: “It is but too obvious that once exchanged from the powerful protection of the United Kingdom you must be re-annexed to the dominion of France” Not happy with simple conjecture, Brock went on to inform the inhabitants that “this restitution of Canada to the

the Canadas have if the Americans—those acting in accordance with the dark land of France—actually won and were placed in charge?”²⁵ The fear of French governance reveals a more global political astuteness within the colonists than they are often credited with possessing.²⁶ Such transatlantic awareness means that when clergy called France “dark” and England “light” they were not creating meaning but were adding other levels of meaning to ideas already in place within the culture. With that in mind, the clerical discourse chastising America for being too close in their sentiments to the French, even before the July 1812 invasion, was a masterful rhetorical stroke.

B. A Defensive War is Just

i. The Anglican and Presbyterian Position

empire of France was the stipulated reward for the aid afforded to the revolted colonies, now the United States; the debt is still due, and there can be no doubt but the pledge was renewed as a consideration for commercial advantages, or rather for an expected relaxation in the tyranny of France over the commercial world.” While there is no evidence to support Brock’s charges that the Upper and Lower Canada were to be returned to France, his statements, along with the similar themes in the clerical discourse, do offer more insight into the transatlantic concerns that leaders believed weighed on the minds of the colonists. In his work on this, C. P. Lucas states, “Brock’s words show what was the feeling of the time, and how in Upper Canada resistance to American invasion was identified with the world-wide struggle in which Great Britain was engaged against Napoleon.” See Lucas, *Canadian*, 16-7.

²⁵ “In the actual situation of Europe, in which every individual power has to wage a war, for existence, against the unprincipled and mad ambition of a military adventurer, the Americans ought, as a duty they owe to civil society and to the cause of liberty, which they affect to cherish, to make cheerful sacrifices to the common cause; and they ought by a magnanimous conduct, founded on principle, and not on the groveling views of temporary advantage, to avail themselves of this opportunity of acquiring the esteem of foreign nations.” See Strachan, *George*, 87.

²⁶ Another evidence of this, though composed much later, comes from a Mennonite recollection of life in Upper Canada and the ability to receive news about transatlantic events: “About this time [1807] a feeling of uneasiness had begun to spread through the county. News of Napoleon’s triumphs in Europe managed to trickle through to the scattered settlements and became the main topic of conversation at most gatherings. With so many countries falling to the French invaders, folks began to worry about England. And if England became involved, what might happen on this side of the Atlantic?” See Coffman, *Twenty*, 43.

In his 1815 theological summation of the war, Robert Easton saw God's hand at work because the British were "kept from being the aggressors in the war"²⁷ and, due to that fact, the people of the land were set free from any residual guilt over the destruction occasioned by the war or lingering fears that killing might invite further judgment from God.²⁸ In contrast to what was perceived as the anti-Christian joy the Americans took in the prosecution of the war, the British subjects were identified as "those, who took up arms with reluctance, merely to defend their British character and rights."²⁹ Such appeals were part of a larger argument about which nation could rightly claim the higher moral ground from the preceding war.³⁰

In his 1812 sermon to the Legislative Assembly in York, Strachan stressed "the justice of our cause" and then went on to prove his point by displaying the well-known American dissent as proof that, "the best informed of our enemies have publicly declared that it is the most wanton and unprovoked war that ever was made, and proceeds from the most corrupt and shameful motives."³¹ Like the comparisons

²⁷ Easton, *Reasons*, 5.

²⁸ The idea that the war was a punishment sent by God was preached frequently and will be handled in greater depth in a subsequent section of this work.

²⁹ Easton, *Reasons*, 6.

³⁰ Ascribing motivations to various actions was not merely an academic exercise but were tools through which the conflict was given meaning and such meanings were used not just to placate the people but also to further unite them together and construct a British world in the colony. Describing the American invaders as "an army of banditti, whose sole object was cowardly plunder" William Powell was able to inspire the York volunteer militia through contrasting such immorality with the character of Isaac Brock who, through bravery and gallantry, was able to "save the Province and capture General Hull and his whole army." See Address to the York Militia by Strachan and William Powell ca. 1813. As found in Cruikshank, *Documentary*, 2: 27. This speech to the militia came in 1813 and served as a wartime example of how memory was utilized to further the military effort during a troublesome time for the British campaign, as York itself was captured and several buildings burned.

³¹ Strachan, *Legislative*, 6. The following quote provides evidence that supports Strachan's assessment about American dissent. This speech, published in the Alexandria Gazette on 24 June 1812, shows Samuel Taggart's concerns regarding the war: "*With good advice make war.* This is a maxim which is peculiarly applicable to offensive wars. With respect to such wars as are purely defensive, nations are, many times, not left to their own choice... The nation invaded has no choice left but either resistance or submission. No doubt such unprovoked aggressions legalize war." See Congressman Samuel Taggart.

between American and French ideologies, such arguments were designed to illustrate that Britain was the more Christian nation. Such arguments gave to the listeners “a consolation that our enemy never can enjoy” because the pre-war attempts to broker peace displayed by England showed the imperial love of peace and established “that our Parent State granted every condition, till demands were made totally inconsistent with her independence” demands, as Strachan termed them, that were ultimately deemed too destructive to England’s sovereignty and “if complied with, would have in a few years stripped her of those valiant defenders who have exalted her so high among the nations of the earth.”³² The fact that the American nation did not enjoy the same unanimity, as Strachan argued the Upper Canadians enjoyed, only further strengthened his case that the British position was more consistent with the character of God and, as such, was enjoying the blessings of peace that the enemy could not.³³

As found in, *Dared*, 11. For more on the divisive nature of the war on American culture, see Errington, *Lion*; Taylor, *Civil War*; Gribbin, *Militant*.

³² Strachan, *Legislative*, 20. American Methodist Abel Stevens remained politically neutral but did argue that peace was essential for the spiritual and material growth of the fledgling United States. He saw the war as directly responsible for overthrowing both of these: “The war with Great Britain was at hand, and the political agitation of the nation had already disturbed its religious tranquility and prosperity.” See Stevens, *Bangs*, 199. John Carroll also saw the war as harming the cause of religion in Canada because it prevented Nathan Bangs from fulfilling his role as Presiding Elder over Lower Canada. Carroll wrote, “The failure of Mr. [Nathan] Bangs to reach his appointment was a great loss to Canada; during his absence from this country he had proved himself a superior man as a preacher, administrator of the discipline, ecclesiastical legislator, and writer in defense of Methodism. Had he entered the province again, he would have been likely to have remained, as it was the home of his wife and his own spiritual birthplace; in which event, the gain to Canadian Methodism would have been of incalculable importance.” See Carroll, *Case*, 6:170. Baptist Michael Smith wrote that the growing stability of Upper Canada provided an environment conducive to the cultural and intellectual improvement of its citizens. In his travels he noted, “the country has become more settled, and the inhabitants rich, or in a good way of living, which is almost universally the case,” which gave them the freedom and time to, “pay considerable attention to learning.” See Smith, “Upper Canada,” 39. Therefore, the war was seen as a destabilizing force that could do nothing to help the cause of true religion on either side of the border.

³³ Strachan argued that the people of Upper Canada had already achieved “half the victory” because they would not be hindered by conviction that they were in the wrong. In order to convince the people, he offered the following analogy: “a man that is embarked in a good cause has only to contend with exterior difficulty and danger, he may be plunged into calamity, his prosperity may vanish, but he never can be deprived of the approbation of his own conscience; while it approves he can bear with every privation, he may be oppressed by men, but God is with him.” See Strachan, *Legislative*, 6.

While war was acknowledged as “the cup of affliction” Strachan reassured the leaders of York that since they were “now called upon to defend every thing that is dear to us, and that we shall have to contend with an enemy at our very doors” their strength for the daunting task facing the colonists was to be found in the knowledge that “we have the most solid motives of consolation, we have uniformly looked for ‘peace but no good came’ for a time of health but behold trouble.”³⁴ The importance of establishing the justice of the British North American cause was intended to provide the internal convictions soldiers and civilians would need if they were to defend their homes with sufficient skill, tenacity, and endurance. Later on in the course of the war, Anglican Bishop Jacob Mountain desired to “shew the necessity of prayer and thanksgiving to the Almighty Sovereign, for the unnumbered blessings, he has bestowed upon us” for what Mountain described as the “late victories, which he has enabled us, and our Allies to gain over our enemies.” While such themes of prayer and thanksgiving were quite common within religious discourse, Mountain argued that the prayers were necessary, “in order to acquire his protection, and support...against the attempts of our neighbouring enemies to conquer us.”³⁵ The use of the term “neighbour” to describe the enemy forces is important because it showed both the proximity of the people to their attackers as well as implying that such an attack was a betrayal of the mutually beneficial relationship that neighbours were supposed to possess.³⁶ Mountain was able to encourage his listeners to pray in order

³⁴ Strachan, *Legislative*, 5.

³⁵ Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 4.

³⁶ “We are engaged in an arduous war with our neighbours—a war most unjust and unprovoked; but hitherto our affairs, through the blessings of God, have prospered in a most astonishing manner.” See “Exhortation pronounced after the sermon 22 November 1812,” as found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 363.

to receive divine protection from an imminent threat while simultaneously denouncing the perpetrators of that threat on a moral level.

Building on the work of St. Augustine, Strachan then went on to extol the people to remember that it was the internal disposition, not necessarily the external actions, that made the prosecution of war sinful. With that in mind, the God-fearing people were free to wage a guilt free war because, as Strachan argued:

the very precept, 'love your enemies' presupposes the existence of enemies, and consequently of wars—Yet this precept has been deemed totally irreconcilable with such as of late, for it has been triumphantly asked how can you love those whose destruction you desire, and against whom you are fighting. To this the Christian may answer, that he seeks not the destruction of his enemy, but his return to justice and humanity. The end proposed by all wars is peace, and as soon as this can be obtained on equitable terms by the friend of the Gospel he wars no longer.³⁷

Such a statement showed that the war in which the people were engaged was not antithetical to the Gospel but actually needed to be informed by it in order to insure success. The souls of the people were not in jeopardy as long as they understood that the war was not to be celebrated but, rather, understood as a necessary evil on the road to peace and reconciliation. Therefore, belief in the Gospel of Jesus not only provided instruction for the internal beliefs of the combatants but also provided, albeit loosely, a definable end point for any conflict. Once peace could be discovered, the Bible demanded that the faithful cease fighting; until that time came, however, Strachan counseled that the righteousness of England deserved a vigorous defense of British rights in the Canadas.

ii. Tensions Within Methodism

While the Anglican clergy saw the need to fight the Americans in order to

³⁷ Strachan *Legislative*, 8.

preserve the British colony,³⁸ similar language was not as forthcoming within the cross-border denomination of Methodism.³⁹ It stands to reason that a church with members and adherents on both sides of a war would be unable to condemn or support one side out of the fear of alienating members from the other side.

Christopher Adamson addresses the tricky political situation that faced Methodists during the war: “most Methodist itinerants, including the presiding elder of the Genesee district, William Case, withdrew during the war. Those who remained...kept a low profile,” but certain individuals, like Henry Ryan, “loudly proclaimed their loyalty and their British citizenship.”⁴⁰ John Carroll wrote of an American-born Methodist preacher and exhorter by the name of Thomas Harmon. His story bears repeating because it recounted Harmon’s belief that Christians should not fight in war but, “when he saw the country invaded, he prayed earnestly to God for direction; and he came at length to the decision that it was his duty to obey the authorities.”⁴¹

Harmon’s submission to the Upper-Canadian authorities came as a result of his belief

³⁸ “[America has] threatened with unblushing arrogance to subdue this fine colony; to separate us from that heroic nation which enjoys the gratitude of the world. They mocked our attachment to the best of kings; and tho’ born to the most exalted freedom and independence, they reproached us with being slaves.” See Strachan, *Sermon*, 37.

³⁹ Because of the fictitious nature of the account, the following story of an American Methodist in Upper Canada during the War of 1812 is not prominently featured as a source in this paper. However, what it does teach us is how later Methodists viewed (or desired to view) their role in the war. In this quotation, author William Henry Withrow references Methodist preacher Neville Trueman’s duties to his congregants who were present in various locations around the colony. He writes, “Neville Trueman found ample occupation in ministering to the sick and wounded, and in visiting *his scattered flock* throughout the invaded territory.” See Withrow, “Neville Trueman”, 439 (italics added for emphasis). The use of the term “invaded” also shows a late nineteenth-century Methodist view of Canada (a term that was applicable in the late nineteenth century) as partaking in a war of defense which rendered their side as morally superior. Such sentiments were echoed by Carroll in several stories from *Case*.

⁴⁰ Adamson, “Continent,” 435. John Carroll also stressed Ryan’s loud proclamations of loyalty during the war, “Mr. R[yan] by his loyalty, gained the confidence and admiration of all friends of British supremacy, and by his abundant and heroic labors, the affections of the God-fearing part of the community.” See Carroll, *Case*, 6:196. However, both of these writers worked in a post-war period in which loyalty became a central tenet of Canadian Methodism. This will be addressed in greater detail in a subsequent section.

⁴¹ Carroll, *Case*, 6:214.

that the war was a just one because it was defensive in nature.⁴² Secure in his beliefs, he traveled to Queenston and partook in the famous battle where his reputation was a fitting one for both a patriot and a preacher. He was referred to as the man who “prayed like a saint and fought like a devil”⁴³ and, throughout his career, was known to lead fellow soldiers in prayer meetings. He remained in the military for some time and continued to serve both the government and God in Upper Canada.⁴⁴

C. God is On Our Side

The arguments that America was too close in sentiments to the godless and warring French, and that England was the innocent victim of invasion were designed to reassure the people of the Canadas that God was on their side.⁴⁵ To that end,

⁴² This was, of course, supported by Carroll in the following introduction to his section on the War of 1812: “The first act of hostility was perpetrated by the United States, on the sixteenth of May, 1812, and war was formally declared by the American Congress on the eighteenth of June following.” Carroll, *Case*, 6:108.

⁴³ Carroll, *Case*, 6:215. A funny story of Harmon is that, because of his oratory skill, he was asked to read a speech by John Strachan to the men. After the speech another Methodist asked whether or not Strachan’s words contained much “religion” to which Harmon replied, “Not much, but I tried to weave a little into it as I went along.” See Carroll, *Case*, 6: 216.

⁴⁴ The Wesleyans were also negatively impacted by the war as Thomas Coke reported in 1814, “Death hath cut off many of our Dear friends and many left the country owing to the war, this has reduced our numbers.” See Coke, “Letter, 1814,” 1. Writing to England at the end of Napoleonic Wars, Wesleyan Methodist Stephen Bamford simply stated, “I desire to congratulate you on the peace of my beloved Country with Europe [and] wish it might extend to America,” before pleading with his fellow Wesleyans to remember, “the blood of the brave Britains is still running here!!!” See Bamford, “Letter, 1814,” 3. The fact that Bamford and Coke resided in Nova Scotia showed that Methodists from across the colony, whether American or British-born, were taking up arms and defending the land. The Wesleyan Methodist minutes of December 1814 also record a Methodist minister who was a prisoner in the United States during the war, “Resolved that Mr...be allowed twelve guineas for board during the time he was a prisoner in America.” See Wesleyan Missionary, “Minutes, December 1814,” 9.

⁴⁵ “I need not tell you that the book of Proverbs, from which these words were taken, was penned by that excellent spirit of wisdom which descendeth from above; and is therefore deserving of our highest attention. And indeed were ignorant of this circumstance, the various precepts it contains, would sufficiently recommend themselves to our esteem; by their intrinsic worth and importance, being grounded on unquestionable truth, expressed in very intelligible language; and by their sententious brevity, easy to be retained. We are not, however, vainly to imagine, that all the precepts there delivered are to be understood in a rigorous strictness of speech, or in the utmost severity of construction. We are rather to interpret them according to that equitable consideration of circumstances and times, which every general proposition requires; which, though generally true and fitting, will always admit of some exceptions.” See Burns, “Sermon 3 June 1814,” 3. Although the quote does not reference the war or even the American nation, it was part of a larger treatise on the European struggles and included some comments about the state of the conflict in the Canadas. It was his argument that, as

Strachan argued that despite the rumours of the vast superiority of American military presence, “Numbers avail nothing against the religion and the just, they are in the special keeping of the Almighty, who will dispose of them in the most proper manner.”⁴⁶

With God on their side, the soldiers of the Third Regiment of the York militia were called to look upon their regimental flag and be inspired that as it was “fanned by the winds of Heaven” their pride and loyalty to king and country would be maintained, “under the guidance of Thy Divine Spirit, [that] supports our Parent state amid the wreck of nations.”⁴⁷ It was an understanding of God’s protection that inspired Cyril de Rudolph to write in his journal on 14 February 1815 that “[Addison] has witnessed during the last summer Campaign allmost [sic] all the sad scenes of Distress which a Country subject to the Ravages of War can suffer. The English troops however by the blessing of heaven, tho greatly inferior in Number to the Enemy, have driven them beyond the Frontier.”⁴⁸ Alex Spark, in his thanksgiving sermon for the victory of England over Napoleon in 1814, stated the importance of recognizing the role of God in war and the danger of not doing so. He stated:

Hath your Country been delivered from the menaces and insults of a powerful and sanguinary Foe? Perhaps, for the cause of this happy event, you look not beyond the wisdom of your counsels, and the bravery of your troops...to preserve national honour and independnce, in a contest with a powerful enemy, requires both wisdom in the Cabinet, and bravery in the Field...It will farther be confessed that those, who have these or similar ends in view, and neglect the means, not only act inconsistently with the order of

was the case with the war, the actions of the Americans proved their incorrect interpretation of the text based on their incorrect reading of the “circumstances and times” and such readings caused them to be led astray into chaos and war, using the very Bible that, had they heeded both its precepts as well as the present culture, would have showed them the error of their ways in advance.

⁴⁶ Strachan, *Legislative*, 7.

⁴⁷ Strachan, “Prayer of Consecration” as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 12.

⁴⁸ Letters from SPG meetings as found in de Rudolph., “St. Mark’s,” 11-2.

Providence, but may also be said, in the language of Scripture, to 'tempt the Lord' by expecting that he is to bring about events, contrary to the Law of Nature, and to the connexion, which he hath established between causes and effects.⁴⁹

To deny the role of the Almighty in war was to foolishly invite further destruction and death.⁵⁰ Such comments display the importance of maintaining divine favour throughout the war and how religion was viewed as a vital component of military success.⁵¹

Despite the growing violence of the war it is interesting to note that, at Cornwall anyway, funeral sermons were not recorded as having taken place at every funeral.⁵² In fact, they appear to be rare enough that when they did occur there is a mention that "Funeral sermon preach'd" as found on the 12 August 1814 funeral of a female of unknown age known only as Elizabeth.⁵³ That lack of recorded ceremony

⁴⁹ Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 6.

⁵⁰ Regular church attendance was part of the British military way of life. Attendance at worship, and the hearing of sermons, was considered an important part of the military experience. Lieutenant John Le Couteur penned in his journal after the 104th had made the famous march from New Brunswick to Kingston that "Sunday the 18th made it nine weeks since we left Fredericton. The Regiment marched to Church for the first time since we left Quebec and the Second since quitting Fredericton. The Reverend Mr. Stewart, the Rector, gave us a Capital discourse" before lamenting "many of us were considerably discomposed by two Solos from a Jolly Old Clerk who discharged his duty sonorously. It was distressing to listen to one voice after the fine singing of our band people at Fredericton. While far from inclusive of the entire British military experience within the Canadas during the war, such quotes do reflect the realization that church life formed a part of army routine. On display in their uniforms, and marching into the church, the soldiers provided a powerful visual image of a Christian Empire at war. The military dress "was enough to attract notice in some Churches that I have entered." See Graves, *Le Couteur*, 159. Church attendance signaled to the other attendees that mighty British soldiers were not too proud for God. All the pomp and ceremony that attended public military events drew the eyes of the people towards the faith of the soldiers; the drums, uniforms, shouted orders, marching, and grandeur displayed by the soldiers as they entered the church ceased as the superior pomp and ceremony of worship superseded it. In that act, the people were allowed to see that the men who protected their homes were, themselves, submitting to the protection of God.

⁵¹ "This seems to be the most obvious reason why God has annexed the promises of his grace to the performance of this condition: that prayer might be a perpetual memorial of our reliance on him, calling us to such a state of humility, that whenever we do well we should in the words of the Psalmist acknowledge, Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord; but unto thy name be ascribed the glory." Stewart, *Prayers*, 49.

⁵² At Cornwall it was the Royal Marines and the 16th 70th & 89th Regiments.

⁵³ Found in Baldwyn, "1813 Burial Register, Cornwall Trinity," 4. It is worth noting that the deceased girl's parents were listed as well, most likely because she was young.

seems to be fairly common throughout other areas as well. Robert Addison's 1813 records detailed only basic facts about soldier deaths: "July 17th. Colonel C. Bishop (died of his Wounds)."⁵⁴ Thus, when Major-General Robert Ross died in 1814, the length of the sermon preached by Charles Stewart is worth noting. Stewart began by explaining the context in which the man was killed: "after taking the capital of America...[he was] carried off in the very prime of life, and consigned to the tomb, beloved, admired, regretted!" But the concluding point of his eulogy was not to set the man up as an embodiment of bravery or even patriotism, but as a Christian soldier whose ultimate victory was found in the battlefield of his soul. According to Stewart, Ross' heroic acts paled in comparison to, but were inspired by, his inward convictions:

What now avail to him past honors, or present applause; any victory, but that over the world, any conquest, except that of himself, and his own passions? And this victory and this conquest I would fain hope and believe he had won through faith in Jesus Christ; and I would indulge the pleasing thought that he is now reaping the rewards of Christ in fields of perfect peace and everlasting glory in Heaven above.⁵⁵

The character of the soul remained the focal point of the religious discourse even when they focused on the external acts. It was in that understanding that the violence

⁵⁴ Addison, "Burials—Niagara 1813." Other examples of the simplicity within the records includes: "Nov 17 was buried Mr. Ketterman first Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery who was accidentally shot at the Moment of Embarkation...17 November 1813: was buried Mr. Kesterman First Lieut in the Royal Artillery who was accidentally shot at the Moment of Embarkation." See Baldwin, "1813 Burial Register, Cornwall Trinity," 2. It is also interesting to note that American prisoner deaths were recorded in Baldwin's journal: "2 January 1814: was buried from the Hospital Samuel Briggs an American prisoner...10 January 1814: was buried Jacob Bridle an American prisoner...27 January 1814: was buried Elisha Pearce an American prisoner...10 September 1814: was buried Johnson an American prisoner." See Baldwin, "1813 Burial Register, Cornwall Trinity," 2-4. Although the entries are brief they do indicate some level of respect that the Anglican clergyman had for the American soldiers and his willingness to give them proper burial rites. Addison also served both British and American soldiers as a chaplain during the war when the latter occupied the town: "Rev. R. Addison was military chaplain for many years, and also chaplain to the Freemasons. During the American occupation he conducted Divine services for both parties." See Thomas, *Niagara*, 59.

⁵⁵ Stewart, *Providence*, 12-3.

of America's attack displayed the true internal character that all the rhetoric, pandering, and political language were attempting to mask. With the Americans revealing what many of the clergy believed were the "true colours" of Republicanism throughout the war, British rule grew in esteem and respect because of the relative peace and prosperity that had grown in both provinces throughout the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁵⁶

Although arguments were made that Britain was morally superior, that those who were slain gave their lives in service to a Christian empire, that the American invasion simply betrayed the true nature of Republicanism, and that the involvement of religious leaders in support of the war effort all further defined the justness of the cause, the clergy also counseled restraint and guidance for actions that took place during the war. When British Regulars, fresh from the scourge of the Napoleonic Wars, began to land on the American eastern seaboard, the clergy were quick to remind the people to fight their desires for retribution. The fear was that the colonists, understandably upset at the destruction the American war had created, would forget their Christian values and seek the wanton destruction of the United States, sentiments that would make England no better than the land they had been fighting against.

D. God's Tool of Vengeance

In the spring of 1814 Napoleon's military effort had suffered a crushing blow and it appeared that the war on the continent had been settled in England's favour.

⁵⁶ "Is it then any wonder that the prosperity of the country hath increased in a most astonishing degree under an administration so paternal: that agriculture has flourished in a manner unexampled in history: that commerce has been extended in all its branches, and that the arts and sciences have advanced infinitely more in Britain than in any other country in Europe?" See Strachan, *George*, 38.

With the arrival of battle-hardened British Regulars fresh from defeating the French dictator, the British North American cause found itself in a place it had not enjoyed since Brock's capture of Fort Detroit: the role of invader. Up until 1814, all the rhetoric around the condemnation of the American cause was predicated on the immorality of a war of invasion. However, when the war was a couple of years old, the invasion of America was seen as a military maneuver to bring about the cessation of hostilities and, as such, was a wholly different situation than Hull's original invasion of Upper Canada and the subsequent battles. Given the amount of destruction Upper Canada had witnessed on account of the war, the British arrival on the American eastern seaboard invited discourse that cautioned against the spirit of retaliation that many, no doubt, were experiencing.

Citing Napoleon's humiliation, Jacob Mountain, took the opportunity to remind the people that since God had won the war for the people, revenge also belonged to him. Mountain espoused:

The pouring down the vengeance of the Almighty, the pouring down the vials of his wrath, are, I suppose, not very far from their accomplishment. The distresser and tormentor of the world, labors I think, under humiliation; I should hope adequate to his enormous crimes. The horrid crimes of reducing to the most abject slavery, all over whom lie had daringly and impiously gained an ascendancy, and of oppressing and deluging the world in blood.⁵⁷

Maintaining morality and a Christian discipline remained important as the war turned in Britain's favour and, should the people descend into a retaliatory spirit they would be no better than the tyrant who, Mountain believed, had been the originator of the violence in the first place.

⁵⁷ Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 9.

Alexander Spark concurred with Mountain in seeing Napoleon as the root of the evils that had engulfed the world. Borrowing apocalyptic language he preached: “This Power lately risen up against us, is, therefore, a Horn of the Beast, (if we may be allowed the metaphor)—a limb of the great Body of Iniquity. But thanks to Providence, as the vitals are now seriously wounded, it is to be hoped that the members cannot long retain their strength.” He then returned to the popular theme of 1812 by aligning the American cause with the French in the hopes that, “*for their own sakes*, as well as ours, that they may, at last, be brought to a better mind;—that they may reflect on the guilt of persevering in an unrighteous war,—and on the ruinous consequence of the connexion, which they have secretly formed, with the most profligate Power on earth.” He then concluded with the statement that, now guided by the historical outworking of Providence overseas, the Americans “will, at last, be persuaded of the truth of this maxim of the wisest of Kings, that it is ‘Righteousness, which exalteth a Nation.’”⁵⁸ Through the use of the Apocalypse of John, Spark was able to celebrate the fall of Napoleon, offer condemnation of the Americans, laud the superiority of England, and extol the people to recognize that it was a proper relationship with the divine that guaranteed the future success of their home.

Charles Stewart’s sermon, marveling at the work of providence, likewise related the American attack to the situation presented by Napoleon. Charging that Madison took the unseasonable time to his advantage he charged that “the change in Europe was a most auspicious one in favour of our cause, and it was a complete obstacle and disappointment to the plans and expectations of the enemy. So much so, that the war in Europe which our enemy had expected would disable us from coping

⁵⁸ Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 14.

with him here, has eventually, fully prepared and fortified us for the contest.”

However, the best laid plans of men, according to Stewart, profit nothing if they come up against the will of God and stated, “He attacked us in our weakest state; but the providence of God defended us wonderfully; and now has visited him, in his presumption to wage war against us, because he thought we were few in number and helpless.”⁵⁹ Stewart’s statement was not a *carte blanche* belief in the superior holiness of the empire, but was rather a nuanced and sophisticated theological argument that stated that God would turn against the empire if the empire acted in ways inconsistent with the character of God.

After the stalled attack on New Orleans, Stewart commented that the army needed to repent of arrogance and presumption as God used the event “as an exercise of his mercy towards our enemy, to deliver them from the terror and distress of an invasion, and of an hostile army occupying their territory.” He would go on to demonstrate one of the interesting dynamics of this war already touched on: the Christian nature of both armies. Stewart saw in the British defeat the Almighty’s reward for the American commander’s faith and argued, “the commander of their fleet was a pious man; and it is not to be passed over that such a man, every pious man, the Lord delights to prosper,” before concluding with a reminder to the readers that, “[God] sometimes visits them with affliction for profit.”⁶⁰ In his sermon on providence, Charles Stewart argued that it was arrogance that had led the people to experience defeat. The presence of British reinforcements that had scourged the American east coast had tempted the people to believe in their own strength rather

⁵⁹ Stewart, *Providence*, 10.

⁶⁰ Stewart, *Providence*, 12.

than on the strength of the God who defended them. Chastising his people he preached: "Our army this last campaign was considerable, yet its operations were not in all quarters crowned with favourable results. It would appear that providence would teach us not to depend on the multitude of a host, but on his arm, mighty to save or destroy."⁶¹ Bishop Jacob Mountain reminded his own parishioners that their tale of war and woe was far from over and declared, "The path that is beset with dangers and difficulties" before explaining to them how they could avert disaster and flee from the wrath that was to come. He told his congregants to leave the judgment of the Americans to God so that they could focus on maintaining their own faith because only "those who choose the narrow path, will the wrath of the Almighty be averted; and must abundantly fall on them, who impiously, persist in breaking the laws of the Holy Gospel"⁶² Although the tides of war seemed to be going in Britain's direction, these clergymen called the people into continued thanksgiving and repentance to insure God's continued protection and deliverance.⁶³

John Bethune and Robert Easton, also wrote and spoke of the new obligation military superiority brought to bear on the British. However, they directed their teachings to the people of both provinces out of a desire to see peace re-established between the subjects of the colony and the citizens of the Republic. Bethune challenged his people to remember that "[God teaches us] never to forget the duties of humanity even in the hour of victory, but to raise the fallen foe and treat him with

⁶¹ Stewart, *Providence*, 10.

⁶² Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 11.

⁶³ "Here the Lord in particular prospered our arms, confounded our enemy, and delivered the capital into our hands. And though I would regret, on our part, the destruction of some of its public buildings, yet it appears to me a just judgment of God against some of the chief actors in them, for their wicked and malicious speeches, and their violent and unnatural conduct against their parent country. It was a visitation on them for their eagerness to go to war." See Stewart, *Providence*, 12.

kindness and respect.”⁶⁴ Easton counseled the return of amicable relationships in the place of animosity between the people and instructed the people of his Montreal church—many of whom were American to begin with—to see “Those, who were your public enemies [as] your friends; banishing all remains of jealousy and hate, which may yet rankle in your breasts, as inconsistent with the return of amity and friendly relations.”⁶⁵ In the ability to move beyond the horrors of the preceding three years, the people were invited to turn the other cheek because “It is thus that the Christian soldier softens the horror of war.” Despite what could have been a prevailing attitude of hostility and contempt that could have hindered post-war connections, the religious discourse was unanimous in calling for peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. War had been a blight to both nations and while the churches of British North America condemned the American decision to bring such terror and destruction they did so to demonstrate to the people of both provinces how God had blessed their land and showed divine support of the empire that they had wisely chosen to remain within. The respect and deference shown to the enemy by the clergy once again showed the desire to maintain the higher moral position throughout the contest.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Bethune, *Letter*, 2.

⁶⁵ Easton, *Reasons*, 15.

⁶⁶ Although the following quote pre-dates the War of 1812, Strachan referenced King George’s lack of a retaliatory spirit during the preceding battles with the French nation when he wrote in 1810: “In the conclusion of the war he found an excellent opportunity of proving to the nation, that he was not dazzled by that species of glory, which is fed by human blood, and blasts the hopes of nations; but that he preferred the happiness of his subjects and the peace of the world, to the empty acclamations of military renown. In order to render the peace permanent, the king was content to make it honourable; that his enemy seeing his moderation, might not be induced to nourish any secret resentment, or be urged by the greatness of his losses and disgrace, to embrace the first occasion of renewing the war.” See Strachan, *George*, 17.

The American cause had been lambasted through sermons, letters, and public outcries and the truth of those accusations had been proven on the field of battle as God delivered the British Empire from both Madison and Napoleon. It was the duty of the people who had been blessed with such a vision to remain loyal to the God who had delivered them from seemingly impossible odds; but it also remained in their best interest to remain loyal to the empire that had been so powerfully shown to be under divine protection and the recipient of such miraculous providential care. The importance of maintaining the justness of their cause was never lost throughout the years but, in addition to the cause, the people of the Canadas also had to display justness in the means by which they prosecuted the war. As has already been touched on, the acknowledged horrors of battle could only be softened by those who possessed a deep and abiding faith and acted in accordance with the conviction of their souls and the teachings of the church.

II. Just Means

This section of the chapter will explore two ways in which the religious discourse reflected a desire for the people to uphold the ethical criteria of Just Means and conduct of their various strategies. The first example will look at dialogue surrounding the best, and most Christian, way to utilize the Native allies in battles against America. The second part will look at the characteristics of a Christian soldier and the call for all colonial subjects to support the war effort through frequent prayers and pious living.

A. The Use of Natives in Battle

i. British and American Relations with Native Tribes

For the Americans, the use of indigenous peoples to do the dirty work of destabilizing the west was British skullduggery.⁶⁷ Sophisticated weapons found in Prophet's Town after the Battle of Tippecanoe⁶⁸ gave the Americans the evidence they needed to invade British North America while simultaneously being able to plead that the invasion was a defensive action taken against a hostile and threatening force.⁶⁹ After taking the town of Sandwich in July of 1812, American Brigadier General Hull made the following statement about British citizens fighting with the Native people in his battle proclamation:

If the barbarous and Savage policy of Great Britain be pursued, and the savages are let loose to murder our Citizens and butcher our women and children, this war, will be a war of extermination. The first stroke with the Tomahawk the first attempt with the Scalping Knife will be the Signal for an indiscriminate scene of desolation, *No White man found fighting by the Side of an Indian will be taken prisoner* Instant destruction will be his Lot.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Along with comments regarding Britain's treatment of American sailors and maritime rights, Madison concluded his arguments for the necessity of war against Britain with the following statement: "In reviewing the conduct of Great Britain toward the United States our attention is necessarily drawn to the warfare just renewed by the savages on one of our extensive frontiers... It is difficult to account for the activity and combinations which have for some time been developing themselves among tribes in constant intercourse with British traders and garrisons without connecting their hostility with that influence and without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interpositions heretofore furnished by the officers and agents of that Government." See Brant. *Madison*, 312.

⁶⁸ James Strachan, brother of John, during a visit in 1819 to Upper Canada defended the act of gift-giving by stating that it was a tradition that long pre-dated any struggle with America. He wrote, "The custom of giving presents to the Indians in the neighbourhood of settlements is coeval with the first planting of North America by Europeans; and as many of the settlements of this province are in contact with these fierce children of nature, we seem bound, both by honour and interest, to cultivate a friendly intercourse with them, and, in some measure, to contribute to their support. This is the more reasonable, as the whole country, which is now covered in Europeans and their descendants, was once inhabited by the Indian tribes, who have been dispossessed of it be means not always justifiable; and who are hemmed in, particularly in Upper Canada, by the rapid progress of the whites." See Strachan, *Visit*, 146.

⁶⁹ The following is an excerpt from the speech given by Brigadier-General William Hull after the American capture of Sandwich: "Inhabitants of Canada! After thirty years of Peace and prosperity, the United States have been driven to Arms, The injuries and aggressions, the insults and indignities of Great Britain have *once more* left them no alternative but manly resistance... I come to *find* enemies not *make* them, I come to *protect* not to *injure* you." See Klinck, *Tecumseh*, 131.

⁷⁰ Klinck, *Tecumseh*, 131.

The fear of a British-Native alliance is evident in this quote and the American Northwest Army quickly endorsed Hull's statement that no mercy would be extended to those who fought against the Americans alongside the Natives.

Acknowledging that it is beyond the scope of this work to communicate effectively something as diverse as Native opinions and motivations towards the war, I would also be remiss not to dedicate some space to the topic.⁷¹ In his work on the role religion played in the early nineteenth-century move to unite Native tribes in the Michigan, Ohio and Indiana territories, Herbert Goltz argues that the military and political efforts achieved by Tecumseh originated in a spiritual vision his brother received. Tenskwatawa, popularly known as The Prophet, stated in 1805 that he had received a message from the Great Spirit that gave him, among other ideas,⁷² a theological mandate to engage in warfare against the American people. He reported that the Great Spirit told him,

I am the Father of the English, of the Spaniards and of the Indians...But the Americans I did not make. They are not my children but the children of the Evil Spirit. They grew from the scum of the great water when it was troubled by the Evil Spirit and the froth was driven into the woods by a strong east wind. They are very numerous but I hate them. They are unjust—they have taken away your lands which were not made for them.⁷³

Such rhetoric about the origins of American people as “scum” and descendants of the Evil Spirit that had been blown into the land by an eastern wind contradicted any idea that the citizens of the United States were a people favoured of God. In essence, The

⁷¹ For an insightful and particularly condemning view of the role historians have played in improperly communicating Shawnee culture, see the comments of contemporary Shawnee tribal leader Mrs. Helen Ramirez in Warren, *Shawnees*, 1-12.

⁷² Some of those ideas included refusing to consume alcohol, a return to a more devout and pious life and the forced conversion of any other Natives that did not agree. Harrison did receive complaints from Natives about the reported deaths of certain tribal leaders at the hands of the Prophet's followers that did nothing to assuage the Governor's fears of a violent Shawnee uprising.

⁷³ Goltz, “Revival Religion,” 18.

Prophet's vision was a theological foil to the burgeoning idea of American Manifest Destiny.

When William Henry Harrison's 1806 challenge to the Delawares to "ask [The Prophet] to cause the sun to stand still" coincided with a total solar eclipse, the Native leader was elevated to new heights of prestige and influence.⁷⁴ However, it was in Harrison's attempt to discredit the Prophet's spiritual powers that belied his desire to quell any Native hopes that a powerful religious leader—apparently sent by God—had arrived to lead them. The antagonism between Native communities and the Americans would be a frequent theme within Strachan's writings on the subject that, although he framed the quarrel in order to show the superiority of the British system challenges contemporary notions that the Natives were nothing more than pawns utilized by both the Americans and the British. Strachan understood that the Native-American war predated any contest between America and England and he argued, "if we do not employ these people they will employ themselves—they have been at war with the United States from some years."⁷⁵

The idea that the Natives of the Republic felt more threatened than those dwelling in British North America has support when the role the various tribes took in the actual conflict is taken into account. In his cartographical approach to looking at the war, Robert Surtees explored well-known battles as well as the skirmishes not afforded much historical importance and, in so doing, came to similar conclusions as Strachan. For Surtees, the goal of his study was to modify the belief that the Native people were simply "red pawns" and actually identify the War of 1812 as only one

⁷⁴ Unfortunately for Harrison, he stated that, if the Prophet could perform such a miracle then "you may believe he has been sent by God." Esary, *Harrison*, 1:182.

⁷⁵ Strachan. "Letter to John Richardson, 30 September 1812," 17.

aspect of a larger and on-going war between certain Native tribes and the Americans. After reviewing maps of battles where a Native presence was pronounced and ones where it was scarce, he concluded:

East of the lower Thames it appears as a conflict between the two European powers with the Indians playing only a supporting role on either side; in the Old Northwest, however, it would seem to have been a war between the Americans with some Indian support on the one hand, and the majority of the Indians, with the British from Canada playing a supporting role on the other hand.⁷⁶

Studies like these indicate that the roles Natives played were varied and that neither the Americans nor the British could claim total support.

Stephen Warren has shown that Harrison was not alone in his condemnation of The Prophet's vision and that he actually had support within certain Shawnee communities. Another tribal leader by the name of Black Hoof argued against The Prophet and stated: "the Shawnees and the Americans were 'dropped on the same island'...and because of the common creation of Indians and Americans, both 'ought to be bound in the ties of friendship.'"⁷⁷ Black Hoof's statements resonated with members of the Miamis, Delawares, and Wyandots who feared "the very real threat of violence posed by [the Prophet's] supporters"⁷⁸ and even some Métis and Native fur-traders, concerned what a war would do to their industry, used their wealth and influence to ally their kin to America. Therefore, Native involvement in the war was not guaranteed and those who did appear willing to fight did not necessarily reflect the majority opinion even within their own tribes. However, it would take a violent conflict between Harrison and the aforementioned Prophet at the home of the two

⁷⁶ Surtees, "Participation," 43.

⁷⁷ Warren, *Neighbors*, 26, quoting Hill, *John Johnston*, 52.

⁷⁸ Warren, *Neighbors*, 26.

militant Shawnee brothers to push the tensions of the Old Northwest into the impending theatre of war in Upper Canada.

ii. The American and Native War

If the Indian issue was one of the prominent motives for America to declare war, the Battle of Tippecanoe proved to be a deciding factor for the Natives as well for two reasons.⁷⁹ The first was that, in the wake of the battle, leadership in the young Native confederacy shifted from Tenskwatawa to his brother, Tecumseh. The belief that the Great Spirit was on the side of the Natives against the overwhelming American numbers crumbled after Harrison's successful attack on the Prophet's village in 1811. In *A Wampum Denied*, Sandy Antal claims, "Having led the warriors into this defeat, the Prophet suffered a loss of influence and Tecumseh assumed the leadership of the virtually dissolved Native movement."⁸⁰ This moment's importance is significant because the voice calling for a Native alliance shifted from a theological-spiritual emphasis to a military focus.

The second reason is that Tecumseh's seemingly tireless effort to unite the tribes included appeals to the British for support against any future conflict in the western frontier of the United States. While the official position of the British Indian Department at Fort Malden counseled patience and restraint, men like Brock and Indian-Agent Matthew Elliot saw the wisdom in sustaining a cordial relationship with

⁷⁹ Pierre Berton credits this fight with supplying the final provocation that the native tribes needed to join the British force. He writes, "for the Indians, [The Battle of Tippecanoe] will be the final incident that provokes them to follow Tecumseh to Canada, there to fight on the British side in the War of 1812." See Berton, *Invasion*, 69.

⁸⁰ Antal, *Wampum*, 20. Surtees agrees with Antal's assessment and writes, "the Indians could not enter the war against the Americans with their previous confidence that God was on their side. From this point on they were on their own." See Surtees, "Revival," 27.

Tecumseh.⁸¹ Therefore, as leadership changed hands in the Native alliance and tensions continued to rise between Americans and British and Americans and Natives, attention to the use of disgruntled Natives for the defense of Upper Canada became more prominent. That the Natives were central to those plans is evidenced by Elliot's December 1811 letter to his superiors in which he requested more troops for Amherstburg in order to "give the Indians confidence in our sincerity" and gain the ability to strike quickly at American targets like Detroit. It was his contention, "That once done, the Indians, with some regular troops, would keep the Americans at bay" before reassuring his leaders that "the Indians may be depended upon."⁸² Thus, the skirmish at Tippecanoe ushered in an increased, and much more pragmatic, military dimension to the Native alliance that also gave greater clarity, at least from an Upper-Canadian perspective, to what a British-Native alliance could accomplish for both parties involved.⁸³ The Americans believed that the Natives were too scattered and frightened to pose any serious threat. However, with British support, the Natives were a deadly force that could potentially overrun the western front of the American force.⁸⁴

⁸¹ This theme would be prevalent throughout the war as the following quote shows: "I think that I have now attained the object I had always in view, that of uniting all the Indian nations...[please help me in] fulfilling the solemn pledges that have been made to the Indians." See Letter from Lieut. Duncan Graham as found in "Letter from Robert Dickinson to William McGillivray 29 July 1814." Tensions between the promises made to the Native tribes and what the government believed was in its best interest were most keenly felt by those who worked closest with the Natives.

⁸² Esary, *Harrison*, 1:661.

⁸³ Allan Eckert's sweeping epic about Tecumseh speaks of the distinguished and greatly admired warrior's pleasure when the Americans eventually turned their attention to Upper Canada. Tecumseh's followers in the Ohio Valley, alongside Great Britain, could finally engage in a battle that he had seen coming and had been preparing to fight. Eckert writes, "[Tecumseh] immediately stated that he and his followers were allies to the British... In preparation for this eventuality of war...for several weeks prior to this time Tecumseh had been sending, from Tippecanoe, small parties of twenty to forty warriors toward the Detroit area." See Eckert, *Sorrow*, 570.

⁸⁴ Sadly, the sources left that allow anyone access to the mindset of the Native people of this time are few and those that do remain are written by white men interpreting—and filtering—the words of the

General Hull understood that the Natives needed the British as much as the British needed the Natives. In a letter to the American Secretary of War, Hull wrote: “The British cannot hold Upper Canada without the assistance of the Indians...[t]he Indians cannot conduct a war without the assistance of a civilized nation.”⁸⁵ After the Natives proved incredibly useful in several key battles, including taking Detroit from Hull as Elliot predicted they would, the people of Upper Canada were overjoyed. However, it appears that some people were complaining that using the Natives in battle was unethical due to the viciousness with which they fought. Therefore, men of influence and moral standing were called upon to weigh in on the matter; the Rev. John Strachan was just such a man.⁸⁶

iii. Natives Essential to Upper Canada’s Survival

Strachan realized that in order to defeat the Americans, the British army in Upper Canada needed all the help it could get. He took issue with the “wise acres”

people. In addition to these restricting methodological concerns, Stephen Warren’s *The Shawnees and Their Neighbors* also explains that while Tecumseh receives a great amount of attention in historical writings, his was only one voice, one idea, among others and to identify a single Native voice at that time would be “a fiction at best.” See Warren, *Neighbors*, 7. What is apparent is that while these “children of nature” were exploited for their land by the Americans, and for their anger and indignation by the British; they had their own purposes as well. Tecumseh sought to align divergent voices into a Native Confederacy in order to secure the future of his people on their own terms, but he met with resistance from various tribes that desired to work within the parameters of the American system of treaties. However, the growing conflict between the two white nations provided an opportunity for the Shawnee warrior to advance his own cause towards a united and militarily strong Indian nation. In referencing the quick work of taking the Fort at Michilimackinac from the American forces there (who were ignorant of the fact that war had been declared) Lucas states: “Not a shot had been fired. It was merely a case of a handful of men at a distant outpost having to surrender to a larger force which had them at their mercy; but the enterprise was of some importance, mainly because of the effect which it had upon the minds of the Indians.” See Lucas, *Canadian*, 25.

⁸⁵ William Hull, “Letter to the Secretary of War,” as found in Klinck, *Tecumseh*, 121.

⁸⁶ Thomas Robertson, in *The Fighting Bishop*, writes the following: “Strachan emerged from the conflict like a triumphant and snorting war-horse reinvigorated by the fumes of gunpowder. At the end of the war, on the nomination of the lieutenant-governor [Francis Gore], he was appointed to the executive council. He had arrived.” See Robertson, *Fighting Bishop*, 29. Strachan wrote military leaders to give his insights regarding the war and was sure to remind them of his position and offer any service he could to aid them. He wrote to Sir George Prevost to make the following offer: “I beg leave to add that I am ready to exert myself in any way consistent with my Clerical character to contribute towards the defence & security of the Provinces.” See Strachan, “Letter to Sir George Prevost, October 1812,” as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 13.

that found fault with Brock's use of Natives in battles because, if he had not, "he & all his men must have perished."⁸⁷ Strachan also knew that the Americans were just as eager as the British to employ Natives in the war and, in a letter to the famed abolitionist William Wilberforce defending the use of Natives in battles, Strachan wrote about the American hypocrisy and charged that "These tribes [within our borders] have been solicited & offered bribes by the Americans to desert from us."⁸⁸ The American failure to treat the Natives with respect opened up an opportunity for the British to capitalize on the good rapport they had built to win them over to their side of the conflict.⁸⁹ Naturally, such strategies present in the early days of the war lent support to the American charge that the British were secretly supplying the Natives with weapons and inciting them to war in the Ohio Valley.⁹⁰

Strachan saw these charges as nothing more than false accusations dreamt up by the American leaders to deflect from the truth that they alone were responsible for

⁸⁷ John Strachan, "Letter to John Richardson," 30 September 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 17.

⁸⁸ John Strachan, "Letter to Mr. Wilberforce," 1 November 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 21.

⁸⁹ Strachan's views were also extolled when, in 1819, his brother, James Strachan, visited Upper Canada to see the land that had so captivated his sibling. Despite the completion of the war nearly half a decade earlier he still wrote about the American mistreatment of the Natives and juxtaposed it with the British. He penned the following sentiments that echo the words of his brother from the war times: "The treatment bestowed upon the Indians by the British has been at all times humane, and the greatest deference has been paid to their manners and customs...the United States say in their own praise as to their kind treatment of the Indians, and to give the British government no credit for any thing they have done; but were the matter truly stated, it would be found that the Indians, within the bounds of these States, had been most cruelly.—the very agents of government have cheated them out of the nominal prices given for their lands...the policy of that government, instead of civilizing, is to exterminate the natives; and it has not hesitated, on many occasions, to massacre whole villages. On the contrary, the British government treat them at all times like children, and observe most religiously every stipulation entered into with them." See Strachan, *Visit*, 134.

⁹⁰ Certain members of the British military were also adamant in their desire to see the Natives' cause honoured. The following quote was found in a letter belonging to Robert Dickinson: "I think that I have now attained the object I had always in view, that of uniting all the Indian nations...[please help me in] fulfilling the solemn pledges that have been made to the Indians." See Letter from Lieut. Duncan Graham as found in letter from "Dickinson to William McGillivray, 29 July 1814."

the Natives' displeasure.⁹¹ He argued that the only reason the Americans were complaining was because their efforts to win the Natives over to their side were proving less fruitful than they had hoped.⁹² Their failure, Strachan argued, was because "the Indians have experienced [American] deceptions too often to trust them except in cases of necessity."⁹³ In defense of the rumoured Native excesses in battle, Strachan simply replied: "When you hear of the cruelty of the Savages, think of the still greater cruelty of the Cabinet at Washington."⁹⁴ He charged the Americans with being both deceitful and unabashedly destructive towards these people and he never seemed to waver in his convictions that the Natives were powerful allies that had been treated with great disrespect by those who were now trying to buy their loyalty with more false promises.

⁹¹ Strachan, "Letter to Mr. Wilberforce," 1 November 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 22.

⁹² The following quote shows the attention the Natives received from Anglican missionaries like Addison: "The Reverend R. Addison of Niagara, who with several other missionaries ministered to the Indians of different tribes on the Grand River, reported in 1796/8 there were 'about 550 belonging to the Church' and the number was increasing as he had some 'friendly, serious Indians' who under his direction persuaded 'the neighbouring villagers to be baptized' and taught them 'the principles of Christianity as well' as they 'were able'. The 'serious deportment and devotion' of his flock were 'exemplary' and he taught '18 communicants, as pious and conscientious as can be found...in any Christian congregation'. In 1810, his work among the settlers was making great progress, but he was 'most satisfied with his success among the Indians, several of whom, belonging to the least cultivated tribe on the Grand River' had been lately baptized. In some years he baptized as many as 100 or 140 Indians. On one occasion a Chief of the Cayuga nation and his wife were admitted. 'They had been man and wife many years, but thought it more decent and respectable to be united after the Christian form.' The missionaries were 'greatly assisted by Capt. Brant, chief of the Mohawks' in their endeavours 'to bring the wandering tribes' to Christ." See Pasco. *SPG*, 166. However, the limitations of too few clergy over too much space remained an issue: "[Addison] was a gentleman of commanding talents & exquisite wit, whose devotions to his sacred duties, kindness of manners & sweet companionship, are still sources of grateful and fond remembrance. He may justly be considered the missionary of the western part of the province. In every township we find traces of his ministrations, & endearing recollections of his affectionate visits. He was also missionary to the Indians on the Grand River; and although from the great distance of his residence at Niagara, he could visit them but seldom, yet by the blandness of his address and his peculiar facility in communicating the most important truths, he acquired over their untutored minds a prevailing influence." See A letter from a Dr. Scadding written in 1840 to St. Mark's and received in February of 1841. That last line also shows a stark contrast to the traveling and more exciting Methodist itinerants.

⁹³ John Strachan, "Letter to Mr. Wilberforce," 1 November 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 21.

⁹⁴ John Strachan, "Letter to Mr. Wilberforce," 1 November 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 22.

Because it speaks to his ideas regarding the true motives of the American invasion that will be dealt with in a subsequent section, Strachan's thoughts on Native territory should also be noted. Arguing that the tribes were being forced off land that was rightfully theirs, Strachan critiqued "The American Government [because they] neither attend to the feelings or rights of the poor Indians." His letter to Wilberforce defended Native consternation at the Republic as just and reasonable based on the principle that "as they are independent they have a right to the privileges of independent nations."⁹⁵ In that same letter, John Strachan listed eight reasons why the Native people were upset with the Americans and six of those eight dealt with issues related to territory. An example of two of these complaints, as put forward by Strachan, follows:

The Indians...have been at war with the United States for several years, not at the instigation of the British as the American government have falsely reported, but for the following reasons which they publicly assign. 1. Because the Americans drive them from their hunting grounds. 2. Because the American government make fraudulent purchases of their lands from Indians who have no power to sell—one or two insignificant members of a village for example.⁹⁶

Thus were the American policies in the northwestern territories scrutinized and deemed to be conniving abuses perpetrated against an autonomous and independent nation. In light of such practices, the invasion of Upper Canada was seen—by Strachan at least—as another American step in the process of ridding those territories of their Native inhabitants.

Juxtaposed to the American system, Strachan saw his government's treatment of the Native people as another opportunity to laud the superiority of the British

⁹⁵ John Strachan, "Letter to Mr. Wilberforce," 1 November 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 21.

⁹⁶ John Strachan, "Letter to Mr. Wilberforce," 1 November 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 22.

system. Strachan adamantly opposed the practice of ranking races to determine which were of more value because he believed it could lead to un-Christian behaviour. His contempt for such a practice can be seen in the following excerpt from the January 1811 issue of the *Kingston Gazette*:

The moment that we begin to suppose that mankind are composed of distinct species, that moment our most noble and sublime conception of the human race is extinguished. We no longer discover in every individual, whatever be his color or his language, a child of Adam; a brother, a person of the same feelings and of the same natural powers with ourselves, though differently modified by peculiar circumstances and habits, that grand and affecting idea which represents mankind as one family, one blood branching from one primitive stem, is lost...As Christians then we must recognize the copper-colored Indian and the sable Negro...for our brethren.⁹⁷

For Strachan, kinship with Natives was to be built on mutual respect between the races and a shared distrust of America.⁹⁸

Strachan's concept of the Natives as "brethren" had historic significance to those whose roots were with the United Empire Loyalists. What Strachan proposed was not a radical departure but a reminder of a time in the not-so-distant past when

⁹⁷ Strachan, "The Reckoner," *Kingston Gazette*, 22 January 1811, 1. For discussion on this quotation and others like it see Henderson, *Strachan*, 28. Strachan appealed to the character of the King to show how all people were God's children: "Penetrated with the most ardent but rational piety, [King George] regards the Supreme Being as the common Father of all, and mankind the children, the members of one family. He is not therefore puffed up with vain glory as if he were an independent being and his subjects beneath his regard; he looks upon them as his children who turn to him for protection, and to promote whose happiness becomes the first of his duties; and it is this conviction that determines him always to prefer the public to private good." See Strachan, *George*, 13.

⁹⁸ He also argued that while the Americans boasted of civilizing the Natives they were, in fact, attempting to wipe them out. Writing still to Wilberforce he stated, "and the farce of their civilizing them is the Cant of Mr. Jefferson to gain applause from foreign nations." See Strachan, "Letter to Mr. Wilberforce," 1 November 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 23. Strachan's sentiments, while unique, were not completely alien to an influential segment of the Province's population. James Paxton's article "Merrymaking and Militia Musters" argues convincingly that a "multi-ethnic military community" was birthed in the wake of the American Revolution in Upper Canada. Citing parties, festivals, militia musters, and other social events as ideal breeding grounds for the Native and Loyalist populace to recognize, "a common past, one rooted in their shared experiences of exile and combat" he explains that such shared experiences, "created a usable past that...strengthened bonds of community in the present." See Paxton, "Merrymaking," 218.

Natives and Loyalists found common bonds that united the groups in a kinship. Such a bond was required again as the Natives and Loyalists, once more facing exile and destruction at the hands of the Americans, needed to resurrect such alliances for the mutual benefit and protection of both groups. However, the clergy were also interested in the spiritual wellbeing of the Natives as the following quote from Rev. Addison demonstrates. Speaking of John Norton's work he wrote: "Mr. Norton has finished his translation of St. Matthew, and has promised to proceed till the Indians have all the 4 Gospels among them."⁹⁹ Charles Stewart also possessed the desire to educate the Mohawk children in Kingston during the war, and so he applied to the SPG for "a few Indian primmers [sic] for the use of the Mohawk children at school and also of a few Prayer Books for the use of the Indian families...necessary to the performance of their devotionals...In my letter of March 29th 1813 I submitted to the consideration of the Society the utility and expediency of allowing a salary of...10 [pounds] per annum to a reader to the Mohawks."¹⁰⁰ The willingness to distribute the Gospel, empower the people in their worship, and educate the Mohawk children only strengthens Strachan's assertion that because the British displayed such a desire to improve the lives of these people and care for their souls they were showing their Christian character.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Addison, "Letter 2 July 1812."

¹⁰⁰ Stuart, "Letter 13 July 1813," 1-2. Lieutenant John Le Couteur, reflecting on a church service wrote in his journal for 7 March 1814: "On Sunday we went to the Mohawk Church. The Minister or reader was an Indian Chief, the Squaws were on one side and the Indian men on the other...After having witnessed these men scalping, looting, Yelling and carousing in the Upper part of the Province, it was very striking and imposing to behold them listening to the Divine truths of Christianity. I believe it was a translation of St. John's Gospel into the Mohawk language—one of the many blessings conferred on the American race by the glorious British and Foreign Bible Society. The Squaws sung their hymns sweetly, plaintively." See Graves, *Le Couteur*, 159.

¹⁰¹ Throughout the war there remained interaction between Anglican clergy and various Native tribes. The following excerpt shows the role Addison played in the marriage of some local inhabitants: "The

iv. Respect for Native Warriors

But Strachan was also impressed by the Natives' bravery and care for their fellow warriors. In perhaps one of his most profound compliments, John Strachan compared the honour of the Native chiefs with those of his own beloved English military. He wrote: "Among [the Natives] military merit consists in beating the enemy with little loss. In fine, an Office of Riflemen & an Indian Chief are praised for the same kind of conduct: to repulse the enemy with a severe loss on their own part is disgraceful not meritorious."¹⁰² Strachan commended the conduct displayed by the Natives on the battlefield, especially in light of the growing contempt he possessed for the vacillating leadership of Governor General Prevost.¹⁰³

Brock had utilized the Natives well and they had proven to be beneficial to the cause, if somewhat unreliable. However, according to Strachan, Colonel Bishoppe understood how to best utilize the Native skills of war. It was not prudent for the British people to attempt to force the Natives to fight as the British fought; that would

Mohawk Chief Captain Norton was married to his wife Catherine (I think) on the 27th July when she was baptized; and Jacob Johnson another Mohawk Chief was married to his wife Mary on the 21st August this year [1813].” See Excerpt from Wedding Book of St. Mark’s Niagara by Robert Addison. In the final chapter, marriage as a central part of Upper Canadian society and a way to show the Native willingness to become more British in their cultural attributes will be referenced.

¹⁰² Strachan, “Life of Col Bishoppe, December 1813,” as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 6. It should also be noted that the more vehement comments regarding the American military were reserved for late in 1813 to 1814. While Strachan does not mention a reason for this, it is safe to posit that the capture of York and the reversal the British Navy faced on Lake Erie caused him some concern that the American military effort might prove successful. Therefore, condemnations of their strategies and character gained new impetus and strength. There is little evidence that Americans threw themselves into military engagements with the British with little regard for their own numbers, mostly because they never had sufficient numbers to pursue such a strategy.

¹⁰³ Strachan was not alone in his contempt for the leadership of Prevost. In *A Wampum Denied*, Sandy Antal specifically links the following remark to Strachan’s views of the Natives: “contemporary British observers in Upper Canada were overwhelming in their agreement with the view expressed by Rector John Strachan, who wrote, ‘The matter of employing the Indians is not a question of policy but one of absolute necessity.’” See Antal, *Wampum*, 23-4. Although referencing his baptism, the following quote also shows a nineteenth-century historian’s awareness of the blame that many people ascribed to Prevost’s leadership: “Here is the name of one who justly or unjustly received much blame in the war. Baptism, Nov. 20th, 1808, Augustus Margaret Firth, daughter of Col. Henry Proctor, commandant of the 41st Regiment, and Elizabeth.” See Carnochan, *Frontier*, 3.

be a poor use of their skills. Instead, Strachan argued, they should be allowed to fight as they pleased as long as the British leaders could channel their skills to a common goal. In “Life of Col. Bishoppe” Strachan argued for this:

[Natives] are a fierce and independent people, incapable of submitting to controul [sic]: they are easily led but will never be driven. He, that desires to profit by their services, will study their inclinations, and by seasonable encouragement & heading them in their expeditions with a few whites, he will render them most efficient on the wings of his army. They are at all times terrible to the enemy and beyond measure after a defeat. Col: Bishoppe knew well how to turn these sons of nature to the best advantage: not by changing their mode of fighting, or assuming authority over them; but by reaping benefit from their incessant activity¹⁰⁴

If the leadership would allow the Natives to maintain their way of life and military traits the British would find themselves with a most grateful, and skillful, military ally.

The use of Natives was just one among many issues that faced the clergy as they sought to bolster the people’s faith throughout the dark and violent days of war. Echoing Strachan’s belief in the justness of a defensive war, Captain Merritt wrote about the American encroachment of Native land and that

Self preservation is alone a sufficient plea for our having recourse to the assistance of those warriors. The weaker and invaded party is perfectly justifiable in resorting to every means in their power for defence. The natives had commenced hostilities against the whites some time since, and certainly every candid and unbiased person must say they had sufficient reasons for so doing, by the settlers unwarrantable encroachments on their lands and property.

¹⁰⁴ Strachan, “Life of Col Bishoppe, December 1813,” as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 6-7. Of course others in the British military were not as generous with their descriptions. Lieut. John Le Couteur wrote in his journal: “I can assure you that [neither] to us or our enemies, is the Death whoop as agreeable sound. The Indians are cunning, cowardly, and revengeful in the highest degree, brave only when their enemy is Broken or flying, and then the tomahawk and scalping knife are liberally made us of...The Mohawks of whom we have all heard so much are mostly cowards, thieves and dirty. They do not however make of practice of scalping which the others do, I shall endeavour to procure one as a relic.” See Graves, *Le Couteur*, 147.

However, also like Strachan, the Captain likewise acknowledged “Every friend of humanity must deprecate the savage mode of warfare” and offered up the British manner of warfare as a possible deterrent to the more volatile and repugnant acts associated with Native warfare. To that end, Merritt spoke of “a grand council of war... held at Amherstburgh, where their Chiefs solemnly promised to abolish the shocking practice of scalping, likewise to save all prisoners that should fall into their possession.”¹⁰⁵

v. The True Motivation for the Invasion

Early into the war, John Strachan agreed with the military assessment that the Americans were desirous of land and were determined to take Upper and Lower Canada for their own. However, by November of 1812, Strachan believed that a far more sinister plan was in motion. The following is an excerpt from a letter written to the Marquis Wellesley:

It will perhaps surprise your Lordship but it is nevertheless true, that the Great object of the United States at present is to take Upper Canada in preference to Lower Canada. This Province is of much greater importance to them. Possessed of Upper Canada the Indians are entirely at their mercy for not being able to procure supplies they must submit I know that it is commonly said that so long as we keep possession of Quebec Upper Canada is of no use to the United States but this is a great mistake.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Merritt, *Journal*, 8. In that excerpt he also spoke of his great admiration for Tecumseh: “The order [of Prevost that the war was to be wholly defensive and no offensive tactics were to be pursued] was, fortunately, not extended to Capt. Roberts; who, shortly after, or about the time Gen. Hull invaded Canada, took possession of Michillimackinac, without the loss of a man. This acquisition, with the noble motives by which Tecumseh was actuated, secured us the friendship of all the western Indians. About the beginning of July, the celebrated and magnanimous Chief Tecumseh, arrived at Amherstburgh, with about one hundred and fifty Indians of the Shawnee Tribe; and by his singular tact and address, soon gained over the Wyandotts which, with some others arriving, made a force of between five and six hundred.

¹⁰⁶ John Strachan, “Letter to The Marquis Wellesley,” 1 November 1812, as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 30.

To Strachan, the issue was about the American desire to use British territory, specifically Upper Canada, in order to starve and destroy the Natives.

One of the more controversial positions espoused by Strachan was that the motives cited by the American government for the war were “popular baits,”¹⁰⁷ designed to hide the true reasons from the British people. Strachan condemned Prevost for what he defined as timidity and an unwillingness to act aggressively towards the Americans. Although Prevost’s plan to hold Lower Canada so that America could not advance made sense strategically, Strachan argued that the American goal had always been Upper Canada and to only guard the Lower Province played directly into their hands. Strachan offered his reasons for disagreeing with Prevost in a letter to James McGill:

General Prevost has not certainly so high an opinion of the value of this Province as our Enemies—he thinks perhaps that they cannot keep it as long as he remains in possession of Quebec...But our enemies do not covet the Lower Province because they would be forced to give it up to the French who are ready to demand it. And even should Great Britain refuse to make any peace till this country was restored, still a couple of years possession would answer the policy of our enemies—in that time they would alienate from us all the Indians & reduce them to a state of subjection, and they would oppress & destroy all the Loyalists.¹⁰⁸

For Strachan, the Indian issue was more than just a matter of some importance in the war; it was the entire reason for the war.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ “My leading ideas are that the conquest of the Canadas, particularly Upper Canada, is with the enemy the true cause of the war, in order to dissolve our connection with the Indians; that the other causes alleged are mere popular baits; that the forbearance persisted in by us in these provinces, and especially on the sea-coast has been and continues to be most pernicious.” See Henderson, *Strachan*, 45.

¹⁰⁸ John, Strachan, “Letter to James McGill,” November 1812, Spragge, *Letter Book*, 26.

¹⁰⁹ This sentiment was echoed in an 1812 report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society as well: “Our neighbours seek this province, they seek it because it is the only bar to the success of their system of driving back and extirminating [sic] the Indians. They know that so long as we keep possession of this

In that same letter to James McGill, John Strachan argued that as long as the Native tribes of the Ohio Valley remained strong the Americans could not expand to the west. Since the western frontier was so massive, it would be impossible to hunt all the Natives down and kill them. However, with the Natives contained in a smaller space, like Upper Canada for example, the Americans had an opportunity to wipe them out and, in so doing, open the west up to their people.¹¹⁰ Strachan wrote:

Nor can it be concealed that the importance of [Upper Canada to the United States] is incalculable—the possession of it would give them the complete command of the Indians who must either submit or starve within two years and thus leave all the Western frontier clear & unmolested. The Americans are systematically employed in exterminating the Savages, but they can never succeed while we keep possession of this country. This my Dear Sir is *the true cause of this war*, & so long as there is any prospect of conquering us the war will continue.¹¹¹

Thus, Strachan's compassion for the Natives, his disdain for the Americans, and his anger at the timidity of leaders like Prevost found their significance in the fact that he believed this war was not about the political reasons cited by Madison in June of 1812. Instead, the greedy Americans were staging a war to eradicate a threat to their nation's expansion. Therefore, for Strachan, the War of 1812 was about stopping the systematic extermination of people that, he believed, were allies of the British Empire and, more importantly, fellow children of God.¹¹²

country, we will protect these unfortunate men, and supply them with means of defence." Exhortation pronounced after the sermon 22 November 1812," as found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 365.

¹¹⁰ "Prevost was correct in anticipating minimal support from England. Furthermore, Brock's strategy for aggressive action in the west ran contrary to the views of the previous governor, Sir James Craig, who advocated a stout defence from Quebec City." This, Strachan argued, was playing into the hands of the American military goals to annex Upper Canada, decimate the Native population and then be free to expand westward. See Antal, *Wampum*, 23.

¹¹¹ Strachan, "Letter to James McGill," November 1812, Spragge, *Letter Book*, 25.

¹¹² It is difficult to simplify the causes of something as complex as a war into one, or even several, motives. However, John Strachan's opinion of the American desire to eradicate the Indians was not heavily supported in the writing of the time nor in the academic community. Historian Louis Hacker

His belief in the just position of Upper Canada and the divine nature of the British Empire balanced the concern of the reputed Native excesses in combat. In other words: Britain's right made the Native might permissible.¹¹³ Strachan's opinion of the Native people was both politically and strategically sound, but that it was also theological as well as compassionate. The American government was so morally inferior to England—a point proven by its treatment of the Natives—it needed to be defeated in order to insure the peace of the Province and, indeed, the world. The Native tribes, like the Upper Canadians, were inhabitants of an independent nation that was being invaded by greedy American settlers. Strachan was proud that, due to the respect they were shown by the crown, the Natives had chosen Britain as their ally and he accredited that, once again, to the Christian nature of the empire.

B. Patriotism and the Christian Soldier

i. Is Patriotism Christian?

The question of military morality would be ever-present throughout the war.

Several of the clergy felt the need to answer the critique that the love of country was

does agree that the Americans were less than forthcoming with the true reasons for their attack on Upper Canada. However, he thought that it was Canadian, and not western, land that whetted the American appetite. He writes, "While some Westerners no doubt advocated the conquest of Canada so that their British rivals would be driven from the fur trade with the Indians, the chief preoccupation... must have been with those vistas of boundless Canadian lands." See Hacker, "Desire," 50. Hacker makes the argument that the American west was not desirable land at this time because the settlers lacked the technology to make the vast prairie land viable. Therefore, while expansion may have been their goal, the direction they desired to go was north and not west. Julius Pratt argues against Hacker based on the latter's inability to provide sufficient evidence to prove his assertions. Pratt argues that since many Americans made no bones about using the war to rid the fur trade of British traders, it is unlikely they would conceal their desire for land as if it were more sinister. He writes, "Was it more wicked, and hence more to be concealed, to covet Canadian lands than to covet the profits from Canadian furs? Yet the fur trade again and again creeps into war speeches and war articles." See Horsman, "Conquest," 55. Pratt argues that it was the fear of Indians and the even deeper anger that the British were spurring them on that is easier to prove through primary sources and logical reasoning.¹¹³ It should be noted that Strachan's theory appears to be somewhat of a stretch, and one he did not repeat after 1812. It would be easy to dismiss Strachan because of the apparent unpopularity of this position even within his own later writings. However, it must be remembered that his desire to defend both the Native people and Upper Canada formed the backdrop for many of his writings and teachings regarding the war.

antithetical to Christian teaching. Therefore, the people—both civilian and military—were cautioned not to forget their Christian duty and were reminded to attend, and adhere to, a local church. Right living and the continued practice of God’s laws united the civilians with their soldiers as both sought to expel the invaders with all the tools at their disposal. For the latter it was the musket and the canon, for the former it was prayer and piety.¹¹⁴

In deference to the 1814 defeat of Napoleon, the war with America was considered by Alexander Spark as a “minor consideration” even though he was preaching his sermon from Quebec. While celebrating the fall of the French tyrant he went on to state that the contest with the United States remained “very important to us, in this part of the British Empire” before noting that the loyal colonists of both provinces suffering through “the war lately declared, by the Government of the neighbouring States, and chiefly directed against these Provinces” should celebrate because they, like their imperial counterparts had cause “for Gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of Nations, that our enemies have not been permitted to ‘rejoice over us.’”¹¹⁵ This was not intended to minimize the seriousness of the war in the colony but was

¹¹⁴ “Our fleeing from these vices, and eternally abandoning them, will procure us the grace of heartfelt thankfulness to the only wise God; and we shall be enabled to feel as in duty bound, the surprising blessings he has of late bestowed upon us, and on our Allies; and ardently to hope, that such kind of good, such victories will be our portion in this part of his Majesty’s dominions. Thus helped by the strength and shield of the Lord, our hearts will greatly rejoice; our song, to use the language of the text, shall praise him.” See Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 13. Catholic Bishop Plessis singled out the people that were not able to fight in the altercation and invited them to wage a spiritual war on those who were threatening to remove Lower Canada from the empire. Naming his people “Warriors” he began his sermon extolling them “to stand like a wall against the attacks of the enemy” because while they were not called to carry arms they had a high calling nonetheless. In his address Plessis admonished the “priests, clerks, old men, women, invalids, children, [and] all you who are unable to serve as soldiers” to be united with their warring brethren and “not [to] wait in barren anxiety the development of the war” because they were called to “Join in heart and spirit with me your chief pastor. Serve your country all you can whether in private prayer at home or in church before the altar. Lift up your souls to God. Assault Heaven with a holy violence.” See Plessis, *Thanksgiving*, 36.

¹¹⁵ Spark, “Thanksgiving,” 12.

meant to unite the two causes in order to show the connection between the military threats close to the imperial centre with the similar concerns that were prominent on the periphery. Complementing Spark's understanding of the transatlantic nationalism was John Strachan's sermon in the early days of the war. Defending the care that England had displayed to the colonists as well as reminding the people of the struggles in which their motherland was currently embroiled, he argued that "OUR Mother Country hath contended with very little respite for upwards of twenty years with the most powerful and implacable enemy that ever threatened her existence as a Nation, while we have enjoyed peace and tranquility and received the most solid proofs of her affection, tho' bleeding at every pore."¹¹⁶ Such language provided forceful and deliberate reminders that the people owed their allegiance to England as the nation to which they belonged.¹¹⁷

Far from being uninterested parties in the political events of the colony, the clergy believed that their duty included active participation within the political spheres in order to bring the proper amount of godly reflection to any and all proceedings.¹¹⁸ In a letter from Bishop Jacob Mountain, Stuart was reminded to "take the proper steps to cause the Prayer for the Prince Regent to be read in all Churches throughout the Province."¹¹⁹ In response to wartime measures that would witness the decreasing of personal rights in the interest of discovering spies or traitors, Strachan cited loyalty as the safeguard against fears that such impingements could result in

¹¹⁶ Strachan, *Legislative*, 3.

¹¹⁷ "But the fear here recommended is a filial sense of love and duty, which will lead us to show our reverence to the king by a strict obedience to his laws and by a just respect to his person and government." See Burns, *Thanksgiving*, 4.

¹¹⁸ "Christians, what if to these political considerations you add another, one that above all others entitles this Empire to your gratitude and praise? I allude to the liberty assured to our religion and guaranteed by law." See Joly, *Plessis 1799*, 27.

¹¹⁹ Stuart, "Letter from the Bishop, 17 February 1814," 4.

unnecessary arrests or property seizures by stating that only “Wicked and seditious persons may fear, and such and only such will oppose them.” He then went on to state “the friend of his country, the honest and well intentioned loyalist has nothing to fear, such powers are not directed against him, he will never know that they exist except in the punishment of traitors.”¹²⁰ Such clerical attention to political matters was necessary during times of war to comfort the people as well as reminding them that loyalty brought blessings.

Furnishing his argument with the biblical example of Jesus who “himself wept over the approaching ruin of Jerusalem” and the “holy warmth and zeal” that King David used to “speak of his native land,” Strachan sought to correct those “who affect to call the love of our country a narrow prejudice, [and] totally inconsistent with the Christian character” with the admonition that if Jesus practiced a virtue “it is not very easy to shew” how such a virtue could be inconsistent with a life of faith.¹²¹ Instead, Strachan offered up a positive understanding of the role patriotism played in the history of the world:

All our feelings and perceptions are in favor of this virtue, every age presents us with examples of its unimpeachable uprightness, and none ridicule it but those who are insensible to morality. But it is pretended that we have no precept, no divine warrant from holy writ for the motivation of patriotism. Does not this Heavenly religion inculcate and inspire a temper of universal benevolence and love which unites us to all men, considers us the children of God, and engaged by the strongest obligations to promote the great interests of the human race, without any regard to nation or country, faith or religion so far as we are able, but as we can seldom do this in an active manner, we are taught by the same religion to promote the felicity of particular societies of men and of individuals according to the relations in which we stand towards them, and our knowledge of their deserts. If then a calm and steady love of mankind be the most noble and worthy

¹²⁰ Strachan, *Legislative*, 18.

¹²¹ Strachan, *Legislative*, 14.

principle on which we can act, surely the next in point of excellency and merit, is the love of our country. They can never be separated, he that loves mankind in general, loves his native land in particular. All his social propensities and instincts lead directly to this.¹²²

Such sentiments must be underscored with the understanding that, as Strachan was preaching, Napoleon was threatening to end the nation of England and America was threatening to take the colony away as well.¹²³ In Lower Canada, Charles Stewart similarly argued: “Some persons have very erroneously supposed that friendship and patriotism are not consistent with the Gospel, but the best proof to the contrary...is the example of Jesus Christ himself. He shewed a particular regard for Nazareth...and for John among his disciples”¹²⁴ Although the “Mother Country” might be superior in justice than those who sought its destruction, the events of the eighteenth century provided a potent example that the demise of the British Empire was not an inconceivable concept. Therefore, patriotism was of significant importance to a transatlantic nation with a potentially limited future.¹²⁵

ii. The Christian Soldier

To wage war as a Christian nation necessitated many confusing and potentially contradictory beliefs and, with so much at stake, the churches were forced to take every aspect of the war seriously as they attempted to understand, and teach,

¹²² Strachan, *Legislative*, 16.

¹²³ In the following quote of Strachan when he sang the praises of Addison is the understanding that the latter’s actions in the war displayed his Christianity but did not detract from it. Strachan wrote: “I am indebted for this excellent passage to the Reverend Mr. Addison, Rector of Niagara, whose scientific and classical attainments place him high among scholars and whose services as a Divine and benevolent exertions as a Christian, during the late war, confer upon him a still higher title, and...obtained for him the grateful acknowledgements of the Provincial Legislature.” See Strachan, *Funeral*, 7-8.

¹²⁴ Stewart, *Cornerstone*, 7-8.

¹²⁵ “[H]ad [Napoleon] succeeded against Great Britain, her fate would have been much worse than that of any other nation that submitted to his yoke; as his enmity against her was greater than against any other country in the world. The destruction of England was his great object, in all his wars.” See Reid, *Thanksgiving 1816*, 10.

what God was doing. Arguably the most important question that needed to be answered was whether or not a Christian was able to knowingly engage in combat that would result in the deaths of other people. Building on the positive traits of patriotism, John Bethune offered the motif of defending one's home to alleviate any concern the colonists might have related to warfare for the sake of the empire. His challenge to those who insisted patriotism had no place in the Christian's consideration went as follows:

The Christian soldier loves his country. Were patriotism a determination to support our country when in the wrong, were it an inclination to do evil to promote her advantage, then might we admit it to be a narrow and illiberal prejudice; but the patriotism for which we plead, is an ardent and fixed disposition to promote our country's good by all the lawful means in our power; to sacrifice life, fortune, and every thing that we hold most dear, for its security and defence; not to seek its aggrandizement by the depression of other nations, or by doing any thing inconsistent with justice, piety, and virtue. It is that warm affection which a good man feels for the happiness of his kindred and friends, extended to the society of which he is a member.¹²⁶

Bethune went on to caution that while the Christians of British North America could fight to "promote our country's good" they were not to delight "in the anguish of individuals, [nor approve] acts of hostility [except] what are necessary and conducive to the end and object of the war." His warning that the faithful fighter never forgets "that he is a Christian amidst the slaughter of the field"¹²⁷ showed that not even the horrors of war superseded the Christian's duty to remain faithful and loyal to God. Strachan reminded the people, "The first Gentile convert received into the Christian Church was a Roman Soldier, nor was his continuing in that profession declared inconsistent with his new religion." With scriptural support he declared boldly: "In

¹²⁶ Bethune, *Williamstown*, 43.

¹²⁷ Bethune, *Williamstown*, 43.

bearing arms therefore in defence of your native land, you are not to suppose that you are transgressing any of your duties as Christians, on the contrary, you are discharging some of the most exalted.”¹²⁸

In order to comfort and teach on the issue, John Strachan crafted what he believed to be the characteristics of a Christian soldier. Going beyond simply approving Christians fighting in the contest, Strachan used the opportunity to articulate the heart of those who would be fighting. This sermon was lengthy and will be returned to throughout the remainder of this work but sufficient for this section is his third characteristic of the Christian soldier: “The Christian soldier loves his country.” Far from seeing such a trait as superseding Christian devotion the Anglicans believed that patriotism and Christian fidelity were mutually beneficial terms.¹²⁹ Arguing that, as with all things pertaining to faith, if the heart was correct than the expression was worship, Strachan stated that one of the most important duties of the Christian soldier was to “pray for the happiness of his country” because sincere pleading to God on behalf of one’s country exhibited “the purest patriotism, since

¹²⁸ Strachan, *Legislative*, 19-20.

¹²⁹ Strachan’s reminder to the York militia that they were sanctioned by God to protect their fellow inhabitants of York was echoed some years later in a sermon in Lower Canada given by Presbyterian Robert Easton. His understanding of the successful defense against the Americans was not solely divine right but was also located within the people who did the fighting because, as he preached: “Another powerful cause, which contributed to the integrity of the provinces, was the universal attachment of the inhabitants to their government, laws, and institutions. They have held up an example of patriotism, seldom equelled [sic], never surpassed. Their forwardness in Lower Canada to fly to the standard of their country in the hour of danger, was the salvation of Montreal at different times from the threatened incursion of invading armies. The same magnanimous spirit did wonders in our sister province.” See Easton, *Reasons*, 9. Evidence that such sentiments echoed in the minds of the fighting men is provided, at least in part, from the following quote taken from the journal of Captain Merritt. Taken from his recollection of the battle of Queenston, and the fatal charge of Isaac Brock in October 1812, Merritt wrote: “The States troops had possession of the wood, were likewise drawn up behind a fence, in all nearly a thousand men, greater part militia, with one field piece; to oppose which, we had nearly seven hundred men, mostly militia; likewise a bad position, having to march up and dislodge them from the wood and fence, without any cover, and suspecting them to have four times our force. To counterbalance those evils, our men were under better discipline; were fighting in defence of their lives and property: and to stimulate their courage, knew the issue of this action, though trifling, would decide the fate of the Upper Country.” See Merritt, *Journal*, 17.

nothing would be more profane and hypocritical than to offer up such petitions, if we do not present them from the heart.”¹³⁰ However, Strachan’s suggestions were not all spiritual with little practical value; what follows is a brief summary of some of his central ideas concerning such attributes and it will be noted that, within the discourse, the spiritual and practical interweave together seamlessly:

A Christian Soldier is neither animated against his enemy by hatred nor revenge. These malignant passions have no influence on his operations, finding that gentle means have failed in bringing his enemy to reason, he confines himself to such acts of violence as shall bring him back to equitable terms of accommodation... The Christian Soldier is firm and courageous... Courage must always include conduct, otherwise it is merely an animal impulse. In order successfully to meet danger, we must comprehend its extent, observe it in every point of view and then-consider without any perturbation how to surmount it. Now the Christian Soldier being always ready to die, always prepared for a better world than this, is not much taken up with his personal safety, he is above fear; not that he will omit any necessary precautions.¹³¹

Strachan, in a comparison designed to combat all nay-sayers who argued that patriotism had no place within the Christian worldview, went on to compare Jesus’ prayer for Jerusalem as an example of biblically-sanctioned patriotism.

With patriotism thus defended and the Christian soldier thus defined, attention also needed to be paid to national character because “according to [nations’] characters, so are they also dealt with by Providence.”¹³² Of course, in their descriptions of the national character of England, the clergy were in fact constructing a British North American culture that reflected God’s rewards but called the people to manifest their loyalty in ways conducive to the colonial setting. Such teachings

¹³⁰ Strachan, *Sermon*, 13.

¹³¹ Strachan, *Legislative*, 7, 11, 13.

¹³² Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 16.

reminded the reader that not only was the empire beholden to God, but that the Christian subjects of that empire were also beholden to each other.¹³³

iii. The Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada

One of the ways in which the clergy were involved in strengthening ties to England as well as rewarding those who participated in the war effort was The Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada, established during the war. According to a speech given by Strachan to the York Militia in 1813, the Society originated for the following reason:

A young lady of this place proposed a subscription to afford relief to the distressed families of the militia on duty. The happy thought was instantly pursued with eagerness. One worthy minister from the pulpit invited a meeting for that purpose. Among less than twenty persons who attended more than fifteen hundred dollars were subscribed to be yearly. More is daily added.¹³⁴

Stating that Upper Canada was “Utterly unprepared for war, the militia of the Province was suddenly called to the frontier to oppose invasion” the Society was created because such soldiers, deemed necessary to the military effort and a popular example of praiseworthy loyalty, “had neither arms nor cloathing [sic].” Therefore, the Society was convened and organized “to alleviate such distress,” and was viewed as an extension of the militia effort itself in that it employed average citizens in the cause of imperial concerns.¹³⁵ To celebrate that fact, it was recorded that the Loyal

¹³³ Although anecdotal, the following quote from 1812 hero Col. Fitzgibbon, an Irish Catholic and the recipient of Laura Secord’s famed message, provides a good example of how providence was seen as pervasive throughout all aspects of life: Recounting a story of being hungry in the military service and finding a coin shining in the light of a street lamp: “the thought that it had ever been owned by anyone else never crossed my mind. I was hungry through no fault of my own, and this half-guinea was to me a direct gift from Providence, and as such I used it and was grateful.” See Fitzgibbon, *Veteran*, 35.

¹³⁴ Address to the York Militia by Strachan and William Powell ca. 1813, as found in Cruikshank, *Documentary*, 2:27-8. The young lady was identified by Carl Benn as Elizabeth Selby.

¹³⁵ The following shows an appeal to the British public by Thomas Scott in which he extolled the vigour of the Upper Canadians and critiques the Americans: “A defenceless situation of the province of

and Patriotic Society “was projected, and instantly adopted, with a zeal creditable to the inhabitants of York.”¹³⁶

The Society had a pronounced spiritual element as well as members and leaders of most denominations who desired to be seen as aligned with the charitable and popular nature of the organization. Attempts to place the Society closer to the Anglican Church were thwarted as the Society deemed all help welcome. Thomas Scott recorded:

The Directors of the Society learned with regret, that offence had been taken at the words, ‘Clergymen of the established Church’...As it is the anxious wish of the Society to conciliate and to promote union and harmony...the meeting unanimously agreed to strike out the words...and to substitute in their place, ‘all regular Clergymen.’¹³⁷

While Methodist ministers would find it difficult to become “regular” the statement did allow for Presbyterians and even Catholics to become directors of the Society and inform how the resources were to be distributed.¹³⁸

Upper Canada...[the Loyalists] beheld with indignation their old enemy envying them, their new habitations won from the wilderness, and again thirsting for their blood. Proud of their country, their loyalty burst forth in all its ancient splendour; they volunteered their services with acclamation, hastened to join the very small numbers of his Majesty’s troops, at the several points of attack, and exhibited a degree of valour and fortitude, worthy of the British name...so strong is the spirit of patriotism among the people, that it infects the greater number of people who have recently come to settle in the Province, from the United States, and makes them efficient soldiers.” See Scott, “An Appeal to the British Public,” as found in Anon. *Loyal and Patriotic*, 26-7. However, J.I. Little offers this statement regarding the lack of desire for Eastern Township inhabitants to enlist: “Resistance in the Eastern Townships to service in the active militia stands in marked contrast to the more positive response of the French Canadians, who were neither enamoured of Napoleon nor anxious to exchange British rule for the uncertainties of American annexation. But the habitants were, themselves, still not interested in fighting in the name of religion or nation, despite the rhetoric of loyalty and patriotism issuing from the bourgeoisie and clergy.” See Little, *Loyalties*, 55. His assertion of the lack of Catholic enthusiasm for American rule supports this work’s conclusions.

¹³⁶ Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 3-4.

¹³⁷ Thomas Scott, as Found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 31

¹³⁸ “In 1813, clerics from the other officially-recognized churches of Rome and Scotland also became directors. However, ministers from denominations such as the Methodists and Baptists were not included (unless they made the requisite financial donation) because they belonged to faiths that existed in a state of ‘dissent’ from the ‘established’ church. In part, this reflected John Strachan’s desire to utilize the Loyal and Patriotic Society in support the Church of England’s attempt to assert its status as the colony’s official church. That status was in doubt because the British parliament’s Canada

The positive impact of the organization was well known and highly regarded by the multiple recipients of the benevolent monies. In a letter to Strachan, George O'Kill Stuart wrote with delight: "It affords me much pleasure to remark, that much individual suffering has been alleviated by the pecuniary aid derived from our Loyal and Patriotic Fund."¹³⁹ Such support bound people together as neighbours financially assisted other neighbours who had been impacted with greater severity by the war. Publications of donators and recipients, along with brief tales of how the people were afflicted and why they deserved funding gave a human face to the statistics.¹⁴⁰ This humanizing contributed to a growing communal sense that was binding the people together and minimizing the isolating regionalism that had been so ubiquitous in the pre-war days.

The presence of clergy also invested the goals of the organization with a spiritual element and offered biblical counsel to supplement the already generous

Act of 1791 that created the province only implied that Anglicanism would become the established faith, and thus Strachan and his supporters felt much had to be done to secure such a designation. It also represented his wish to affirm that church's role – along with that of the state – as one of the twin pillars upon which an orderly and Christian society could be built and sustained on the Upper Canadian frontier. The problem with Strachan's perspective was that many people opposed church establishment, and the concept would be abandoned in the decades following the war because the province was too diverse religiously and the times were too liberal attitudinally to support privileging one denomination over the others. In giving the Loyal and Patriotic Society's character something of an Anglican gloss, Strachan may have weakened its ability to appeal more broadly than it did, and consequently may have restricted its capacity to raise as much money to relieve distress as otherwise might have been possible." See Benn, "Loyal," n.p.

¹³⁹ "Letter of George O'Kill Stuart to John Strachan, 19 May 1814," as found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 129. Rev. George O'Kill Stuart was Rev. John Strachan's predecessor at York. In 1812, Stuart transferred from York in order to take over for his father in Kingston (a post desired by Strachan) and remained there for the duration of the war. Along with being appointed the bishop's official in Upper Canada, he would later be appointed archdeacon of York in 1821 and the same for Kingston in 1827.

¹⁴⁰ The following quotes provide two brief examples of such tales as they pertained to a Clergyman sponsored by the Society as well as the widow of a Mennonite: "Rev. Mr. Dunkey, Western: This Gentleman in consequence of the war, had no means of reaching his usual resources; the Society therefore knowing his merits, requested his acceptance of the additional sum of [50 pounds]." See Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 237. Seven pounds was given to widow Overhalt in 1816. For the widow Fairchild it was recorded "money was given by Mr. Addison at different times, some for flour, and some in cash to herself—a great sufferer by the war." See Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 279.

nature of the members. In November 1812, the people were exhorted to “unite like a band of brothers” and support one another during the horrors of combat. The people were encouraged to give as a spiritual discipline much like the ancient Israelites had given to the construction and maintenance of their holy temple. That was important not only because it, once again, united England with Israel but also because it showed solidarity with fellow colonists as a sacred bond because, for the subjects of Upper Canada, “our Tabernacle of safety, through the blessing of God, consists in our friends and brothers, our sons and companions who are on the Lines.”¹⁴¹ In these ways, and through such organizations as the Loyal and Patriotic Society, the churches were able to offer the people a spiritual mandate to undergird their charity that not only aided the British war effort but also united the people to each other and in opposition to America.¹⁴²

For those deemed especially patriotic by Society leadership, the following medal was awarded:

Two inches and one half diameter, In a circle formed by a wreath of laurels, the words ‘FOR MERIT.’ *Legend*, ‘PRESENTED BY A GRATEFUL COUNTRY’ on the reverse, A streight [sic] between two lakes, on the north side a Beaver (emblem of peaceful industry) the ancient armorial bearing of Canada. In the back ground an English Lion slumbering. On the south side of the streight [sic], the American eagle planeing [sic] in the air, as if checked from seizing the Beaver by the presence of the Lion, *Legend* ‘Upper Canada

¹⁴¹ “Exhortation pronounced after the sermon 22 November 1812,” as found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 367.

¹⁴² Such sentiments even included the Catholics as the following quote demonstrates. Lord Bathurst (Secretary of State for Colonies) on the Lower Canadian Catholic claims: “Whatever opinions may be entertained with respect to the adoption of measures for restraining the Catholic church in the province, or reducing its lately acquired superiority, I am sure that you will feel with me that the moment at which His Majesty’s Canadian subjects are making the most meritorious exertions in defence of the province, against the enemy, is not the most auspicious for bringing forward any changes which they might, however erroneously, consider as trenching upon the privileges of their church.” See “Lord Bathurst to Bishop Mountain, 27 December 1813,” as found in Plessis, *Thanksgiving*, 37.

Preserved¹⁴³

Although the original copy of this medal no longer exists, the legacy that medal symbolized does. Citing the willingness of the militia to sacrifice for the preservation of the land, the exhortation following the November 1812 Society sermon stated “never surely was greater activity shewn in any country, than our militia have exhibited, never greater valour, cooler resolution, and more approved conduct” before stating that the local soldiers had acted with courage and skill much like “the choicest veterans” and through their exertions had “twice saved the country.”¹⁴⁴ For any who might have argued that such use of the term “country” in relation to militia might indicate some form of early Canadian nationalism, the 1813 speech of the Duke of Kent must also be considered. While his sentiments regarding the importance of the militia were the same, he understood the defense of the provinces within the larger realm of Great Britain. His comments included the following statement:

That this meeting are deeply impressed with the strongest sentiments of admiration, at the unshaken loyalty, fidelity, and attachment, of the inhabitants of His Majesty’s North American Colonies, and of their gallant defence of these Provinces, which were attacked on the Declaration of War, by the American army. That three successive invasions of the Province of Upper Canada, to which the chief exertions of the enemy were directed, have been repelled by the valour of the Volunteers and Militia, in aid of a small number of His Majesty’s forces.¹⁴⁵

It would be odd to think of men like the Duke of Kent or John Strachan—frequently credited with being the originator of the so-called Militia Myth—lauding “Canadians” over their own beloved English regulars. However, with the understanding that the

¹⁴³ Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 10.

¹⁴⁴ “Exhortation pronounced after the sermon 22 November 1812,” as found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 366.

¹⁴⁵ Duke of Kent, “Meeting Held 6 July 1813,” as found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 353-4.

lands of Upper and Lower Canada were not seen as separate entities struggling to thrive on their own against the harassment of greedy American but as integral parts of the empire the rhetoric finds a more accurate understanding. To laud the role of the non-professional military signified that the people, not just the elites or the enlisted men, saw the empire as a worthy cause to defend. The Loyal and Patriotic Society was a popular level organization that bound the colonists together and through the donations of some, the needs of others, and the bravery of still more, the people were shown that loyalty and patriotic love of England were desired attributes of the colonists and would not escape notice.¹⁴⁶ The Society would not last long after the war but, during the conflict, it was a powerful symbol of unity that bound people from across the provinces together in mutual reliance, spiritually worthwhile endeavours, and the rejection of the American invasion.

Therefore, through claims that the American motives for invasion were duplicitous and evil, the churches of the colonies were able to show, once again, the superiority of England. The close ideological connections between the Americans and the French not only condemned the United States but also placed the British North American struggle in a global context. With the justness of their cause established, the churches also dedicated significant space and time to preaching the proper conduct of Christians both on and off the field of battle during the War of 1812. In these writings, the moral quandaries that were created because of the actions needed to literally, and violently, expel foes from the land were addressed. While there exists no

¹⁴⁶ The following is an important quotation regarding the role of the people in the defense of the land: "The blessing of heaven aids our endeavours, but does not stand in their place: the husbandman tills the ground, and God giveth the increase." See "Exhortation pronounced after the sermon 22 November 1812," as found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 364.

rhetoric that celebrated the existence of war, the clergy explained the necessity of fighting by asserting that the evils of the struggle were preferable to the evils of allowing American armies, or ideas, to claim the colony. Through the biblical defense of English national characteristics, the definitions of Christian soldiering, the empowerment of Native allies, and the establishment of the Loyal and Patriotic Society, the colonists were invited to see the spiritual prerogatives that undergirded the mandate to expel all faithless foes—be they national or religious—from within the borders of their land. The culture of the colony was to be maintained and defended by the grace of God and it was argued time and again that the only hope the inhabitants of British North America had was in their reliance on, and service to, the Almighty Disposer of Events. The notion that God intervened in times of war was nothing new, what was unique was how those beliefs were shaped by the events of the War of 1812 in the British North American colonial context.

Chapter Four

In God's Country: Providential Protection and Colonial Nationalism

*"Our good King, God speed him! never used men so,
We then could speak, act, and like freemen could go,
But committees enslave us, our liberty's gone,
Our trade and church murdered; our country's undone,"*¹

Introduction

James Reid was fairly certain he was about to freeze, or possibly starve, to death. The young man had been educated in Scotland and had shown tremendous promise; he had even refused three offers from parishes there to live among them as their minister. Instead of accepting any of those appealing offers, Thomas Haldane, a man he had once revered, had convinced him to board a boat and do his Christian duty in the young colony of British North America in the Upper Province. Barely surviving the cross Atlantic passage in steerage, he landed in Montreal to discover that no one knew he was coming and, what was worse, Haldane had neglected to give him any official record to support Reid's protestations of being a recognized missionary. After convincing the local authorities that he was not a criminal, a vagabond, or a man fleeing a prison sentence, and with only thirty pounds and some light clothes, he set out to make the long journey to his new parishioners in the Scottish settlement of Glengarry.² Upon his arrival he made the discovery that the

¹ Excerpt from the song "The Rebels" Originally published in the *Pennsylvania Ledger*, 1778. Lyrics by Captain Smyth of Simcoe's Queen's Rangers.

² Many of the settlements that were established after the Revolutionary War were done so based on loyal military regiments and their families. Therefore, Glengarry was just one of several examples of ethnically focused groups: "Because the Loyalists had been settled in groups largely according to their membership in Loyalist regiments (which in turn had often been raised from a particular area in one of the older colonies), these bloc settlements possessed from the outset a social cohesion that was

spiritually impoverished settlers, to whom he had been sent due to his fluency in Gaelic, had been for some time ably served by the Presbyterian minister John Bethune, a man both well regarded and fluent in Gaelic.³ Reid, on the other hand, was considered an anonymous interloper and the promoter of schism and dissent.⁴ Socially outcast, financially broke, without a friend in the world, and about to face an Upper Canadian winter with little more than a light jacket to sustain him, Reid's situation was dire.⁵ Casting his concerns upon providence, he was able, by some miracle, to find employment with another group of Scottish immigrants and by the time of Madison's declaration, he had founded a church in St. Armand in Lower Canada and became one of the more prolific clerical commentators on the events and meanings of the war with America.

In addition to Reid's role in the War of 1812, his story serves another purpose that will form the theme of this chapter: providential protection. Reid's disastrous

normally lacking in frontier expansion." See Moir, *British*, 83-4. The largest group [of Loyalist settlers] encompassed the 3,500 soldiers and dependants of the provincial regiments." See Knowles, *Inventing*, 14. Considering how important they were to the creation of British North America, the United Empire Loyalists remain a largely misunderstood and unknown group of people. In his work on the loyalist tradition, Norman Knowles reports that "Surprisingly little is known about the approximately 7,500 Loyalists who by 1785 had settled in what would come to be known as Upper Canada." Knowles, *Inventing*, 14.

³ "The Highlanders in the County of Glengarry, in Upper Canada, occupy a space not so large as some Highland Parishes, and are supplied with two clergymen of the most respectable characters; one a Catholic and the other a Presbyterian. The inhabitants are nearly equally divided, one half Catholic, the other Presbyterian." See Reid, *Narrative*, xx-i. Bethune was the former minister in Montreal who left his charge for the Glengarry settlement before the division of 1791 specifically due to his ability to preach in the native tongue of the Scottish Protestants in the area. This was addressed in the Presbyterian section of the first chapter.

⁴ "It farther says, 'their situation with respect to religion is deplorable.' As this representation came only from one person, whose letters were filled with such absurdities and falsehoods as deprived them of all credit, it ought not to have been so easily adopted by a grave Society—and the truth is just the reverse... After wondering what to do next Reid, "received an invitation from a few families, who had left Scotland very lately, to preach for them. As they lived at some distance from the clergyman of that place... I thought myself justified in going to them... I did not place myself in array against him, for I never can suppose, that we promote Christianity by raising the malignant passions." Reid, *Narrative*, xxii.

⁵ I could not think of continuing a correspondence with persons who had forfeited my confidence, and who had placed me in a situation which exposed me to the greatest hardships; I found myself... a banished man." See Reid, *Narrative*, xxv.

beginnings within Upper Canada could have easily ended the young man's life and his letter to the aforementioned Haldane reflected as much. However, within the scathing critiques of his former mentor was an understanding that when all was lost, when friends were not to be found, and death seemed unavoidable, Reid found a protector and friend in the mercy of God. Such faith that God can and will provide for the faithful, especially in times of profound struggle, inspired Reid to maintain hope that he would survive and find his calling within the colony. Such belief, while impressive in the case of the young clergyman, was not Reid's alone and proved to be a common theme throughout much of the work as the colony was engaged in the disastrous and terrifying war.⁶ Like Reid, the clerical discourse reflected a sense of isolation, fear, and uncertainty about the future that was offered as further evidence that the people needed to place their hopes in God and maintain their loyalty to the land that God favoured.

The idea of loyalty had many connotations that need to be considered when looking at how the term was used during the war, and how it was argued to impact the lives of the colonial inhabitants. The first section re-visits the discussions related to the character of the empire that was extant in the pre-war discourse to demonstrate how it was adapted due to the events of the conflict. The second section frames the colony within a global context by demonstrating how the British Empire was seen to be a servant of the entire world. The existence of evangelistic agencies like the SPG

⁶ Stewart, as an example, preached the following about the role of public and private prayer: "God is most honored and glorified [by public prayer]; and a sense of his Majesty is maintained in this world...for private prayer is only piety confined within our breasts; but public prayer is piety exemplified and displayed in our outward actions: it is the beauty of holiness made visible; our light shines out before men, and in the eyes of the world; it enlarges the interests of godliness, and keeps up a face and sense of religion among mankind." See Stewart, *Prayers*, 46-7.

and London Missionary Society were levied by the various denominations as evidence that England was God's chosen nation to proselytize and civilize the globe. The final section will offer the thanksgiving sermons after England's 1814 victory over Napoleon as proof of divine favour and the belief that if British North Americans desired similar results in their own war they needed to emulate England in order to receive the same blessings. In none of the theological arguments did these clergy ever introduce, or reference, a localized nationalism that could be considered, even in an early form, as a plea to defend Canada. In fact, their arguments proposed the exact opposite and inspired the people to take pride in their nation of England. The war was not deemed an appropriate place to introduce new national concepts but the British victory over Napoleon was celebrated as a victory for the people of the Canadas as much as it was for their counterparts across the Atlantic. In such discourse, modern scholars must challenge the myth that 1812 was a war for Canada and argue that nationalism has to be viewed through the colonial celebration of their transatlantic connection to God's Empire of Great Britain.

I. The Character of the English Nation

A. The Bastion of Liberty

Robert Easton's understanding of the significance of the war in his 1815 sermon from Montreal argued that the Americans had miscalculated the significance of imperial loyalty within the people of the Canadas. He stated clearly the colonists were not, as Republican political rhetoric seemed to suggest, "ripe for revolt," but that the actions of the regulars and militia in the preceding war had "shewn that the

calculation was of a piece with the rest of their policy.”⁷ For Easton, the people were attached to the empire because of the freedom and benefits it granted to them. Such respect applied not only to those who had initially left the colonies for a life under British rule after the Revolutionary War but also included the French Catholics of Lower Canada and the later arriving American settlers, all of whom had grown in prosperity due to the benevolent and generous policies of England.⁸ To quell any concern and to combat any opinions that dared to tout the American system, Easton replied: “Never were there a people more highly favored in a civil respect, than the Canadians; nor less disposed to barter the solid advantages of British protection, for the doubtful blessings of democratic liberty.”⁹ Those who remained loyal did so, from the clerical perspective, because the empire possessed a substantial and proven record of care and the protection of liberty that superseded any of the unproven and fairly ambiguous American promises for greater freedom within the Republic.¹⁰

As was stated in the previous chapter, the Americans were great at saying what the people they were attempting to conquer wanted to hear—and the Native people were held up as a sad example of the truth of that condemnation—but they

⁷ Easton, *Reasons*, 8.

⁸ Plessis wrote similar sentiments in the 1799 victory of England over Napoleon: “But what am I saying? No, Great God, you will not refuse to grant success to our arms, and since it is your cause that we are defending, arise, O Lord, scatter your enemies; put to flight those who hate you. Let them disappear, like smoke, let them melt like wax before the fire.” See Joly, *Plessis 1799*, 22.

⁹ Easton, *Reasons*, 7. The term “Canadians” might argue against this work’s assertion that this was not a war for Canada. Easton uses the term to identify those who live in Upper and Lower Canada versus, for example, the Maritimes.

¹⁰ Evidence of the long-standing care the French Catholics found under the protection of the English King is found in the following: “All that weakens France tends to increase the distance between us, and assures our lives, our liberty, our peace, our home our faith, our happiness. Let us render our thanksgivings to the God of victory. Let us intreat [sic] Him to long preserve the benevolent and august Monarch who reigns over us, and to pour over Canada his most abundant blessings.” See Joly, *Plessis 1799*, 29.

were duplicitous when the time came for them to honour their promises.¹¹ Such actions, such character, was not the embodiment of freedom but was the result of dishonesty that led to enslavement under false pretences. The constantly changing nature of the American political scene made the enjoyment of slow but steady growth and prosperity difficult due, in part, to the larger amounts of taxes and political pandering that prevented stability from taking root within the nation.¹² Strachan stated that the King and Constitution were not, as they were accused of being, the tools of tyranny but important elements that guaranteed the liberty of all those they sought to govern. Because the constitution prevented the king from seizing property and the king prevented the constitution from being misused (as it was in America) by various political parties, the two balanced each other out and prevented power from shifting with the tides of popular sentiment. To that end he stated that “Our aged sovereign stands at the head of a constitution which requires only to be known to be beloved; its different parts are so harmoniously combined and incorporated as to produce the greatest possible good.” For him, loyalty to such a government made the most sense for the average person because “it not only insures the most extensive civil liberty to every individual, but preserves all the other properties of a good government,

¹¹ In his war-time sermon, Brown Emerson decried his own government’s system and aligned—not intentionally but ideologically—with the judgments of Easton when he preached: “Lying and slander are crying sins of the present day. A lying spirit seems to have pervaded all ranks of society. This is inseparably connected with that violent party spirit which rages through the head and members of the political body. Whatever one affirms, which has any bearing upon political opinions and public measures, another is almost sure to deny.” See Emerson, *Sermon*, 8.

¹² Whereas the empire was shown to be, along with divine protection, the defender of human freedom: “There is one thing, however, in which we do well to rejoice, that our arms by sea and land, though not successful in every instance, have yet preserved our liberties, and conquered peace. Let us look to the King of nations, as the great author of our success, as having ‘disappointed the devices of the crafty; so that their hands could not perform their enterprize [sic].’” See Easton, *Reasons*, 10.

dispatch, secrecy, energy, wisdom and union.”¹³ Such checks and balances prevented the inner machinations of power from becoming corrupt and crushing the freedom and safety of the people.

B. John Bethune and the UEL

In the 1815 obituary of Presbyterian minister John Bethune, similar sentiments were expressed because Bethune had been among those original UEL settlers who had held to British institutions in the face of the revolutionary spirit. His time in an American prison during the Revolutionary War was acknowledged because that event reduced “he [sic] and many others...to much distress,” due to “their steady loyalty, and by their firmness and attachment to the government.” His attachment to the British government did not wane throughout the years but was held to be one of the defining characteristics of his ministry to Scottish Presbyterians first in Lower and then in Upper Canada. Although he had been living as a free man for a couple of decades, Bethune’s anonymous eulogizer argued that his time in prison “probably laid the foundation of that disease which has ultimately caused his death.”¹⁴ In death, Bethune was celebrated as a man of God who saw cherishing a connection with England important enough to warrant any sacrifice. The theme of exile surfaced again during the 1812 contest because it proved a compelling counterpoint to the American promises of liberty and freedom and reminded the people of the harsh American policies from the last war that cost many their homes.¹⁵ John Strachan’s “Life of Colonel Bishoppe” commented on the Colonel’s joy when he saw, “the readiness with

¹³ Strachan, *George*, iv.

¹⁴ Unknown. “Bethune Obituary,” 1.

¹⁵ “Like those earlier children of the covenant, the Israelites, these later exiles also thought of themselves as God’s chosen people, leaving their Egypt—the rebellious American colonies—to seek the promised land where they could enjoy their British birthright.” See Moir, *Early*, 177.

which the Loyalists & their children marched against their antient [sic] Foe, [who had] come to drive them from their habitations to which his cruelty had exiled them.”¹⁶ The imperial colony had a proven record of support that inspired the next generation of inhabitants to, like their parents, take up weapons and fight for the cause of Great Britain because the empire was seen to be the best place to build their homes.¹⁷

Because of this, the term loyalty should be viewed not as a word but as a construct designed to impart imperial sentiments in a colonial setting, to be both definable and rigid enough to know who was loyal and who was not, but also malleable enough to permit the greatest amount of people to be placed under its rubric. Demonstrating that the empire had not been the aggressor in either the Napoleonic or American Wars was essential, as was the ability to show that the British model of governance was the greatest champion of liberty and individual rights, especially in contrast to the claims made by both France and America that their revolutions were inspired by the desire to increase that for their citizens.¹⁸ Such attributes were designed to make the colony seem more appealing by grounding imperial ideology in what the clergy interpreted as central to the cultural *milieu* of their colonial setting.¹⁹ However, it was in the arguments that England was uniquely

¹⁶ Life of Col Bishoppe Dec 1813,” as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 9.

¹⁷ An example of such an argument is put forward by Little, who sees the British ability to lower taxes as another example of how the simple things in life, like money and land, superseded ideological issues like political preferences. He writes: “in Upper Canada, where the population was 70,000 in 1815, the immigration from south of the border was driven not by an antipathy to republicanism but by the fact that the War of Independence had left the new country with a large debt... Britain assumed the cost of government and taxes were only nominal.” See Little, *Loyalties*, 5-6.

¹⁸ Plessis argued such ideas in regards to the French Revolution: “we need not look further than irreligion for the immediate cause of the French Revolution.” See Joly, *Plessis 1799*, 15.

¹⁹ Although condemnatory to the way in which the war was handled by the British military leaders (Prevost specifically) the following quotation from Strachan’s funeral sermon of Richard Cartwright

blessed by God that gave the British form of government the superior spiritual mandate as well as attempting to strengthen the colonists' attachment to the nation out of a personal desire to remain within the will of God.²⁰

II. God's Chosen Empire

A. Influence Over the World

John Reid's 1816 sermon thanking God for the deliverance of the British Empire revealed his belief in his congregation's awareness that the events of the previous wars fought by England had global ramifications that impacted people from Europe to British North America. He preached: "What would our condition, and that of the world in general, have been had the false philosophy, the disorganizing principles that produced the French Revolution, been allowed to take deep root in the world?" The successful implementation of such philosophies—philosophies that Reid considered the inspiring ideas that birthed both France and the rebellious Republic to the south—upon more national governments would insure that "mankind would

serves as an example of the incorrect ideology that he espoused to be the motivation for the war: "[Cartwright] was convinced that the rebellion originated...a restless democratic spirit, and that it gained ground only by the imbecility of the measures taken to crush it, the assistance of the opposition in parliament, and the treacherous conduct of the commanders employed by sea and land." See Strachan, *Funeral*, 27.

²⁰ Strachan saw the clerical role in developing colonial in the following ways: "The Clergyman should be a pattern of moderation, temperance and contentment, to all his parishioners; by this he will extend his influence among them, increase their felicity, and prepare them, by a living example, for securing that blessed immortality which the gospel announces. Not that he was ignorant of the difficulties which a Clergyman has to surmount in this country, from the laxity of religious principle; from the want of early impressions, and the general indifference to, and total neglect of gospel ordinances. But those difficulties he was accustomed to say, would rather stimulate, than impede the conscientious Priest, who would find infinite delight in forming a congregation where there had been none before; changing darkness into light, promoting industry, sobriety, and humanity among his people, and proving to them, that even in this life the sincere christian enjoys infinitely more happiness than any other man, and this in a great measure independent of transient things; other stations might, he said, possess greater pomp and shew, but he knew no social condition which united so many sources of the highest enjoyment, so many objects for gratifying those passions which lead to self satisfaction." See Strachan, *Funeral*, 1815, 25.

become worse than barbarians.”²¹

Reid’s argument demonstrates that while British North American theology encompassed local and regional situations in order to bring the colonists into the respective church folds, they also spoke about global considerations as well as eternal and cosmological beliefs in order to communicate the importance and relevance of their teachings to the people they were attempting to persuade.²² As in ancient Israel, the success of the empire’s military made Great Britain “conspicuous and rewarded for never yielding to the reign of terror, which spread over Europe.” Britain’s refusal to bow a knee to Napoleon was used by God when, “at length, by her perseverance, encouraging and determining [England inspired] the rest of the nations to resist it, and to overcome.”²³ Such was the world-wide impact of the small island of England, and that impact provided further proof that the empire, like Gideon’s small band of 300 soldiers, was blessed by God to achieve ends beyond what such a seemingly insignificant place should be able to accomplish.²⁴

²¹ Reid, *Thanksgiving 1816*, 15-6.

²² Although it would be naïve to think that the Anglican struggle for ecclesiastical supremacy did not involve some ulterior motives, it would also be irresponsible to not recognize that to those trained in English seminaries, Britain was more than just an empire; it was God’s ordained instrument for spreading the gospel to the world. Curtis Fahey correctly states: “[The conservative ideology that dominated British political culture drew] on Anglican theology and the conservative elements of the Whig tradition, stressed the divine origins of government, the necessity of obedience to the powers that be, *the divinely sanctioned nature of the social hierarchy*, and the role of the Church of England as an agent of social and political control.” See Fahey, *Name*, 5. Italics added for emphasis.

²³ Stewart, *Providence*, 8.

²⁴ “A year before the war, the Bible society of Philadelphia expressed its joy in being united with the British parent organization to extend the heavenly kingdom, ‘an empire infinitely more glorious and durable than any which is acquired by arms and cemented with blood.’ This transatlantic unity was strained but hardly broken by the advent of hostilities.” See Gribbin, *Militant*, 47. The quotation is from *Christian’s Magazine* New York (July 1811) 405. Such a quotation displays an understanding, even within America, that the Kingdom of God superseded any worldly counterpart due specifically to the fact that it was not an empire or nation that required strength of arms, or violence to defend its sovereignty.

However, England was not great simply for the sake of imperial glory but was destined by God to greatness in order that it might reflect God's greatness to an unbelieving, and often dark, world.²⁵ In the summation of his sermon, Robert Easton believed that loyalty to England was responsible for the "improvement of the many blessings, which we at present enjoy," but reminded his congregants that the price they paid for such blessings was the awareness that they were not their "own masters. We are accountable to the Most High for our time, our talents, and enjoyments. We must all stand before the bar of God, 'who will render to every man according to his deeds.'"²⁶ Once again establishing the character of the empire as instructive for imperial subjects, Charles Stewart saw England's willingness to stand up for righteousness against the threat of Napoleon as offering an example for the people to emulate in their own, seemingly impossible, daily struggles. To that end he preached:

The perseverance of Great Britain in a good cause, and her final success in it, should teach us to be earnest and diligent in doing that which is right; not to be discouraged by dangers, or difficulties, but to exert ourselves to the utmost in the discharge of our duty, and to hope and strive to the good end; and to believe, that God will in his good way and time, in this world or the next, always reward those who persevere in a good cause.²⁷

In that way, providence was shown to be an act of God that required a reciprocal act from people. Thus loyalty, if it was to properly be called loyalty, could not allow for

²⁵ The churches with missionary societies in England were able to supplement early missionary work when dependence on congregational giving was questionable at best. The ability to do such allowed these churches to grow without being dependent on their congregations' often poor tithes. Arthur Addison addresses this idea: "In his first year, [Addison] informed his society that his ministrations required his making a journey of one hundred and fifty miles several times per year if he was to perform his duty. The roads, he informed them, were very bad, but that he was ministering with some regularity at several points that were twenty or thirty miles away from his home. He further stated, 'that the humble settlers that labored on the land were kind to him. the rich traders endeavored to be polite, but he was sorry to say that their subscriptions were likely to end in words.' Instead of the 100 [pounds] promised it was in some years 30 [pounds], sometimes 40 [pounds], and once at least the annual collection seems to have been neglected entirely." See Addison, "Loyal and Patriotic," 422.

²⁶ Easton, *Reasons*, 22.

²⁷ Stewart, *Providence*, 8.

neutrality or disinterest in the fate of the empire but called all those who desired the continuance of God's chosen instrument to become active in order to insure its continued existence in British North America.²⁸

B. The Blessing of God's Chastisements

The people were called to repentance through teaching that highlighted the biblical fact that God always chastised those he loved. Looking to the stories of the Old Testament, Clark expressed his understanding of the empire as a new version of Israel, but brought with such a belief a warning for England:

This solemn interrogatory was first addressed to the Jews...the divine indignation was impending over that guilty people: they had, as a nation gone away from the ordinances, forsaken the worship of the true God, and turned aside to idolatry. The effect was, their attachments to idolatry *obliterated* the sentiments of religion from their hearts; had exceedingly *relaxed* the sense of moral obligation, and they were sunk into an awful excess of profaners and licentiousness. They had often been admonished and warned...The time was, therefore, fast approaching when the nation was to be visited by a signal display of the divine displeasure.²⁹

The people who belonged to God's nation needed to learn and recognize the patterns that had defined God's first chosen people in order to avoid the calamities that eventually overtook them and removed them from the divine plan.³⁰

²⁸ “[England] will stretch forth her protecting arm, and rescue us from our treacherous foes; she will do more, she will avenge us on our enemies, and she will acknowledge us as her children with pride and exultation—Let us not then...be wanting ourselves, let us prove ourselves a part, and a pure part of that illustrious nation, who combats for the freedom of nations... England expects all her children to do their duty and it is ours at the moment, to comfort those who are fighting our battles, and defending every thing dear to us at the hazard of their lives.” See “Exhortation pronounced after the sermon 22 November 1812,” as found in Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 369.

²⁹ Clark, *Sermon*, 5. Italics part of the original quote.

³⁰ This idea that England reached beyond its national boundaries was strengthened by Strachan's earlier assessment of George as well as Plessis's appreciation of England for allowing French Catholics to live in relative prosperity in Lower Canada. This “theological foreign policy” was, according to Strachan and other pro-imperial supporters, another of the Christian characteristics of the empire that did nothing to weaken the British position on personal freedom but actually strengthened it. That the empire was willing to spread the gospel beyond its national boundaries was evidence of the empire's Christian character that superseded Israel's earlier claims precisely because the English were willing to

The identification of the war as punishment for national sin, and the accompanying call for the people to repent, also provided opportunities to define the empire in ways that were both applicable to the larger global stage as well as tangible in the colonial context.³¹ The summation of Alex Spark's entire sermon, in which he extolled the virtues of the empire as he saw it, was to remind the citizens of Lower and Upper Canada of the need to be "grateful to the Supreme Disposer of events" because the character of the nation was rooted in its ability to honour God or, in Spark's biblical explanation of the empire, "to adopt the words of Solomon, that 'The Throne is established in righteousness.'"³² Although calling their people to personal repentance, these men maintained a constant view of how individual devotion provided an opportunity for the subjects to place themselves within the larger rubric of, and in service to, the empire.³³ As Spark wrote, repentance was "part of the duty" which was to be enacted by the individual, as he or she was called: "to examine our ways and our doings; and wherein we are conscious of having heretofore violated the Divine Law, or dishonoured God, by our conduct, to repent and amend."³⁴ Spark then went on to contradict Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees," in which, according to a note in Spark's sermon, Mandeville attempted to show "that 'private vices are public

look beyond themselves. In so doing, they were bringing greater honour to God than the Jewish nation, which, in turn, granted even greater prestige to the policy.

³¹ "Yes, the cup has come round to us; our country is now involved in war, one of the sorest judgments with which God usually visits a people!" See Clark, *Sermon*, 4.

³² Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 14.

³³ "By terrible things in righteousness, the Lord is proclaiming that he has controversy with the nations: that he is coming forth in judgment to take vengeance for abounding iniquity! *In our own country*, the earthquake's repeated and alarming shocks have been felt. These, and other signal visitations, in providence, which have been experienced of late years, admonish us that the Lord is on his way." See Clark, *Sermon*, 4. Italics part of the original quote. Note the comment about earthquakes, something that Jonathan Edwards also used to implore with people to repent in the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century. This illustrates the use of the natural world to deepen understanding of the Divine will and to explain how everything is used by God for blessings, punishments and warnings. It is the role of the Christian to "understand the signs of the times" and act accordingly.

³⁴ Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 15.

benefits.”³⁵ For Spark, because society was both larger than, but comprised of, individuals, each subject’s personal piety needed to be seen as part of the greater good. To that end he wrote:

Though individuals dies the nation still lives, and is liable, as a nation... Everyone, therefore, who professes to love his Country, if he would act consistently, ought not only to abstain from vice himself, but also, to the utmost of his power, to discountenance and suppress it, wherever it appears. As the aggregate of the nation is made up of individuals, hence the vices of individuals have a certain influence on the national character; and, contrary to what a late sceptical [sic] writer hath endeavoured to maintain, we do not hesitate to assert, that even private vices are public and national injuries.³⁶

Jacob Mountain concurred and explained to his congregants the reasons he believed were behind the war with America. For him the answer was that the people of British North America

must be subject to the inflictions, which have desolated the greatest part of Europe, if we are weak and wicked enough, to be void of this due preparation. For can the God of justice desist from impartially administering justice, throughout the whole world? Can the God of truth and mercy, mitigate those punishments which are essential to the penitence and happiness of his creatures. He cannot, for some of his characteristics are faithfulness and justice, perfect goodness, rectitude and truth.³⁷

Like Easton, Mountain and Spark challenged the people to examine their own hearts and make amends for whatever transgression they had found there. Contained within these admonitions was an understanding in diametric opposition with the republican Christianity that they charged the Methodists with espousing. For these churches, personal faith was important not for the spiritual well being of the individual alone

³⁵ Spark, *Sermon 1814*, footnote on 17.

³⁶ Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 17.

³⁷ Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 11-2.

but because, as Robert Easton wrote, “By being able to act in [a Christian] manner, you will reap the advantages, and so will your country.”³⁸

The war was seen as the supernatural outworking of the earlier, and often lamented, lack of attention to religious matters that many clergy stated defined both provinces.³⁹ Responding to the question “why was this pouring out of the vials of God’s wrath?” Jacob Mountain responded: “For the absolutely necessary scourging the wicked.” However, he did not leave that statement to stand on its own but further qualified it with the hopeful belief that such a chastisement was, as with all things related to God, for the greater good of bringing sinners “to such a sense of their crimes, as will conduct them to their eternal salvation!” In that, even something as terrible as war could bring the people to a deeper understanding of grace and concluded that, despite the appearance that the people had been forsaken by God, he believed “that the horrid murders, and sufferings from war, and various other sources of affliction were the intention of an all wise and just Providence, for the necessary chastisement of the world.”⁴⁰ Spark echoed these sentiments and saw in them a warning that if the people did not turn from their ways they could expect even worse in the future. To that end he preached:

Perhaps the danger with which we were threatened, was sent upon us, as a punishment for sins committed, or a warning against those into which we were ready to fall. Have we then, by the favour of Providence, been defended against this danger, and in a great measure, relieved from the apprehension of it? Let us apply ourselves the admonition, which our blessed Lord addressed to a man, whom he

³⁸ Easton, *Reasons*, 17-9.

³⁹ Further supportive of that is John Strachan’s prayer to the York 3rd Militia Regiment: “Continue, O Lord, thy gracious protection: pour into our hearts a true Christian spirit, that we may purify ourselves from all transgressions, and that our offerings of praise and thanksgiving may rise up a sweet memorial before thee, our only refuge in the day of trouble.” See Strachan, “Prayer of Consecration,” as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 12.

⁴⁰ Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 10.

cured of a bodily infirmity: Let us 'go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto us.' Let us reflect that the goodness and forbearance of God towards us, are meant to lead us to repentance.⁴¹

Despite the horrors of war, the clergy saw the evidence of God's greater work in such atrocities and encouraged their people that not only were they not abandoned but also through their prayers and repentance they could usher in the end of the conflict.⁴²

When Joseph Clark taught, "The country whence our forefathers sprung, partaking deeply in the common guilt of the neighboring nations, is sharing in their plagues,"⁴³ this is the closest ideological critique of the empire as can be found. Such chastisement was, in the words of Robert Easton, just further evidence of the "efficient agency of God in all events," but it was left to the "discerning eye" in order to recognize the presence of the Divine in something as seemingly evil as war. However, once that recognition was reached, the faithful were called to respond in "praise of his infinite perfections."⁴⁴ In such ways, the punishment of war was not solely designed as a warning or to usher in a spirit of repentance that could unite the people together, but it also showed that, just as God had punished Great Britain with Napoleon, so too were the colonists undergoing a similar cleansing. In that, the people were once again united with the empire as they suffered similar afflictions that bound the colonists with their empire.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 16.

⁴² "It is rather only subservient and preparatory to a higher branch of the duty. That part of the duty is, to examine our ways and our doings; and wherein we are conscious of having heretofore violated the Divine Law, or dishonoured God, by our conduct, to repent and amend." See Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 15.

⁴³ Clark, *Sermon 1812*, 4.

⁴⁴ Easton, *Reasons*, 3.

⁴⁵ Mountain likewise saw the only hope for the land was the joining together of the people in worship: "Be assured my brethren, that there is no devotion in thanksgiving, which will be acceptable to God, without our determination to become truly penitent; and that thanksgiving will afford us, but a momentary satisfaction and comfort, and not contribute to our relief from the pains and perils of war; and to our prospect of prosperity and peace; but by our fleeing from vice and closely adhering to, and obeying the gracious precepts of the Gospel." See Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 14.

Even concepts as disheartening as national sin and divine wrath were seen as possibilities for the people to become united to the nation of England, each other, and the military effort.⁴⁶ As was discussed in the previous chapter, civilian prayer was seen as a central aspect of uniting the people to the soldiers as they fought a spiritual war for the redemption of the land.⁴⁷ Joseph Clark explained to his congregation “we are met to consider our departure from the living God; to look deeply and seriously into our ingratitude and rebellion against him; to humble ourselves, as a people, before him; and to implore his mercy on us and our afflicted country.”⁴⁸ Robert Easton, though happy with the turn of events that had occurred in Europe in 1814, also admitted the need for the people to “confess, with shame and sorrow our share in those sins, which procure his permission of public calamities” in the hopes that such prayers would cause God to act “in behalf of oppressed and suffering humanity.”⁴⁹ Using Jesus’ command to the woman caught in adultery as the text for his parishioners, James Stewart stated, “We ought to go and sin no more” out of fear that the temporal punishments of war were only a foretaste and that repentance was required “lest we be punished for our sins in the world to come.” For him, like others, the punishment of war visited on the land was both “one of the greatest of [God’s] judgments” but was also sent by God “to purify us from our sins, and to turn us from the vanities of this world.”⁵⁰ Before reminding the people that “when [the American

⁴⁶ “Obedience to orders is a duty of the utmost importance, for without steady discipline you cannot be useful.” See Strachan, *Legislative*, 20.

⁴⁷ When the British army was turned away from New Orleans in January of 1815, James Stewart saw providence at work and challenged the people, “that Providence was against us, because of our sins, of our pride and presumption” before pleading to God “to humble us and visit us, and turn us away from breaking his laws, and profaning his sabbaths.” See Stewart, *Providence*, 10-1.

⁴⁸ Clark, *Sermon 1812*, 3.

⁴⁹ Easton, *Reasons*, 4-5.

⁵⁰ Stewart, *Providence*, 14.

soldiers did come to Lower Canada], I am sure, we suffered less than our sins deserved. We ought to consider these our sins and our provocations against God; and his goodness and forbearance should lead us to repentance.”⁵¹

The necessity to serve God through prayer and repentance was seen as the tool needed to avoid further calamities, like war, from occurring and gave a twofold manual for future action: repent and live accordingly.⁵² The former was simple, the latter much more complex. However, with the understanding that England remained central to God’s plan for the world, permitting American-inspired ideas to pollute the sacred land was comparable to committing treason. Thus, because of the war, the people were encouraged to see that the need to expel faithless foes from the religious landscape was deemed to be just as important as any military campaign.

C. Missionary Efforts

Although even the rhetoric of national sin was designed to showcase England’s place of honour in the divine plans for the world, the deeper message was that such a role necessitated certain actions. In the words of scripture, to those who receive much, much is required.⁵³ With proper education, the British people could

⁵¹ Stewart, *Providence*, 14.

⁵² “While we call these things to mind, let us also reflect on what we endeavoured to show, in the former part of this discourse, namely, that the whole is ultimately to be ascribed to the over-ruling Providence of God. Various visible means, and secondary causes, may, no doubt, be assigned for every event, to which we here refer. But, we have seen that there is a power superior to those means,—a power, which superintends and rules those causes themselves. It is to this power, therefore,—this supreme superintending Providence, that our highest praise and gratitude are due.” See Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 15. This is why prayer and holy living were essential, because it was God’s providence that was responsible for the victories and successes of the empire.

⁵³ In the support of international missions, even during wartime, England showed the heart of a land that desired to see, in Kendall’s words, the “heavenly light [not] confined to a single nation; but...gradually to extend its beams over the whole earth.” See Kendall, *Sermon 1811*, 5. Such a mission indicated the spiritual nature of the empire and gave godly sanction to the actions of the empire as it attempted to defend its right to continue to exist and fulfill the divine mandate. This was a theological idea that had serious political ramifications and profound social influence, as Sydney Wise states: “Only religion teaches that the government is ordained by God, a principle that gives the state

succeed where the Jewish people had failed and the existence of the SPG and London Missionary Society provided strong evidence that the spreading of God's message throughout the world was central to the British religious ethos.⁵⁴ It was held that, along with bringing the financial and material blessings of British civilization, the missionaries were also bringing the spiritual message of salvation that underpinned all that made England great.⁵⁵ In imperial missionary endeavours, England was renouncing the Israelite desire to conceal God and was bringing the gospel to every corner of the realm; such a faithful act, it was argued, meant that Britain could count on God's continued support against any obstacles—national or internal—that sought to hinder such plans.⁵⁶ As C. W. Vernon put it, "In the Motherland the unity of the Church paved the way for the unity of the Kingdom."⁵⁷ Their beliefs were well-supported by others who also argued that the safety of British institutions, both

an authority that no secular sanction can give it." See Wise, "Sermon Literature," 87. Therefore, missionary societies proved the superiority of the empire to meet the spiritual needs of its people and defined another spiritual aspect of the nation.

⁵⁴ "The Jews confined their regards and affections entirely to their own Nation, and pursued the rest of mankind with animosity and disdain. This inhuman conduct was reprobated by our blessed Saviour, who was so far from allowing his disciples to despise strangers or to confine their good will to their friends, their kindred; even their country." See Strachan, *Legislative*, 8.

⁵⁵ The following are just two ways in which the peoples' spiritual needs were met: "During the sessions of Parliament, when Mr. Addison attended the duty of the Legislature, Mrs. Addison continued to assist the poor people, and to this amount [25 pounds]." See Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 287. "This money was given to [Rev. Dr. Burns] by Thomas Dickson Esq. first [45 pounds], and then [50 pounds], to be distributed at Stamford and neighbourhood, the distress was extreme, among those not employed by Government, particularly among women and children, and although there has no detailed account reached the Society, yet they have no doubt of its most faithful application." See Anon., *Loyal and Patriotic*, 291. Although the Society was an Upper Canadian invention, the distribution of religious materials was made by Anglicans and the Duke of Kent championed the local organization (this will be examined further in a subsequent section of this chapter).

⁵⁶ Kendall preached: "The land of our Forefathers has taken the lead...and has contributed more, than all the world besides, to the propagation of the gospel, to give light to the Gentiles, and to send Salvation unto the ends of the earth." See Kendall, *Sermon 1811*, 23. Kendall, an American, would go on to state his desire that his nation would imitate England: "The land of our Forefathers has taken the lead in these [missionary] institutions, and has contributed more, than all the world besides, to the propagation of the gospel, to give light to the Gentiles, and to send Salvation unto the ends of the earth. This benevolent and pious example begins to be imitated in America." See Kendall, *Sermon 1811*, 23.

⁵⁷ Vernon, *New Dominion*, 40.

civil and religious, were only safe in the hands of those who understood the divine significance of England's Empire.⁵⁸

The Anglican and Presbyterian Churches were not the sole beneficiaries of English support as the Wesleyan Methodists, through their London Missionary Society, were also able to claim the same transatlantic benevolence.⁵⁹ During the war, William Bullpitt was able to brag to the recipient of his letter that he was able to procure holy scriptures during the contest and that he had "distributed fore [sic] hundred Bibles I...received from...London."⁶⁰ Such was a claim that the Episcopal Methodists, despite their attention to literature and printed materials, were unable to make during the conflict that separated them from their suppliers in America.⁶¹ In that

⁵⁸ One of the more interesting aspects of studying the French discourse in relation to the British Empire is the understanding of the role of the empire in God's plans. The following 1799 quote from Plessis demonstrates a belief that France was God's choice but they had squandered the opportunity through the Revolution. However, God had chosen England to take over and, as such, the French Catholics of Lower Canada should not lament their lot under the Protestant crown but should recognize that the France they long for no longer exists. "First point.—Does it not appear painful to you, my brethren, to have to call 'enemies' a nation to which this Colony owes its birth, a nation which for such a long time has been united to us by the close ties of blood, of friendship, of trade, of language, of religion, which has given us fathers, protectors, governors, priests, perfect patterns of all virtues, cherished Sovereigns whose wise and moderate rule was such a source of joy to us and deserved all our affection and gratitude. Such was France as we once knew her, beloved by her children, dreaded by her enemies, faithful to her religion, respected by every nation of the world. Did she not deserve, on so many grounds, the regrets you expressed on being separated from her and your generous efforts to remain under her rule? But since God, in his mercy, has placed us under another rule, great Heavens! What a fatal change has that unfortunate kingdom undergone!" See Joly, *Plessis 1799*, 13-4. William Westfall records correspondence between William Knox and Charles Jenkinson in which the role of the church is deemed essential for the development of the community. Westfall reports: "The influence of Religion on the Opinion, Temper and Conduct of Mankind – its Tendency to promote the Internal Peace of Society, when under proper Regulations; and how capable it is of being made an Engine of Discord and Sedition—are matters too well understood, and generally acknowledged, to require any Proof in this Place. The National Religion of any state may be presumed to be best adopted to the Civil Constitution of the state, hence it claims the Countenance and Support of the Civil Magistrate, which should be considered not only as a Matter of Piety and Prudence, but of the utmost Necessity in a Political View, being connected with the Peace and Welfare of the Community." See Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 95-6.

⁵⁹ However, the Presbyterians did not enjoy such transatlantic blessings. During the war "The Church of Scotland had no overseas missions and no auxiliary similar to the [SPG] to support members in the colonies." See Moir, *Early*, 41.

⁶⁰ Bullpitt, "Letter 10 December 1813," 1.

⁶¹ Scott MacLaren spoke on this issue at the May 2012 CHA conference in a paper entitled: "Rekindling the Canadian Fire: Print Culture and the Reconstruction of Upper Canadian Methodism

connection to England, the Wesleyans and Anglicans shared more in common than the former would have done with the Methodists in the States.⁶² Once again, the war changed the inter-denominational dynamics because the question that plagued the spiritual landscape of Upper Canada during the contest was who could garner the supplies needed to maintain the religious needs of the people.⁶³ As with armaments, food, clothing, and the variety of other supplies needed throughout the war, the group that could provide material with greatest regularity and dependency stood to gain by the sufferings of the conflict whereas others were doomed to lose out.⁶⁴

Along with Bullpitt, other Wesleyans also utilized their connections with England in their ministry. After the 1812 Declaration of War, William Bennett wrote to the missionary society in London that “We are much concerned for the War with the United States.” But his evangelical mind showed through as his concern quickly drifted from the carnal realm of war to a deeper concern for the “minds and morals of the people in these Provinces” before framing the entire episode in a spiritual framework: “Would to God that in these days of Judgment the people learn’d

After the War of 1812.” In the paper MacLaren argued that the distribution of Methodist literature not only supplemented the itinerants’ incomes but also helped unify large segments of Upper Canadian culture through the shared readings of such pieces of literary work.

⁶² “The Anglican politician and Archdeacon of York, John Strachan, and Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Colborne realized that the British Wesleyans could be instrumental in cementing popular loyalty to the Crown and so pressured the British Wesleyan Conference to resume its missionary work in Upper Canada, especially among the Indians.” Adamson, “Continent,” 437.

⁶³ An example of such care for the people is found in the following quote pertaining to the use of church structures to aid the army: “The encampment [at Four Mile Creek] is very beautiful and is formed of the 8th and 104th, part of the 89th and 100th Regiments, consisting of 2000 men...lie upon the edge of the woods, having large clearings in the front and the main road crossing the camp by Mr. Addison’s, where the General stays.” See “Thomas G Ridout to Thomas Ridout at York, 4 September 1813,” as found in Cruikshank, *Documentary*, 3:99.

⁶⁴ Writing about his relief that the war had not interfered too significantly with the peoples’ attention to worship, even if the ability to hold worship was strained, Duncan McColl wrote: “The people are as attentive as ever to our meetings... I thank God that I never felt my gifts better than at present and my soul feels engaged.” See McColl, “Letter 3 August 1814.”

righteousness.”⁶⁵ Stephen Bamford, likewise, wrote to England at the cessation of the Napoleonic War “to congratulate you on the peace of my beloved country with Europe” before adding, near the end of his letter, a reminder that the Empire was still at war: “I wish [peace] might extend to America...the blood of brave Britains is still flowing here!!!”⁶⁶ Bamford represented a growing number of Methodists who saw themselves as servants of God’s Kingdom as well as the British Empire. Nowhere is that idea more clearly developed than in the letter of James Priestly:

Some indeed seem to be much alarmed on the account of the American war. The Americans, no doubt, envy the place, and...with their numerous forces may attempt to take it, but I hope they will attempt it in vain. The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. If our enemies were as numerous as the locusts of Egipt [sic] and should attempt to come here in great numbers God being for us, we shall see them glad to go home again. In the meantime, I understand it to be my duty to exhort the people to be furiously loyal to their God, and then there will be no doubt that they will be loyal to their king. The fear of God is closely, may I not say, inseparably connected with loyalty to the king.⁶⁷

Such blatantly loyalist sentiments illustrated that, despite the Anglican charge of treason and their frequent accusations that evangelical enthusiasm led to republican sentiments, the truth was the bid for British dominance had one of its greatest allies in the Wesleyan Methodists.⁶⁸

Methodism decreased in both numbers and influence in the early decades of the nineteenth century but this was attributed less to a shift in the populace and more to the

⁶⁵ Bennett, “Letter 22 July 1813,” 2.

⁶⁶ Bamford, “Letter 5 July 1814,” 2-3.

⁶⁷ Priestly, “Letter 27 Jan 1813,” 2.

⁶⁸ William Bennett explained how the Wesleyans stood to serve the British colonists better at the end of the war when he wrote, “it is well understood that in the various places where the English Government has made any military or naval establishment, the Preachers from the U. States are not well received.” See Bennett quoting John Strong, “Letter 6 October 1815,” 4.

unnatural and unhappy war now existing between England and America; though many desire worldly advantages from it both here and elsewhere, yet several suffer loss in their souls by permitting it to engross too much of their attention. I may add that there are several things which make it manifest that religion suffers more here on account of the war than any other part of this province⁶⁹

The British Wesleyans had found their *raison d'être* in the wake of the war and the surprising twist that came out of the War of 1812 was that the Anglicans and Wesleyan Methodists found themselves agreeing with each other in their shared desire to remain British, even if they did not agree with the way in which the other accomplished such goals.

III. Providential Protection

A. Victory over Napoleon

Despite the prolific clerical writings of 1812 and 1813 that charged democracy with breeding the violence and chaos occasioned by the war, the British victory over Napoleon in 1814 provided a compelling example to the people of Upper and Lower Canada that if they desired success in their own struggle, they needed to emulate Britain. Like David Bell's work on the construction of symbols and language suited to a particular time, place, and culture in order to make impersonal terms like "Empire" mean something to the pioneers of Upper Canada, the thanksgiving sermons of 1814, printed and disseminated throughout the land, offered spiritual hope based on an event that was too far removed to have much bearing on colonial life. However, the clergy were able to offer the victory over Napoleon as proof to their parishioners of God's providential care for the empire and challenge the colonists that if they desired similar success they needed to embrace imperial beliefs, repent of sins,

⁶⁹ Priestly, "Letter, 27 July 1813," 2.

and reject any religious or political construct that was deemed, in the words of James Reid, to be a “false philosophy” or “disorganized principle” that could achieve nothing except forcing the world to descend into a state, “worse than barbarians.”⁷⁰

In his 1815 sermon from St. Peters’ Street Presbyterian Church in Montreal, Robert Easton offered one of the first, post-treaty interpretations of the war that had engulfed the land over the course of the preceding three years. In that sermon, Easton defined the British Empire as the “Bulwark of safety and independence” and challenged his listeners to “maintain that loyalty and obedience to the laws, which have tended so much to the preservation of our country.”⁷¹ To him, attention to those ideologies that he believed defined the British Empire would prevent the colonists from giving up “in times of peace what we would not surrender to the promises and threats of an enemy in the time of war.”⁷² Both England and America celebrated the liberty and safety they provided for their inhabitants and lauded them as evidence of the truly Christian nature of their country. However, for the empire, stability was found in the submission to the King and Constitution whereas American Republicanism saw those as the embodiments of slavery and the antithesis of security.

The 1814 victory over Napoleon allowed the clerical discourse, in a way not available to them throughout the war, to hold England’s military supremacy aloft as evidence of God’s favour of the empire.⁷³ Morality lessons and cautions took on new

⁷⁰ Reid, *Thanksgiving*, 15-6.

⁷¹ Easton, *Reasons*, 14-5.

⁷² Easton, *Reasons*, 15.

⁷³ “By our determination to fulfill this most essential duty of receiving the holy sacrament, and all the illustrious ordinances of the Supreme Being, we may look up with true thanksgiving, or with grateful hearts for his astonishing mercies to us, in chastening and treading down our enemies, and the enemies of our Allies, on the continent of Europe, and restoring to us such a peace; which by our determined devotion to him, and obedience to all his commandments, as may long, long continue. Surely, our being blessed, with the subject of thanksgiving, ought to call forth, ‘all that is within us;’ all our love

significance as the clergymen were able to remind those who heard or read the contents of their messages that imitating the characteristics of such an empire could result in the same blessed outcome for the colony in its struggles against its violent neighbour.⁷⁴ The imperial victory in Europe was a crucial event in the further development of colonial Britishness because, in some aspects, it answered the question that had been dogging the confrontation—at least from a clerical perspective—from its inception: which nation does God favour?

It would be remiss to overlook the importance these sermons, printed and dispersed throughout the colony in celebration of the victory, played in advancing a colonial desire to emulate the empire that had been blessed by God with military victory. During a time when the Canadas were reeling from the losses that 1813 had brought and an American victory seemed more certain, the British victory became something the colonists were called on to celebrate as their own not just for the sake of morale or unity, but as a spiritual lesson in what it took to achieve victory in the empire blessed by God. Jacob Mountain's 1814 sermon extolled the people to prayer, because

what conduct, after having acquired such victories, as have been gained over the common enemy of mankind, is more likely to call down the favor, the grace, and the protection of the Almighty Sovereign of the Universe, against the attacks of our neighbouring enemies, than prayer, praise, and thanksgiving; for his wonderful condescension [sic], and bounty, in pouring down such unmerited favours, as he has graciously bestowed upon us; by his astonishing mercies, in putting an end to the late bloody, extended, and expensive war, on the continent of Europe.⁷⁵

and adoration, and gratitude to the God of the Universe,-and fix in us the continuance of them, to the end of our lives; and conduct us peacefully to our latter end." See Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 9.

⁷⁴ "Nations, like private persons, have their characters; and, according to their characters, so are they also dealt with by Providence." See Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 16.

⁷⁵ Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 3.

It is important to note not just the fact that the people were called to pray to God to insure divine favour in the contest against America, but that the victories in Europe were a result of God's blessing on "us." Such phrases were not accidental but were designed to unite British North American colonial subjects with their counterparts across the sea.

Alex Spark's sermon from Quebec City in April 1814 echoed Mountain's calls for spiritual fidelity among the colonists but proved even more blatant in its comparisons between the colony and the empire. For him, the Atlantic Ocean provided little obstacle to his rhetoric as he ascribed the imperial traits of "success of our Arms,—the loyalty and unanimity, which prevail among all ranks, of people at home, and the confidence placed in us, by foreign States" to the colony with no visible sense of discontinuity. For John Strachan, Napoleon's defeat foreshadowed the Americans' own demise should they continue on their course against God's chosen nation.⁷⁶ His thanksgiving sermon delved more into the realm of prophetic utterance as he simultaneously lambasted the American motives for invading Upper Canada and, by identifying them as equal to France in revolutionary violence, depravity, and immorality, was able to predict the end such a path put them on. To that end he wrote:

our neighbours blinded with ambition; and arrogant, from the great wealth and extensive trade which they had acquired by the miseries of Europe; and tempted by views of immediate aggrandizement, became traitors to the peace and happiness of mankind; and anticipating the downfall of the last citadel of liberty, hastened to seize upon a part of her territories. They have been sadly disappointed, and are about to meet with the punishment which their baseness deserves. The same victories which have prostrated the

Tyrant of Europe [Napoleon], will prostrate *his Satellites in America*.⁷⁷

His sermon was designed instill in the Upper Canadians a sense of pride as subjects of such a “fine colony” and to shame the Americans for their “unblushing arrogance [in desiring] to separate us from that heroic nation which enjoys the gratitude of the world.”⁷⁸ To Anglican and Presbyterian clergymen like Strachan, Easton, Mountain and Spark, England was the bastion of liberty and stability for the entire world and, as the colonists continued to embrace Mother England, they, too, would be the recipients of that safety.⁷⁹ However, the strengthening of the empire meant that each citizen had to do his or her part to maintain and enhance the spiritual integrity of the land.

Ultimately, the victory over Napoleon was celebrated by the British and the clergy believed—correctly as it would turn out—that it signaled a turning point in their own violent struggle.⁸⁰ Hope defined the clerical discourse from 1814 as the clergymen saw God’s providence mightily present to protect the integrity of the empire and its remaining colonies in America. To that end, many clergy called their parishioners to retain their hope in a loving and just God, the same God who had protected England was sure to do the same for England’s loyal subjects in their hour of need. In this section the final word will be given to John Burns who, in a somewhat

⁷⁷ Strachan. *Thanksgiving*, 33. Italics added for emphasis.

⁷⁸ Strachan. *Sermon 1814*, 37.

⁷⁹ “For all our late successes then, and the happy peace, which has taken place in Europe, let us gratefully repeat our thanksgivings to the Universal Father ; give him the glory of our victories, and look to him for protection and support; exerting the powers which he has bestowed upon us, with ardent hope of obtaining by our devotions to him, the blessings in these Provinces of glorious victory, and permanent peace.” See Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 15.

⁸⁰ “[Napoleon] is made to tremble for the safety of his own throne. ‘This is the doing of the Lord;’ and it demands the affectionate gratitude of all the Friends of order, justice, peace and virtue After a dark night of terror, suspense and alarm, we now behold a bright and cheering dawn of hope. In attempting our destruction, this implacable enemy hath brought ruin upon himself: The evil, which he had prepared for us, hath fallen upon his own head.” See Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 12.

liberal translation of Proverbs twenty-four, gave a strong biblical and practical reason for the people of Upper and Lower Canada to retain their faith in the British king and constitution:

‘My son, fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to change.’—Proverbs xxiv, 21. When a daring spirit of anarchy, and confusion seems to prevail through the world, it becomes the duty of every man, whose situation in life gives him the opportunity, to inculcate the lessons of obedience and subordination, contained in the words of the text; and to endeavor to extinguish that torch of sedition, which in the hands of a few misguided zealots is ready to scatter fire and devastation through the land.⁸¹

The Revolutions of France and America were simply following their natural courses of violence and anarchy that defined them at their core. For the Anglican and Presbyterian clergymen of British North America the war with America proved the immorality of their governance and the victory over Napoleon presented proof that God agreed.⁸²

In St. Mark’s Anglican Church in what is now called Niagara-on-the-Lake there stands, affixed to the back wall of the sanctuary, a tablet placed there in honour of the congregation’s most famous rector Robert Addison.⁸³ Upon the tablet is carved the following words from the book of Hebrews 13:7: “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God.” That simple inscription—which incidentally forms only the first half of the complete thought contained in that biblical command—provides an example of an ideology present within much of the Anglican and Presbyterian religious discourse during the first

⁸¹ Burns, “Sermon 3 June 1814,” 3.

⁸² “However deserving [the citizens of Lower Canada] have been of heaven’s judgments....they were not the aggressors in relation to the United States. Canada did nothing to provoke hostilities. Nor was there anything new, oppressive and unnecessary in the measures of Great Britain, to justify the effusion of human blood.” See Easton, *Reasons*, 5-6.

⁸³ As of March of 2013, that plaque remains in the church.

decades of the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ The notion that the sacred duty of spiritually equipping and educating the colonists of Upper and Lower Canada as a top-down venture was based on the belief—defended as being evident in both biblical theology and the natural world—that clergy occupied a divinely sanctioned role over the laity within the hierarchy of civilized society.⁸⁵

However, the “Democratic Age” was forcing clergy like Addison, Strachan, Kendall, Sparks, Burns and Mountain to defend their significance in society as the spiritual, and national, revolutions of the eighteenth century grew into the cultural norms of the nineteenth.⁸⁶ The declaration of war in 1812 offered some spiritual ammunition to the clergy desirous of establishment, as they sought to show how

⁸⁴ This idea seems to be strengthened by Kendall in his sermon to the SPG when he said: “Every head of a family, who gives his children and his household a religious education...extends the influence of the gospel, and is himself a preacher of righteousness. Every christian [sic] Society, whose united prayers are unceasingly offered up for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom, and who add alms to their prayers to furnish the means of light and Salvation to such as have no light, and no hope, are the agents of heaven, and labourers together with God, in strengthening the walls of Zion, enlarging the borders of that kingdom, which is not of this world, and multiplying heirs of the grace of life.” See Kendall, *Sermon*, 24. This sermon was in praise of the SPG and its ability to bring light to the darkness of Upper Canada and how faithful Christians should be thankful that such a society existed to bring the gospel to the world. The section quoted was an encouragement to those in attendance to continue to support the Society in its attempts to strengthen Upper Canada as a Christian province (note that proper education is mentioned specifically in the quotation).

⁸⁵ “It is evident that there is a subordination in the Natural World. We may extend the analogy and suppose that it is the intention of nature that the like subordination should prevail in the Modern World.” Quotation taken from Christie, “Democratic,” 19. The Methodist teaching of the power of the individual threatened to undermine the very structure that upheld civilization. Nancy Christie correctly states, “American Methodism challenged constituted authority and overtly fostered democratic values by extolling the universality of spiritual perfection and equality in religious communion. As such it became one of the most active cultural vehicles for transplanting the anti-traditionalism and reformist spirit of the new American republic particularly into Upper Canadian society.” See Christie, “Democratic,” 23.

⁸⁶ In an isolated area such as Upper Canada, civilization was a lifeline to the more stable world. Little writes in *Borderland Religion*: “[Anglicanism’s] basic values included Episcopal succession with freedom from the papacy, a limited monarchy with freedom from ‘mob rule’ commonly associated with republican government, and the profession of a ‘rational religion’ which rejected ‘enthusiasm’ on the one hand and ‘superstition’ on the other.” See Little, *Borderland*, 41. Mark Noll writes: “Defenders of Anglicanism...sought a faith featuring order, stability, and social harmony. On the other hand, Methodists...wanted a faith defined by the transformative power of Spirit-inspired revivalism.” See Noll, *History*, 267.

democracy bred violence and chaos. But it was the British victory over Napoleon that strengthened their ability to both defend and define the significance of the British Empire. Although many in 2012 love to proclaim this as the 200th anniversary of when “we” beat the Americans, the “we” being talking about now is much different than the “we” the people of the land would have meant. For the clerical discourse of the time did not see the war as the proper time to introduce new concepts of national identity, and whenever “we” or “us” was mentioned it was to remind the people that they were English subjects and to England they belonged. The fear and deprivations occasioned by the war required soothing comfort and hope for the subjects of the beleaguered empire and the 1814 Thanksgiving Sermons provided just that. In so doing they did not interpret the war as a defining moment of a new nation; rather they defined it in ways designed to draw the people into the belief that loyalty, a term defined by the ideologies they espoused, would grant them rewards from both their earthly king and their heavenly one.

B. War Not as Disastrous as It Could Have Been

James Reid saw God as the source of Napoleon’s strength and argued “No doubt the Almighty girded this man with strength for the battle; to be the scourge of nations for their wickedness; but when his purposes were, for the time, finished, he laid him aside.”⁸⁷ Such statements placed even great threats like Napoleon under the sovereign will of God so that James Stewart could explain, “[God] permits nothing to take place, and brings nothing to pass, but what in his good time shall manifestly contribute to his glory, and to the happiness of his people.”⁸⁸ Thus while the war was

⁸⁷ Reid, *Thanksgiving, 1816*, 9.

⁸⁸ Stewart, *Providence*, 4.

seen as a calamity it was also not as disastrous as it could have been. This interpretation of God's mercy once again reflected the special relationship God had with England. Robert Easton, like his co-religionists, stated: "God certainly was just in hiding his face and leaving us in darkness and trouble," but for him, such a state of darkness did nothing to discount the superiority of British governance; rather he blessed God because "the sufferings of the war were [not] the fruits of disaffection to the government, under which we are placed."⁸⁹ Likewise, Clark saw in the American invasion not the sign of cursing but the sign of blessing.⁹⁰ He stated that "a people signally favored must expect the visitations of his righteous displeasure, when they fall away to high-handed iniquity."⁹¹

Citing Job's "pious resignation and patient suffering" Strachan then went on to say that such important virtues "would never have been called forth, had his prosperity continued."⁹² In those interpretations of the machinations of God, even the war itself was seen as evidence of divine favour and God's unique relationship to the empire. Because the war had only damaged, but not destroyed, England's American holdings, the clergy could argue that the Christian nation was being visited with punishment for its lack of piety and concern for the matters of religion. Strachan put it succinctly when he said, "The advantage of calamity is positive, it brings us to a

⁸⁹ Easton, *Reasons*, 7.

⁹⁰ Yet, Strachan also saw the hand of God at work and believed that the existence of the conflict, while awful, would serve the higher purpose of convincing the people that they needed to part with Republican sympathies and pursue the higher calling of British government. To that end he preached: "It is in the power of God only to extract good from evil; and in his hands the revolutions and convulsions which are now terminating, will be made the instruments of good; but the guilt of those who promoted them is not the less." See Strachan, *Thanksgiving*, 29-30. Because such teachings might convince the people that their actions did not matter and that something like loyalty was ultimately in God's hands, the people were cautioned strongly against siding with a government that was clearly demonstrating its rejection of the Gospel.

⁹¹ Clark, *Sermon 1812*, 6.

⁹² Strachan, *Funeral*, 1815, 10.

proper sense of ourselves, of our situation, and of our mutual dependence.”⁹³ The exploration of what constituted national sin and, more importantly, what constituted national piety became another opportunity for the clergy to interpret the war in ways that shaped the concept of loyalty to the landscape of Upper and Lower Canada. While the celebration of England never waned, what was born out of the war was a British North American understanding of the empire and how the people of the colony could best reflect their English culture in a colonial setting. Such interpretations have been cited as nascent Canadian nationalism but they were not. They are better understood as interpretations of the British Empire from a distance and then the systematic attempt to implement those ideas that seemed most conducive to such a unique setting.

In conclusion, the people of British North America were encouraged by their clergy to see the War of 1812 as part of a larger global struggle between darkness and light. By invading British soil, the American nation was doomed because they had chosen to make an enemy of God’s country. Transatlantic connections were of increasing importance not simply because of the empire’s ability to provide for the needs of the colonists but also because it attached the struggling colony to the nation that was so obviously integral to God’s plans for the world. With the defeat of Napoleon, the clergy of British North America had compelling proof that their rhetoric of loyalty was supported by God’s providential protection. The celebration of their connection with England defined a growing understanding that any hope the people might have to see peace returned to the land was only possible through further connection to the empire. In that context, loyalty was a type of spiritual discipline that

⁹³ Strachan, *Funeral*, 1815, 11.

necessitated the expulsion of the faithless Americans and any faithless ideas that were informed by the flawed philosophies of the darkened and misguided Republic to the south.

Chapter 5

The War is Over, the War Has Just Begun: Peace and the Future of the Colony

It is always profitable to consider the value of time, and the importance of making improvement of it. The present season of the year affords additional reason for making a survey of the past events of our lives, and of looking forward to our interests in futurity.¹

Introduction

It was the kind of damp morning that made the echo of horse-hooves and booted feet seem muffled and distorted in such a way that one felt either totally alone in the world or surrounded by a veritable, if invisible, army. Spring was arriving late in April of 1815 and the chill winds that blew in off of the water had the ability to reside in a person's very bones for weeks on end. Illness and fatigue were common in Montreal and Robert Easton had been called on frequently throughout the winter months to visit parishioners that were stricken with a variety of maladies. However, as the sun began to break up the lingering fog on that Sunday morning, Easton felt his heart lifted as he prepared to encourage the people that they were not, as the fog might make them feel, alone in the world and that all things, even the recent war, evidence of a benevolent God at work. The church on St. Peter's Street was near capacity as Easton stepped to the pulpit to offer his sermon celebrating the peace that existed between his beloved England and that nation of lawless republicans that existed entirely too close to the south. Although educated in America, he disdained the United States for, in his view, its false ideas, reckless individualism, governmental

¹ Stewart, *Providence*, 3.

pandering, judicial corruption, and democratic sentimentality. Even though the war had ended several months earlier, Easton remained troubled because the proximity of the United States presented a very real threat to the safety of his parishioners' bodies and souls.

Adding to Easton's concern was the renewed growth of evangelical revivalism and all the ensuing shouting, ecstatic, and enthusiastic behaviour that its camp meetings created. The return of Episcopal missionaries was common knowledge among people throughout Lower Canada, as was their connection to the American nation; but few of his people seemed as concerned by this fact as he would have liked. Given that many of his parishioners hailed from America, that morning's sermon, thought Easton, would not simply be a celebration but a lesson that peace, true and lasting peace, can only be found in this land when the people cling to the only truly providentially blessed nation in the world: England. For England had defeated the two-fold threat of Madison and Napoleon to prove, beyond doubt, that God's tool for the dissemination of peace and prosperity throughout the Canadas—and the world—was none other than his beloved British Empire.

Easton's understanding that the empire was the truest champion of liberty and safety directly contradicted many of the American clerical writings that held the same belief about their nation.² After the conclusion of the war, the religious discourse shifted from condemning the American nation and reverted back to condemning the

² The Elkhorn Kentucky Baptist Association would not even permit the appearance of both war and famine—two events frequently attributed in the Bible as punishments doled out by God on unfaithful nations—to override their belief of God's pleasure with America. Acknowledging the calamities of 1814 they remained adamant in their claims that their land remained blessed in the sight of God and that “we are yet, a people highly favored by the Lord” before summarizing: “we possess a still greater blessing—Religious freedom constitutionally secured.” See Anon., “Elkhorn Kentucky Circular Letter, Aug 1814,” 4. For more on American Baptists, see Robertson, “Uniting.”

American Methodists for attempting to invade the colonies with a more subtle, though still destructive, form of Republicanism. In the post-war world of the Canadas, the differing national ideologies remained an influential component of the competing ecclesiastical struggles that defined both America, and American-style religion, as “faithless foes” and established a trajectory of interpreting the war that would inspire the development of both provinces throughout the remainder of the century.³

This chapter will examine the topic of the post-war colonial culture in four sections to demonstrate that the end of the War of 1812 did not mean the end of the religious struggle. The first part will focus on the clerical discourse related to the material and spiritual benefits brought by the end of the war. The return of piety and missionary endeavours featured prominently in these writings, as did the return of condemning American-style beliefs. That will lead into section two which looks at the tensions that arose between the two Methodist camps in the years following the struggle. One of the more captivating aspects of the War of 1812 was how the Wesleyan and Episcopal Methodists, now viewing each other as rival claimants to colonial Methodism, began to utilize the ideas of expulsion against each other. Operating under the belief that Upper Canadians would not welcome back American itinerants, the Wesleyans joined in the condemnation of American religion and offered themselves up as the solution to any loyal colonists who desired to remain both British and Methodist. The next section will examine three of the dominant characteristics of British North American loyalty in the wake of the war. Robert

³ An example of the clerical desire to interpret the war as an important event for the development of the land: “It is always profitable to consider the value of time, and the importance of making improvement of it. The present season of the year affords additional reason for making a survey of the past events of our lives, and of looking forward to our interests in futurity.” See Stewart, *Providence*, 3.

Easton's sermon arguing against the adaptations of new ideas, the rejection of the pursuit of wealth, and the use of Christianity as a guide for public policy was designed to insure that the ideologies he believed were indicative of both the American nation and American religion would be expelled from the land. The final section will briefly explore the trajectory of interpreting the war to show how the idea of expelling faithless foes was destined to remain prevalent throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. The fragmented pre-war landscape was beginning to grow into a more unified, if somewhat diverse, collection of people with greater awareness of their neighbours and a growing understanding that connections to England did provide certain desirable benefits. The return of peace brought many blessings to the beleaguered inhabitants of British North America even though it did little to end the war between the denominations. While England had successfully defended its colony in the Americas, the war for the soul of that colony continued to rage.

I. The Blessings of Peace

A. Material Benefits

Without the economic drain of a sustained war effort, British North America was poised to enjoy a renewed season of prosperity.⁴ James Reid, himself no stranger to physical and monetary deprivations, believed a new day of advancement was able to dawn. He wrote in 1816, "In consequence of the Peace, the Arts and Sciences will be cultivated with success; and, perhaps useful discoveries shall be made," and each one of these potential discoveries could be used "to improve the state of Society, and

⁴ "Had the whole value of what has been expended in wars, been appropriated to the purpose of peace, how laudable would have been the appropriation, and how blessed the consequences!" See Worcester. *Solemn*, 5.

add to the comforts of man.”⁵ Charles Stewart argued that the best way to continue within the realm of divine blessing was to adopt societal measures that were in line with God’s revealed desires in scripture. Stewart admonished his people to “lay out part of your means and your property to the glory of God and to the good of your neighbour, in the furtherance of good institutions, and pious and charitable works” and the reasoning behind such teaching was simple: “This is one of the chief ways of preserving his favour, of preventing the evils of war, and of bringing on the blessings of peace.”⁶ Likewise, Robert Addison stated plainly for this people:

Believe me, the best way to avoid the just and deserved punishment for our sins, both here and hereafter by the Almighty disposer of all events is to humble ourselves before Him, to implore in fervent prayer with minds abstracted from every-earthly consideration, His pardon, grace and mercy, and to copy the example and precepts of His Blessed Son, our Lord and Redeemer... There was nothing our Saviour inculcated more strongly into the minds of His disciples for the instruction and blessing of all generations than that brethren should love one another and have charity.⁷

Just as the people were encouraged to increase piety as a strategy during the war to gain the favour of God, so too were they instructed that sustained peace was built on the same principles.⁸

Robert Easton stated in his 1815 service that the people could “celebrate with the voice of thanksgiving the return of peace to our country.” He then went on to claim “Peace and quietness are highly acceptable; after the experience, which many of our people have had, of the deprivations, uncertainties, alarms and wounded

⁵ Reid, *Thanksgiving 1816*, 13.

⁶ Stewart, *Providence*, 17.

⁷ Addison, *Scholar*, 103-4.

⁸ “And may the people of England never forget that, upon the unshaken fidelity to their God, upon affectionate loyalty to their King, upon disinterested love of their country, depends the continuance of that Divine favour which can make of the noblest blessings on earth a passport to immortal glory.” See Mountain, *Death*, 24.

feelings attendant on war.”⁹ Easton framed his arguments in an understanding that the sooner the war was over the sooner the people could get back to matters of religion, piety, and the evangelization of the world that would usher in the kingdom of God. Social conscience was seen as central to the new world of British North America, and, if the people were willing to help each other out and rebuild the war-torn land together, they could construct a colony blessed with peace and mutual prosperity.¹⁰ James Reid believed that increased morality was necessary to retain peace. Since the character and motives of God were clearly revealed in scripture, one had only to pay attention to the biblical narrative in order to discern the necessary steps to achieving the most ideal living conditions for the colonists. He stated:

Let us keep in mind that God will punish an individual for sin and contempt of his word, as well as nations; and that there is no way of escaping his wrath, but by leading a life of faith on the Son of God...Our God, while a consuming fire to the wicked, verily rewardeth the righteous, and putteth a difference between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. And as ‘the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet,’ may we possess in our minds that joy and peace, which the Gospel alone can communicate.¹¹

It was in the power of the Gospel, as a political and spiritual tool, that the people would find their direction as they attempted to go forward into the second decade of the nineteenth century.¹²

B. Peace is Good for Religion

⁹ Easton, *Reasons*, 4.

¹⁰ “[H]ow much we are indebted to that over-ruling providence in human affairs which has preserve the honor of our country unstained, during the late war...and restored to us the inestimable blessings of a settled order of things. ‘Praise the Lord O Jerusalem; praise thy God of Zion; for he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of wheat.’” See Easton, *Reasons*, 14.

¹¹ Reid, *Thanksgiving*, 18.

¹² On the topic of Providence and morality, Mountain declared: “the whole people learned of him to hope for the protection of Providence, only by endeavouring to deserve it.” See Mountain, *Death*, 16.

Despite all of these more “physical” considerations of the blessing of peace, much of the discourse was also reserved for the fact that the return of peace was good for the religious climate.¹³ James Reid stated: “In time of war the morals of people most generally relax, and are apt to receive a wrong bias from the privations, sufferings...into which they are inured.” For him, such moral laxity could be remedied because “Peace restores order, and presents to all classes of the people the happiness that may be enjoyed, when everyone pursues a peaceful occupation, ‘Sitting under his own vine and fig tree, none making him afraid.’”¹⁴ The violence of the war necessitated a shift in focus from the spiritual to the physical world. However, with the hostilities no longer pressing on the minds of the colonists, the churches invited the people to return to the task of spiritual contemplation.¹⁵ Fear did not drive the people closer to God, James Reid argued, but created distractions and created a land in which the Gospel was not deemed essential. The return of peace meant the return to missionary ideals in which the Gospel could be focused upon and spread throughout the land. For Robert Easton, “A time of peace is favorable to [missionary endeavours]” and he cited the “evils of war” as a deterrent to such activities before motivating his people to be “more zealous, in promoting the peaceable kingdom of Jesus Christ.” Such language reminded the people that their souls, just like their land,

¹³ “Peace...is favorable to religion and morality, in so far as it sweeps off a variety of distracting cares and amusing subjects; and so leaves the mind more at liberty to attend to its spiritual and eternal concerns.” Easton, *Reasons*, 14. This is an interesting quote if only because it seems like a contrast to the “there’s no such thing as an atheist in a fox hole” idiom.

¹⁴ Reid, *Thanksgiving 1816*, 11.

¹⁵ “In the circumstances of this country from the commencement to the conclusion of the late struggle with our neighbours, if we are at all attentive to the hand of God, we must perceive many reasons for exulting in him, as a just and merciful sovereign. By his goodness we were kept from being the aggressors of the war. He gave to many parts of Canada a singular run of commercial prosperity, as a balance to those evils, which other places had to suffer. He has, with striking justice, compleatly [sic] frustrated the designs of the common enemy: And granted peace, before the war could assume all that terror, which might have been expected from its continuance.” See Easton, *Reasons*, 5.

needed to be defended against all alien incursions that were deemed harmful. Reid preached that, while peace was to be celebrated, only God had the ability to fully remove all threats of violence and war:

We have seen the end of one dismal night, in which the comet of war darted its baneful influence through the incumbent shades. When the empire of reason and religion, or the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost shall be universally established, which is the ultimate goal of Providence; there will be no night in that new order of things. The glory of the Lord shall shine without the intervention of darkness.¹⁶

The darkness of the war had been lifted, the people had to look forward to the unhindered light of God as they looked forward to a future of increased blessing and hope.¹⁷ Such was the exuberant rhetoric of a people so recently released from the dark horrors of war.¹⁸

Peace, like the war, had to be interpreted so that people would know how to act and what they, as Christians, were called to do.¹⁹ If the war was partially punishment for sin then peace could be viewed as the result of proper piety or, at least, a respite that offered a chance for the people to show God that they had learned

¹⁶ Easton, *Reasons*, 19.

¹⁷ "That spirit of zeal, which now pervades the religious world, is an evidence of his unchangeable fidelity. Nor can we forbear to hope that it is also a prelude to the promised time, when all the families of the earth shall be blessed in the seed of Abraham... These considerations should induce all, who value the gospel, to exert themselves for its diffusion through the earth." See Easton, *Reasons*, 20-1.

¹⁸ Robert Easton's more nuanced understanding of the war was informed by the reality that: "Even the pleasure of victory is stifled by painful recollections." See Easton, *Reasons*, 10. For him, and others, the war was to be understood within the larger framework of God's plans for the world. The arguments were framed as both punishment (as has already been covered) but also with the reminder that peace needed to be seen as God's mercy.

¹⁹ "In consequence of the peace it is to be hoped, that more exertion will be made to ameliorate the moral and spiritual condition of mankind... A great deal had already been done... but much yet remains to be accomplished before all the heathen nations shall have been evangelized. That highly favoured country, to which we have the happiness to belong has set a glorious example... The Scriptures, which reveal the way of Salvation to mankind, have been, or are translating, into the most part of the languages spoken among men and are distributed to an unparalleled extent. If such works as these have been accomplished in time of war, what may we not expect in time of peace?" See Reid, *Thanksgiving 1816*, 14.

their lesson.²⁰ As Anglican Bishop Jacob Mountain noted, “Let us be prepared then, for we know not when the day of the Lord shall come; to enjoy that peace and comfort, which the cessation of war can never bestow on the voluptuous, the licentious, the profanely blasphemous and the impenitent.”²¹ Peace could not be enjoyed by those who did not live according to God’s law and for anyone interested in seeing peace sent to and maintained in the Canadas, their duty was clear: live in service to the God of peace, honour divine teaching, reject faulty religion, and peace will reign in the land.²²

C. Post-War Religious Landscape

However, just as in the days prior to the war, the teachings of how to best live as a servant of God presented numerous, and often rival, interpretations.²³ The religious landscape returned to the fragmented nature that had defined it in the pre-

²⁰ “In all frontier pioneer settlements...there is much lawlessness. Part of the population consists of such who left civilization to escape the law. Horse-racing, drinking, gambling and all other vices prevail until law and order is established...[The German settlers from Pennsylvania exhibited] nothing of this sort of wild life. They were a God fearing religious people.” See Seyfert, “Migration,” 40.

²¹ Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 14-5.

²² “The whole history of the world does not furnish a lesson so striking, as the events of the last thirty years, to teach, that the welfare of nations depends on their virtue, and their virtue upon their religion.” See Mountain, *Death*, 19.

²³ Bishop Jacob Mountain harboured no illusions about his church’s status in the post-war colony and taught his people to be aware that they needed to prove the validity and superiority of the Anglican faith. He preached: “it must surely be admitted, that all that has the power to increase the comprehensive grasp of the mind; all that helps to furnish it with just principles of thinking, reasoning, and judging; all that enlarges, and strengthens, its capacity for observation, and reflection; all that makes it better acquainted with the character, transactions, feelings, and passions of men; and all that prepares it for an intelligent contemplation of the works, and of the word of God, and of his dealing with his creatures—in his Dispensations of nature, and of Grace—must contribute to enrich the students’ stores of eminently useful matter—matter peculiarly applicable to his purposes, who, as he is to know the Law, which he is commissioned to teach, should also know the Nature, to which that Law is to be applied.” See Mountain, *Charge*, 13. Following on that: “if you can doubt this—look at the effects of the entire absence of that knowledge, as they shew themselves in those self-appointed Teachers, who assume to be above it. Observe how rapidly they proceed from error to error: how boldly they discuss, and how confidently they decide upon questions of the deepest, and most difficult research, and which they possess no single qualification that can enable them fairly to examine: observe that extravagance of enthusiasm, which, however acceptable it may be for the multitude, is but a miserable excuse for the mischief’s introduced, by ignorance, and folly.” See Mountain, *Charge*, 14. Note the understanding that despite such condemnations, the enthusiasts remained popular for the “multitudes.”

war days of Upper and Lower Canada. The return of Episcopal Methodists to Upper Canada was greeted with incredulity due to the close connections the denomination had with the warring American nation.²⁴ Jacob Mountain, in his charge to new ministers, explained the dilemma from the Anglican perspective that “the various origin, and mixed character of the persons who inhabit [the provinces],” made religious establishment as an unchallenged idea almost impossible. Adding to that detriment “the constant intercourse with a neighbouring country, in which much laxity of Religious opinion is known prevail, [creates] great room to fear, that we are not a little infected with loose notions upon the subjects just mentioned; and cannot rely with security upon any general attachment to our Church.”²⁵ Since many of the colonists had not learned to condemn and reject all American teachings as contrary to the peace of British North America, it was incumbent upon the Anglican ministers to win the people over to their church.²⁶

In the following quotation it is important to note that national loyalties were seen to be influential over theological considerations, a position that existed before the war but one that also found renewed prominence after the hostilities.²⁷ Mountain charged those desirous of ordained ministry in the Canadas with due diligence to

²⁴ “[B]y a disdain, or neglect, of the necessary preparation of other learning, tends rather...to bewilder, than to enlighten; to plunge men into the depths of controversy, which they are utterly unable to fathom.” See Mountain, *Charge*, 15. “The knowledge [your parishioners will gain from careful preaching] will best guard them against the influence of enthusiasm; and most effectively fix in their minds, a just sense of the great sinfulness of schism, and of the wide-spreading mischief’s of separation from the Church.” See Mountain, *Charge*, 18.

²⁵ Mountain, *Charge*, 35.

²⁶ “The imperfect state of our Establishment, tends, in a considerable degree, to diminish the influence of the Clergy, as a body; and, as individuals, places some obstacles in their way, which under more favourable circumstances would either not occur at all, or would be easily surmounted.” See Mountain, *Charge*, 32-3.

²⁷ “Although cessation of the war desirable, the treaty failed to secure the colonies from future American aggression.” See Zuehlke, *Honour’s Sake*, 383. The truth of Zuehlke’s statement seems to be reflected in the clerical discourse as the Anglicans quickly returned to the idea that American theology was too prominent following the war.

“guard your people not only against errors, which are the produce of your own soil, and which gain strength from the natural habits of an unsettled life, but against those loose opinions also, that are *the growth of other lands*, and that by contiguity, and intermixture, are easily disseminated, and readily take root, and grow amongst us.”²⁸

The agricultural analogy demonstrated Mountain’s belief that American ideas were weeds that were threatening to choke out the good and desired flowers of British rationalism and Church Establishment. Charles Stewart agreed with his Bishop’s assessment and, in his description of the Eastern Townships, stated to the governing officials,

The deficient and dangerous state people are in with regard to knowing and fulfilling all their duties, the Worship of God, the allegiance due to their country, and all the charities of social life, when they are left without aid of any regular Ministry of the Gospel, needs to be represented...The evils which are to be dreaded, and of which there are some instances in this part of the country, are, the spread of enthusiasm and fanaticism among the people, and their being led by false and ignorant teachers into many errors and irregularities in their lives and conversation. It is to be hoped that Ministers of the Established Church will ere long be supplied by Government.²⁹

The war provided stronger critiques related to the dangers of American Methodism and the need for Church Establishment within the colonies but, much to the dismay of the Anglicans, it was not strong enough to completely expel the faithless American evangelical presence, nor convince the people to accept the rationality of establishment; a topic that was dealt with in greater consideration in a previous chapter.

²⁸ Mountain, *Charge*, 36. Italics added for emphasis.

²⁹ Stewart, *Townships*, 17-8.

Therefore, while even the Methodists shifted their discourse to be more pronounced in their effusions of loyalty, such a trend does not appear to have equated to the increased desire for establishment within the masses or even the perceived weakening of the Methodists as religious rivals from the Anglican perspective.³⁰ Seeing his Anglican missionaries as persecuted servants of Christ in a faithless generation, Mountain reminded his fellow Anglicans to avoid discouragement and while their “Church may have difficulties to encounter, [and] may suffer occasional depression...it will never be overthrown: ‘The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.’” The lot of the church desirous of establishment was not to quit but to “‘fight the good fight of Faith’: secure, in doing so, of effectual support.”³¹ The religious war between the churches from America and England was active years before Madison’s declaration and the description of the Episcopal Methodists as “the Gates of Hell” seemed to indicate that it would go on long after as well. The American churches were not seen as brothers but as obstacles to be overcome, through fidelity to God (as explained by each church’s practice) the “good fight” of the post-war Americas was spiritual in nature and pitted the Anglicans against the faithless Episcopal Methodists in a battle to expel their corrupt doctrines from the land. Just as the people had fought against the physical assaults of the faithless American nation, the Anglicans cast themselves as the defenders of the colonists’ spiritual virtues against the onslaught of faulty American religion.

³⁰ A critique given by Mountain regarding Anglican preaching style and the need to improve it if the Methodists were to be removed from their cultural significance: “I must confess my own opinion is, that many of the Clergy of our Church...from a dread...of being thought to resemble, enthusiastic, and methodistical Preachers—if they are energetic, or earnest, in their manner—many of our Clergy, are too indifferent—too little ambitious to excel—where excellence is so pre-eminently beneficial—too tame, and inanimate, in their addresses to their people.” See Mountain, *Charge*, 26-7.

³¹ Mountain, *Charge*, 33.

II. The War Within Methodism

A. Lack of Anti-American Sentiment

Due to the vacuum created by the loss of the American itinerants, the Wesleyans³² began moving west from their circuits in the Maritimes out of the belief that Methodism connected to the United States was not welcome in Lower Canada.³³ Unfortunately for those British Methodists, rampant anti-Americanism was slower to develop within Upper Canadian Methodism than the Wesleyans might have liked so an unofficial campaign against the American Methodists began.³⁴ In an article on the life of Henry Ryan, Goldwin French reported that, “the attack on Canadian Methodism would be initiated not by the local élite but by the British Wesleyan Conference.” However, it would be unfair to demonize the Wesleyans; French is correct when he describes their concern for the spiritual state of the land.³⁵ He reports that the Wesleyans saw their role as liberators of Methodism in the Canadas: “In 1814

³² The British Wesleyans’ date of creation is usually given as 1795 when they officially separated from the Church of England four years after the death of their namesake. They began their missions in Newfoundland in 1765 or 1766; in Nova Scotia in either 1799 or 1784 (depending on the source) and began to move into Upper and Lower Canada in the wake of the War of 1812. Lower Canada seemed to respond more to the Wesleyans as greater animosity towards America was felt there. However, part of the conflict that would arise between the two groups would deal with the American Methodists’ belief that they could win Lower Canada back.

³³ In the minutes from the January 1815 minutes of the Wesleyan Missionary Society there is evidence of a desire to strengthen the Quebec mission, “[Let it be] resolved that an additional missionary be sent to Quebec...to supply the Three Rivers, where they have already had preaching.” See Wesley Missionary, “Minutes, Jan 1815,” 10. “Faced with a constant shortage of able men at home, the bishop...[was]not really interested in the distant and detached Nova Scotia mission. Probably the preachers too could see little merit in going from the United States, where Methodism was a flourishing and accepted form of Christianity, to a country in which they would be aliens, potentially, if not actually suspect to the authorities and people.” See French, *Parsons*, 34.

³⁴ “The fiercest attack on the American Methodist tradition in Upper Canada came from the British Wesleyan Conference.” See Adamson, “Continent,” 437.

³⁵ In November of 1815 there is even a conciliatory note struck as the Wesleyan Missionary Society resolved to “send a letter to Mr. Asbury explaining the reason why the British Conference sent missionaries to Canada.” See Wesley Missionary, “Minutes, 24 November 1815,” 73. This would be taken even further in July of 1816 when the Society recommended one of their own to give up a chapel in Montreal to an American Missionary and, “to quietly resign the premises to the American brethren and to procure other accommodations for themselves.” See Wesley Missionary, “Minutes July 1816,” 91. However, the note before that mentioned that they were sending three more missionaries to Quebec.

the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, responding to complaints by Lower Canadian Methodists about the political attitudes of their American ministers, began a mission in the Canadas.”³⁶ The Methodist Episcopal committee responsible for looking into the religious climate of Upper Canadian Methodism in 1817 saw the Wesleyans in a different light. Believing Upper Canada was theirs to protect and serve, the Methodists saw the Wesleyans as agitators—not liberators—and responsible for “evils... dangerous to the peace and safety of the Church,” and they stated that the troubles within the, “Provinces are occasioned by the introduction, and thro the influence of certain British Methodist Missionaries.”³⁷ In one of the more interesting aspects of the post-war religious landscape, a religious contest took place within Methodism as both the American and British variations of the denomination attempted to expel the other from land they believed was rightfully theirs.

In Henry Ryan’s eyes, his political allegiance was unquestionable as was his dedication to the Methodists he had almost single-handedly supported throughout the war. When Wesleyan Methodists began to move in on some of his chapels citing their superior loyalty, Ryan was devastated. Never short on words, Ryan acknowledged the new political climate and penned his outrage to the London Missionary Society. What follows is a detailed account of Ryan’s efforts in his own words:

I was in and had charge of Upper Canada during the late war. The Preachers under my charge bore hardship with Christian fortitude they waded hundreds of miles thro mire and mud they flew to the distressed and did their [sic] endeavour to administer comfort to the

³⁶ French, “Ryan,” 1. The Wesleyans appear to have believed that missionary opportunities to France would exist at the end of the Napoleonic Wars and began to ask their preachers to learn French. However, those who did so were sent to Quebec to assist with the denomination there, “Resolved, that a third missionary who can speak French be sent to Quebec.” See Wesley Missionary, “Minutes, July 1815,” 20. The underlined segment is part of the original quote.

³⁷ Pearce et al., “Report, 1817,” 1.

afflicted notwithstanding the dangers they were in by night and day from savage cruelty they still stood by the souls of their charge who was dearer to them than life itself and behaved themselves in a manner as convinced government that they were feasible harmless men seeking only for the welfare of their fellow men why then branded with rebellion who has ever proved any of us to be rebels who of us has ever refused to take the Oaths required by law Can it be proved that any of us has not been conscientious in praying for Kings and all that are in authority. But will you after all justify your preachers in wresting our circuits and Chapels from us...call your Preachers immediately out of Canada you cannot wish to forment dischord between the two connections, who heretofore have been on the best terms of friendship³⁸

His feeling of betrayal and disappointment are clear in this letter. However, it also revealed that the winner of the post-war religious battle would be the group that could provide more demonstrable acts of loyalty to the crown and the governing authorities than its opponents.³⁹

B. The British (Wesleyan) Invasion

Territory quickly became the issue as Wesleyan ministers began to absorb churches and circuits that had been built by the Episcopalians and were apparently experiencing some success bringing people over to their version of Methodism.⁴⁰

Referencing their growth in Montreal during the first half of 1816, the Wesleyan Missionary Society resolved to insure their missionaries to “avoid all disputation and

³⁸ Ryan, “Letter 9 October 1815,” 2-3.

³⁹ “I have acted in unison with the opinion of the majority of the Trustees who are of [the] opinion & are determined to place [the churches] under the British conference, being loyal Subjects to the British Government.” See Bennett quoting John Strong, “Letter 6 October 1815,” 1. Bennett would comment later in the letter while traveling around Lower Canada: “we were informed they had been without a Preacher during the late war... We had also come to know their situation & if being British Subjects with other considerations they wished to connect themselves with the British Conference. Not that we had any intention or wish to interfere with the American Brethren.” See Bennett quoting John Strong, “Letter 6 October 1815,” 4.

⁴⁰ It should be noted that the Wesleyans seemed genuinely interested in not usurping the American circuits in the years immediately following the war: “No missionary shall be allowed to take into his circuit any place where the American Brethren have Societies, unless there be a regular invitation from a Majority of the official Members in that place. Nevertheless where the American Brethren only preach but have no Societies, our Missionaries have full liberty to take such places into their circuits and attend them regularly.” See “Nova Scotia District, 1817,” 4.

to cultivate a spirit of Brotherly affection towards the American preachers and their Societies,” and lamented “that there should be even the appearance of collision and separation between the two Connexions.”⁴¹ However, another report from 1817 showed that the American Methodists were displeased because they heard the Wesleyans were characterizing them negatively in order to alienate their members.

The Episcopal Methodists began to communicate diligently with their followers the very distinct natures extant within the Methodist circles of that time. Among other condemnations, the report stated that Upper Canadian Methodists had their concerns about the role of American religion in the land “roused by what they conceived to be injuries in the late war” before describing the Wesleyans of using “the most clandestine seducing arts” to confuse the minds of former supporters of Episcopal Methodism. The American missionaries were aggravated that the British used “apparently friendly persuasions by men bearing the same name with us” to gain audience with the people in order to remove them into another denominational affiliation.⁴² The committee described the “evils, which occasion much confusion in our societies” before explaining just how pervasive this threat had become. The report itemized the various regions that were suffering tensions: “at Kingston, Bay Quinty [sic], Augusta and Cornwall... At Kingston the society has been divided. In the Bay Quinty [sic] and Augusta...societies appear on the moment of division...in Cornwall one of the society there has also been divided.”⁴³ The rift was growing deeper as the

⁴¹ Wesley Missionary, “Minutes, July 1816,” 91-2.

⁴² Pearce et al., “Report, 1817,” 3.

⁴³ Pearce et al., “Report, 1817,” 1.

Wesleyans continued to work within territory that had traditionally been under the leadership of the American Methodists.⁴⁴

In November of 1818 the Wesleyans addressed the issue and decided whether or not to suspend their mission to the Canadas. They began by stating, “there has been an interference in some places between the American and British Missionaries, which the Committee regrets” but then went on to write, “notwithstanding this it does appear that there are a number of places in the Canadas...where the population is so large, that the labours of both parties may be necessary.”⁴⁵ That was the logic utilized by the Wesleyans to justify their actions: the growth of the provinces’ respective populations necessitated two denominations working in the same areas to witness most effectively. While such motives were above reproach, the wording of the Committee to its missionaries left plenty of room for interpretation. The Committee on Missions in the Canadas recommended,

[there should be no preaching in any] Chapel in which is now jointly occupied by the American Brethren and for the sake of peace to practice their labours separately; and not to continue their labours in any station previously occupied by the American Brethren except when the population is so large or so scattered that it is evident that a very considerable part of them must be neglected.⁴⁶

Thus, the Wesleyans had a mandate that, they argued, necessitated cooperation between the two groups to insure maximum effectiveness. However, according to the American Methodists, the behaviour of the British Methodists did not live up to such lofty goals in reality. Wesleyan missionaries were free to decide what constituted a

⁴⁴ The Wesleyans saw their mission in the Canadas as dedicated only to those the Methodists from America could not reach.

⁴⁵ Wesley Missionary, “Report from Quebec, 18 November 1818,” 199-200.

⁴⁶ Wesley Missionary, “Report from Quebec, 18 November 1818,” 201.

“scattered” or over-populated area and could then proceed to preach, teach, employ, and convert with the full support of their denomination.

The American Methodists began to view themselves as the innocent victims of Wesleyan aggression and using military terminology they argued that “the British Methodist missionaries...have relaxed in none of their measures of *invasion*, but on the contrary, have renewed their exertions to divide our societies and to dispossess our preachers of their Charges.”⁴⁷ In essence, the American Methodists were accusing the British of invading their “spiritual land” and conducting a war of ecclesiastical conquest. However, the official reports of the Wesleyans balked at such motivations and stated simply, “[our intentions were] to labour in those towns and villages where the population is to [sic] large that the addition of their labours to those of other ministers are demanded by the moral necessities of the people.”⁴⁸ The American Methodists now found themselves using similar arguments that the Anglicans had used against them before the war by stating that the churches of the Canadas were theirs by right. After the war, it was the Episcopalians who were feeling slighted and the British Wesleyans making the argument that the moral imperative of all Christians is to spread the gospel wherever it was needed, regardless of institutional jealousy.⁴⁹

Fresh out of a physical war that had nearly destroyed them, the American Methodists of Upper Canada found themselves in a new contest for their survival. Unfortunately for them, their connection to America was even more of a detriment because they were the frequent targets of Anglican and Presbyterian rhetoric claiming

⁴⁷ Pearce et al., “Report, 1817,” 1. Italics added for emphasis.

⁴⁸ Wesley Missionary, “Minutes, 26 June 1818,” 103-4.

⁴⁹ The official reports did not indicate any desire to “grab land” from the Methodists: “Resolved: Not to increase the number of missionaries in the Canadas until farther information of the real necessities of that province can be ascertained.” See Wesley Missionary, “Minutes, 26 June 1818,” 103.

that American-style religion was a threat to the provinces and an increase of British immigrants led to stronger English sympathies that could only strengthen the Wesleyans' position.⁵⁰ The American Methodists summarized the struggle they faced by writing that "The chief arguments [of the Wesleyans] Are 'These are British provinces', 'We have a better right,' 'You are Aliens' 'Tis more loyal to join us,' 'It is contrary to law for his majestys Subjects to come under a foreign Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction,' ... 'British missionaries are better qualified to do good,' are 'more honorable and have a larger influence'."⁵¹ Therefore, it became essential for their survival for the Episcopal Methodists to loudly and forcibly proclaim their own love of the British crown. In his work on Methodists in the first half of the nineteenth century, Todd Webb writes about the tensions faced in being regarded as both loyal to the crown and faithful to the gospel:

In their efforts to ward off charges of doctrinal apostasy and political disloyalty levelled against them by the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas, the Canadian Methodists, like other settler groups in those colonies and across the British Empire, eventually found themselves claiming to be as British as the British themselves, if not more so.⁵²

The need to assert their "Britishness" inadvertently strengthened the arguments of the Wesleyans and contributed to the distrust of American ideas within Upper Canada

⁵⁰ "Upper Canada's political and clerical elite reacted harshly to the resurgence of Methodism. Despite their single-minded preoccupation with the conversion of souls, the Methodists were now politically vulnerable, as it was easy for their opponents to accuse them of disloyalty. Loyalist government officials, Anglican and Church of Scotland churchmen, and British Wesleyan Methodist missionaries pointed to the fact that appointments to Upper Canada's nineteen circuits were made south of the border and concluded that members of the Methodist Episcopal Church were Yankee republicans in their hearts." See Adamson, "Continent," 435-6.

⁵¹ Pearce et al., "Report, 1817," 1.

⁵² Webb, "Canadian Methodists," 171.

that had been lacking immediately following the war.⁵³ The dominant religious bodies throughout the province were united in preaching a gospel more rooted in British traditions and institutions in an effort to maintain their place in society.⁵⁴

C. New Political Realities

Just as in the actual war, both sides began to build their “armies” which, in the case of that spiritual contest, meant church membership. The 1817 committee both extolled the faithfulness of their British North American flocks and demanded rapid action to strengthen the connection with them. They reported, “notwithstanding these severe trials and the extraordinary exertions [of the Wesleyans] to divide and draw off our societies, the great body remain steadfast and unmovable. And they earnestly solicit your especial assentance [sic] at this critical moment.”⁵⁵ The casualties of that struggle were not those left on the battlefield but those who left to worship with the rival faction. The denomination that could claim more adherents and members would be able to lay claim to the territory when all the maneuvering finally concluded. That race for people changed the face of colonial Methodism as the itinerants and circuit leaders began to pursue the “respectable” members of society. The denomination that

⁵³ “In 1812 the Lower Canadian Methodist district joined the Upper Canadian district as part of the Genesee Conference, which met on the American side of the Niagara River one month after war was declared. The bishop proceeded to make circuit appointments to the Canadas, but American preachers had already been ordered out of the provinces and no Canadian-born preachers attended that Conference. The bishop's circuit plan existed on paper only, for no Methodist preacher remained in Lower Canada and eight of the thirteen still in the upper province located, that is, ceased to itinerate, before the end of the War. Thus the work of the American Methodist virtually disappeared during the war and there is no indication that the preachers who remained in Upper Canada were under any suspicion for their previous American connection.” See Moir, “Influence,” 449. This chapter would disagree with that final statement as Ryan, for one example, found it incredibly important to assert his Britishness during and after the War of 1812.

⁵⁴ The following quotation again shows the tensions the groups were having as Methodists from other nations were seen as interlopers: “I have had much trouble and affliction of mind in consequence of two Preachers from the United States, one for this city & the other a Missionary, who have caused some considerable trouble & disturbance among us.” See Bennett quoting John Strong [Montreal], “Letter 6 October 1815,” 1.

⁵⁵ Pearce et al., “Report, 1817,” 2.

had grown to prominence in pre-war Upper Canada by being a faith of the people now needed to build up a base of citizens that could wield real political power within the colony. With the metaphor of the war as the backdrop the committee reported, “while the *invading* missionaries were threatening our preachers with the displeasures of Government...the Lord was converting some of the most respectable persons in the province.”⁵⁶ Not only were the Episcopal Methodists displaying increased attention to the societal status of the converts, they were also aware that the Wesleyans were allies of the British state. Alienation from the government was bringing legitimate hardship to the American Methodist cause in Upper Canada and, once again, the call to form an independent body went forth: “the Methodist[s] in this province aught be set apart from those of the United States...[the] British Government Cannot Recognize us as a Religious Body—in consequence we suffer many privations which is unpleasant and unprofitable to the Cause of God—National prejudices with some even of the members of our societies are manifest.”⁵⁷

While Wesley and his followers were frequently branded as dissidents in England, he had maintained allegiance to the Church of England and now such allegiances were paying off in the contest for political influence in the British colony of Upper Canada.⁵⁸ Even if the Wesleyans were bluffing, this increased desire to be aligned with the crown would form another facet of the new Upper and Lower

⁵⁶ Case et al., “Report, 1817,” 3.

⁵⁷ Unknown, “Letter to Genesee Conference, 1817,” 1.

⁵⁸ Moir comments on how and why the Episcopal American Methodist faction came into being: “Methodists, like the Baptists, could date their beginnings in Nova Scotia from the time of the Revolution, but, unlike the Baptists the Methodists came into existence as an organized body in North America as a direct result of the Revolution. The necessity of providing continuity for Methodism in the revolted colonies finally forced John Wesley to make the long avoided and unwanted break with the Church of England by sending Coke to consecrate Asbury as bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.” See Moir, “Influence,” 444.

Canadian Methodist traditions.⁵⁹ Lower Canada was organized as a District under the direction of the London Missionary Society in 1817 and remained so until 1854, when it formally united with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada already in existence in Canada West (Ontario).⁶⁰

Therefore, even though tensions existed within Upper and Lower Canadian Methodism, the two camps attempted to minister together in order to avoid duplicating each other's work.⁶¹ To that end John Strong wrote, "we were informed they had been without a Preacher during the late war... Not that we had any intention or wish to interfere with the American Brethren."⁶² William Bennett recorded Asbury's desire to clear the matter up and he reported to the London Missionary Society that "Asbury invit[ed] me to take a seat in the next Baltimore [Conference meeting]...when the subject relative to the Canadas would be brought forward."⁶³

⁵⁹ Christie notes the differences between the two factions of Methodism: "The Methodism of Francis Asbury, however, veered sharply from British Wesleyanism which, under the leadership of Jabez Bunting, sought to shore up traditional authority... American Methodism challenged constituted authority and overtly fostered democratic values by extolling the universality of spiritual perfection and equality in spiritual communion. As such it became one of the most active cultural vehicles for transplanting the anti-traditionalism and reformist spirit of the new American republic particularly into Upper Canadian society outside the rarified stability of the Tory elite." See Christie, "Democratic," 23. Eventually, the tensions over jurisdiction in the Canadas between the American Methodists and British Wesleyans resulted in an agreement reached in 1820 whereby Lower Canada was allotted to the British Wesleyans (with the exception of the east side of the Ottawa River), and Upper Canada to the American Methodists (with the exception of Kingston).

⁶⁰ Numerous writings exist which speak about the complex development of Methodism in the nineteenth century. However, the scope of this work is to look more at the developments shortly after the conclusion of the war.

⁶¹ "No missionary shall be allowed to take into his circuit any place where the American Brethren have Societies, unless there be a regular invitation from a Majority of the official Members in that place. Nevertheless where the American Brethren only preach but have no Societies, our Missionaries have full liberty to take such places into their circuits and attend them regularly." See Nova Scotia District, 1817," 4.

⁶² Bennett quoting John Strong, "Letter 6 October 1815," 4.

⁶³ Bennett quoting John Strong, "Letter 6 October 1815," 4.

Although the groups attempted to be cordial and come to a mutually supportive decision, the deaths of Coke and Asbury slowed the process of reconciliation.⁶⁴

American complaints fell on deaf ears as Methodists from Lower Canada re-asserted their preference for British clergy.⁶⁵ The aforementioned John Strong wrote, "I am persuaded never the less it is for the peace of the Methodist Society at Montreal & the prosperity of the work of God that Methodist missionaries [be sent] from England...into Canada."⁶⁶ A petition sent to the Episcopal Methodists in 1815 from the Chapel in Montreal indicated that the members were adamant, even before the start of the war, in their desire to be linked to Britain. Such a statement did not come from spite or dislike, but out of loyalty to the crown, personal political affiliations, and concern that another war would, once again, retard any ministerial work that American Methodists would be able to do. An excerpt of the Petition of 1815 reads as follows:

In June 1811 previous to the War, an official Letter was sent to Dr. Coke bearing the signatures of all the Stewards, Leaders, & Trustees in which we solicited a supply of British Preachers. To this letter we never received an answer... The following are the reasons why we thus applied (1) we are British Subjects, this we consider a priviledge [sic] Honour; we believe it therefore to be our duty to employ as Minister none but such Preachers as are under the British Conference; this duty we believe we have for ourselves, our country & our Lord. (2) The difference that exists between us as British Subjects & our American Brethren as Citizens of the United States in regard to our political principles...we are willing to bear all the indignities and

⁶⁴ Bishop Asbury's protest against this intrusion was answered by the London Missionary Committee with a reference to the Lower Canadians' preference for English preachers... Probably the deaths of the diplomatic Coke and Asbury prolonged the settling of this confrontation between English and American influences. Before a concordat was reached in 1819 giving Lower Canada and Kingston to the English Conference." See Moir, "Influence," 450.

⁶⁵ "When Bishop Asbury complained of the English intrusion the Missionary Committee in London replied that their missionaries had been invited by the loyal Methodists of Lower Canada." See Moir, *British*, 93.

⁶⁶ Bennett quoting John Strong, "Letter 6 October 1815," 3-4.

reproval...for the Cause of Christ, but to have our fidelity as Britons disrespected we cannot away with. (3) That in the event of War with Great Britain & the United States, we should be in great danger of being left without Preachers. It is a fact that cannot be controverted that several circuits in Canada during the late War have been thus left, at the manifest injury of Religion...(4) The manner in which Preachers are sent to Canada is to us objectionable. The American Bishops who it appears have the exclusive right of stationing the Preachers, have no authority whatever to appoint Preachers in these Provinces...In having a supply of British Preachers, this evil will be removed.⁶⁷

Although Upper Canada would eventually be given to the Americans and Lower Canada ceded to the Wesleyans the writing was on the wall.⁶⁸ Methodism had forever been changed in the Canadas and the post-war frontier faith needed to dedicate its time less to the teaching of God's word and more to the demonstration that its brand of Christianity was a blessing to citizens who had recently purchased their place in the British Empire with the blood of their children.⁶⁹

D. Loyal Episcopal Methodism

In order to prove their loyalty, the Methodists not only pointed to the actions of their adherents in the previous war but also, as Henry Ryan had done, argued that the actions of the leaders and preachers proved that they valued the souls of the inhabitants with unquestionable fidelity. The loyalty of the Episcopal Methodists to the empire was made manifest by caring for the people that comprised the empire. In December of 1813 the congregation of St. Croix wrote that "[Mr. Bullpitt has] been

⁶⁷ "Petition 11 November 1815," 2-3.

⁶⁸ "In 1820 it was agreed by both conferences that the American-sponsored societies of Lower Canada should be placed under the care of the British brethren while British societies in Upper Canada were to come under the care of the American or Canadian brethren." See Walsh, *Church*, 139.

⁶⁹ "Upper Canada's political and clerical elite reacted harshly to the resurgence of Methodism. Despite their single-minded preoccupation with the conversion of souls, the Methodists were now politically vulnerable, as it was easy for their opponents to accuse them of disloyalty. Loyalist government officials, Anglican and Church of Scotland churchmen, and British Wesleyan Methodist missionaries pointed to the fact that appointments to Upper Canada's nineteen circuits were made south of the border and concluded that members of the Methodist Episcopal Church were Yankee republicans in their hearts." See Adamson, "Continent," 435-6.

particularly instrumental, under God, in doing much good [for] the inhabitants of this infant colony.”⁷⁰ Men like Ryan and Bullpitt, along with the others who had suffered so many privations because of, and throughout, the war provided ample proof that the American Methodists were serving the Kingdom of God irrespective of political discord in the realms of earth. This also reflected a subtle change in the understanding of the role of society and the individual. As has been demonstrated, the Anglican and Presbyterian rhetoric around loyalty focused on the attributes of the empire in order to court the allegiance of the people.⁷¹ In contrast, the Methodists showed their allegiance to the empire by caring for the people.⁷² While reflective of the Democratic focus on the individual, critics of Methodism were hard pressed to wield such accusations with any kind of success to the citizenry that had been on the receiving end of American-based Methodist support.

That active brand of Methodist loyalty offered a potent foil to the Anglican establishment argument by stating that combining church and government was not

⁷⁰ St. Croix, “Letter 14 December 1813,” 1.

⁷¹ Clark provides an example of concern related to the increase of division due to a multiplicity of religious and political sentiments: “Party spirit amongst ourselves has already weakened the harmony of society, and assumed a threatening aspect. Should war, undertaken in such a state of things, increase the flame of party passions, and embolden to acts of outrage on the peace of society, who can calculate the extent of the mischiefs that are preparing to flow in upon our country.” See Clark, *Sermon 1812*, 5. Strachan likewise condemned such “party spirit” and lambasted the perceived freedoms brought about by the Revolutionary War: “But the [Revolutionary War] was not about liberty, for he uniformly maintained, that there was less of true liberty among our neighbours, than when they were colonies; for the dominion of the party...renders all pretentions to liberty ridiculous. It is a fiction that has always been turbulent, cruel, and vindictive, discovering oppressions where none existed, supporting insolence, and trampling upon virtue. Not is it doubtful that the most rational and best informed, would rather live under a mild mixed government, possessing the power of enforcing its decrees, than in their recent disjointed democracy.” See Strachan, *Funeral 1815*, 28. Both of these quotes show the concern over allowing democratic influences too much sway within the colony, a point this work has made.

⁷² Cecilia Morgan has done extensive work examining how the cultural elites of the day saw their place in society, and what spiritual significance they attached to their social standing. Referencing public morality she writes, “those who had been entrusted with leadership must be careful not to abuse their position. Rulers and elites were, after all, expected to behave in a moral fashion and thus set examples that would encourage the development of loyalty within the home and nation.” See Morgan, *Public Men*, 31.

always a blessing but could lead to corruption or crippling bureaucracy counterproductive to the sharing of the gospel.⁷³ Such an opinion reflected a more American sentiment and formed a direct challenge to the Anglican Church's belief that the church was called to be a vital and functioning aspect of government in order to insure that governance maintained spiritual character.⁷⁴ In the eighteenth century, Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke wrote in their *Doctrines* that "The idea of the supreme magistrate or legislature of a country, ought to be the head of the church in that nation, is a position which, we think, no one *here* will presume to assert."⁷⁵ It is not difficult to see how such beliefs were seen to be part of a republican political agenda couched in religious language that threatened social structures inherent in the British system.⁷⁶ While the Methodist people of Montreal enjoyed the attention and support they received from the American brethren, they also recognized that the cultural tides were shifting and that the war had forced new realities that needed to be addressed. Writing to Asbury, a leader by the name of McGinnis explained his opinion about the future of the denomination:

the late unhappy war which has begotten in the minds of the people and—particularly in the society a spirit of prejudice to the American people and Preachers which we much fear will not easily be done away. As the war prevented us from corresponding with our

⁷³ "[T]he Church of England, whose work had been frustrated so regularly in the revolted colonies, was one vehicle for preserving loyalty." See Moir, *British*, 22.

⁷⁴ Nancy Christie also cites how their theology offended the Anglican respect for British institutions: "[Itinerant preachers] transplanted the ideology of equality and liberty into British North America, where their radical religious tenets found a sympathetic hearing among the American Loyalists who were largely common folk, small farmers and artisans." See Christie, "Democratic," 28.

⁷⁵ Asbury/Coke, *Doctrines*, 6.

⁷⁶ The Hay Bay revival, "was attended by approximately 2,500 people (about 5 percent of the total Upper Canadian population)." Rawlyk, *Fire*, 120. Although prior to the war, such a revival, no doubt, concerned the Anglicans of the region. The existence of such a disproportionately large group of people together—organized by theological dissenters with democratic sentiments from America—had political implications as well.

American Brethren we were under the necessity of soliciting the British Conference to supply us with Preachers⁷⁷

McGinnis's statement about the necessity of communing with the British Wesleyans reflected an understanding that the messages being proclaimed by the Americans were not overly political but that a growing prejudice towards all things American prevented Christ's message from superseding such fearful anger.⁷⁸

Therefore, the American Methodists needed to respond and enter their voice into the loyalist conversation in ways that reflected their belief. If not, they faced the loss of the Upper and Lower Canadian circuits entirely. What could have been a disastrous turn of events for the American Methodists was turned, with relatively minor alterations to their ideas, into another avenue of success and continued cultural influence. Focusing on the loyalty of their actions allowed the Methodists to present themselves, once again, as the champions of popular faith and work their way into the frontier culture while simultaneously showing that they were not a threat to increased British sympathies.⁷⁹ The people of the frontiers remained largely left to their own

⁷⁷ McGinnis, "Letter to Asbury," 1.

⁷⁸ Such tensions were not extant simply due to the war as the following quote shows. On the very day the Americans declared war, the following letter was penned: "Brethren I beseech you to consider [the sending of a superintendent] consider the present time a very important one, old prejudices are dying, Methodism has begun to raise its head." See Sutcliffe, "Letter 18 June 1812," 3.

⁷⁹ Such a belief was present in the post-war eulogy of Richard Cartwright presented by none other than John Strachan: "Richard Cartwright, was born at Albany, in the state of New York, then a British colony, on the 2d of February, 1759. His father, an emigrant from England, was highly respectable, of great hospitality and possessed of the most agreeable convivial talents. His mother, born of a loyal Dutch family, was remarkable for her strength of mind, excellent judgment, and tenacity of memory; gifts which descended with increased vigour to her affectionate son. His education commenced at a private school, and much pains was taken by his parents, to gratify that strong desire of information which he exhibited from his earliest infancy. He was permitted to peruse every book which came in his way, nor was such promiscuous reading found injurious to his taste, nor inimical to his progress in useful learning; for the accuracy of his judgment soon taught him to distinguish the useful from the trifling." See Strachan, *Funeral, 1815*, 22. In this we see Strachan's reference to both loyalty (note that he takes pains to state that while Cartwright was born in America, it was when it was still a colony) and a celebration of both English and loyal Dutch (important given that George was a Hanoverian) parentage and a love of education that was not "inimical to his progress" as some more enthusiastic clergy would condemn.

devices and that ushered in a renewed call for Methodism—albeit a Methodism refocused on the role of loyalty—to bring Christian religion to the land. However, the war within Methodism after the conflict with the United States arguably impacted British North American Methodism more than any of the critiques presented by the other denominations. The increased presence of Wesleyans in Lower Canada and their accusations of Methodist disloyalty and undue American influence would force the American Methodists who desired to remain at work in British North America to proclaim loudly their allegiance to the crown and ultimately join their British rivals in order to verify their “Britishness.” Each of these factors changed the face of Methodism in Upper Canada from an exuberant pioneer faith of the people that cared little for national politics into a more reserved and conservative version that required greater institutionalism in order to most effectively communicate its message to the people.⁸⁰

The welcome return of the Episcopal Methodists to Upper Canada presents a difficult challenge to simplistic interpretations that offer anti-Americanism as a defining trait of post-war British North America.⁸¹ An answer might be found, ironically, within the Anglican camp. Their assertions that the empire’s greatness was located in its Christianity insured that Christianity would be sought out by the desperate colonists rebuilding their land after the disastrous war. Yet, just as in the

⁸⁰ It has not been the intention of this chapter to equate evangelicalism with America because the origins of the movement were, of course, British. That also contributed to the ability of American-based Methodism to retain influence over the British North American culture. The beliefs and language of both the Wesleyans and the Episcopalians were so similar that it was nearly impossible for the former to truly distinguish itself from the latter. Many scholars have commented on the transatlantic influence of evangelicalism and have noted “interconnections among British, American and Canadian evangelicals...have been foundational to evangelicalism.” See Noll et al., *Evangelicalism*, 6.

⁸¹ “Closer scrutiny of American religious influences during roughly a century preceding Confederation suggests that anti-Americanism is a minor and in some areas insignificant factor in the development of Canadian Protestantism.” See Moir, “Influence,” 440.

pre-war days, the Anglican and Presbyterian clergy remained largely removed from the homes of the majority whereas the Methodists, freed to roam north of the border, returned to their old roads and circuits and were embraced by the frontier people once again.⁸² The wise ones downplayed their American connections and increased the significance of biblical learning, personal piety, and individual salvation in such a way that the national differences between the colonists and the evangelical clergy were able to be overshadowed by the greater spiritual need of the former for the latter.⁸³ Once again, the war within the Methodist denomination proved that American

⁸² In *Case and his Contemporaries*, John Carroll detailed for his readers what the conditions of the “dark prison” of Upper Canada meant for the saddle-bag preachers of the time. He spoke of both their toils and their reasons for such endeavours in these words: “To accomplish [the spreading of the Gospel in Upper Canada] extensive forests had to be threaded, without the least semblance of roads, and often with no other directions for their journey than the marks on the trees. Rivers had to be crossed without the help of bridges, mountains ascended and descended with neither companion nor guide, and suffering and peril in a thousand forms endured without human alleviation or support. Added to all this, those itinerants were often reduced to extreme want, from the poverty of their brethren and the limited compensation which they received for their labors. Indeed, the subject of pay did not seem to be taken into the account. They lived with the settlers on the scantiest fare, and suffered with them for the sole purpose of winning them to Christ.” See Carroll, *Case*, 6:127-8. Jacob Mountain, although not a Methodist supporter in any capacity, supports Carroll’s description of the land as well as affirming the pervasiveness of the Methodists throughout Upper Canada. He wrote, “From Montreal to Kingston, a distance of 200 miles, there is not one clergyman of the Church of England, nor any house of Religious Worship, except one small Chapel belong’d to the Presbyterians. The Public Worship of God is entirely suspended or performed in a manner that can neither tend to improve the people in Religious Truth, nor to render them useful members of Society... The great bulk of the people have and can have no instruction but such as they receive occasionally from itinerant & mendicant Methodists, a set of ignorant Enthusiasts whose preaching is calculated only to perplex the understanding & corrupt the morals, to relax the nerves of industry, and dissolve the bonds of Society.” See Fahey, *Name*, 10-1. The Wesleyans also exhibited the same drive and determination to reach the people as the Methodists of Upper Canada. In a letter defending himself from possible expulsion from the Connexion, a Mr. James Bulpits gave a detailed account of his activities, “I have traveled through the greatest part of this Island [sic] I have preached from two to three hundred sermons a year and traveled some hundreds of miles through lonesome and disagreeable roads.” See Bulpits, “Letter to Mr. Smith,” 1.

⁸³ Although from the Maritimes, the following provides a good example of how loyalism was considered a central theme of worship by Inglis and, while important, was a secondary consideration to a local Methodist preacher: Note the style of the praying is brought into question in this letter. It appears that Jessop did not follow what was considered standard and appropriate liturgy. Within the liturgy existed rites of worship (including prayer) that would be considered appropriate (read loyal) and form a measurable standards of political loyalty and stability that could be monitored by local authorities: “One of [William Jessop’s] wicked hearers entered a complaint to the Clerk of the Peace [of Saint John], against Mr. Jessop preaching without a license. His complaint was made because Mr. Jessop did not always pray for the King: The fact was, that Mr. J did not pray by form nor by imitation,

connections were destined to remain an ever-present threat to the churches with stronger ties to England. The Episcopal Methodists were able to utilize the language of loyalty and the work of men like Ryan demonstrated their care for the spiritual needs of the loyal colonial subjects. Such words and deeds made it difficult to condemn these ministers as faithless foes dangerous to the well being of British North America. While such a statement might seem to argue against the theme of this work, the struggles that took place within Methodism provide useful insights into how American style religion remained as an influential cultural force—and perceived threat—on the spiritual landscape of post-war Upper Canada.

III. The Character of British North American Loyalty

A. Refuse New Doctrines and Ideas

If the rejection of American religion was to be a dominant trait in British North America, it was incumbent upon the churches to define what that actually meant. The old interpretations of the term needed to be updated in light of the preceding three years and, much as before the war, it was the Anglicans and Presbyterians that found themselves establishing the parameters of the dialogue. John Burns' interpretation of the twenty-fourth Psalm provides the core of this first trait of British North American loyalty. In his translation he stated a biblical injunction to “fear thou the Lord and the King; and meddle not with them that are given to change,” and it was in the rejection of new ideas, both political and religious, that the colonists were instructed to cling to the time-tested ideals that defined the British Empire. Robert Easton instructed his people to “[s]till consider political union, as the

but as the Lord gave him liberty: hence he sometimes did, and at other times did not pray for the King.” See “1794 Petition to Preach,” as found in Bell, *Manning and Innis*, 309-10.

bulwark of your safety and independence. Beware of any new doctrine in politics; lest it comes, as a thief, to steal away your treasure, and rob you of the honor to which you have attained.”⁸⁴ The “political union” was a comment on those who believed that the proper way to insure the future prosperity of the colony was to adopt certain measures that were more akin to the Democratic ideas taught in the American Republic. To incorporate American plans was to invite disunion from the empire and instability within the land because, as the war had shown, the newer concepts were proving to be more chaotic than helpful.⁸⁵

James Reid also encouraged his listeners to reflect on the superiority of the government they already enjoyed rather than courting new ideas. In 1816, he reminded the people that “There remained so much virtue, talents, and religious zeal, on the side of our excellent Constitution, and our Holy Religion, as arrested the torrent of political innovation” and that such a proven record was the surest protection from “skepticism in Religion... in its daring, sweeping progress.”⁸⁶ Not that progress was to be condemned but that it was to be found within the context of the British system was the deeper point these men were attempting to make. For Burns, the English monarchy had a biblical mandate to govern as “God's deputies or vicegerents here on earth” and instructed the people that the system of government they lived under derived power not from itself but from God and that such as system was put in

⁸⁴ Easton, *Reasons*, 15.

⁸⁵ “The enemy must be sincerely desirous of peace... Peace on honourable terms, which are likely to be permanent and profitable in their duration and effects is certainly always to be desired; and such terms it is reasonable for us to require. The evils of war are great, especially its immoral effects. These are not sufficiently considered by most men, but on this account particularly all good men long and pray for Peace.” See Stewart, *Providence*, 17.

⁸⁶ Reid, *Thanksgiving 1816*, 16

place “to govern and protect the world in peace and quietness.”⁸⁷ Although citing God as the ultimate reason for the success of the military effort in the Canadas, Easton also saw the ineptitude of the American government as proof that they truly were a faithless nation and that those who fought for England had been wise in their choice. He preached: “Let us glance at the means under God, by which the Canadas have been preserved entire notwithstanding every effort, in the power of political delusion, to alienate and subdue them. This was owing to disunion abroad, unanimity at home, and the active perseverance of those, to whom the defence of them was intrusted [sic].”⁸⁸ In his Prayer of Consecration at the presenting of a banner to the 3rd Regiment of the York militia, Strachan prayed: “Enable us, Almighty God, to remember with the most grateful hearts, the inestimable benefits which thou hast conferred upon us as a people—we have tasted the sweets of civil and religious liberty: we have enjoyed the blessings of peace, of tranquility and order; and when war has assailed us, thou has given us the victory over our enemies.”⁸⁹ These comments demonstrate the religious opinions of men like Easton, Strachan and Burns that, while a peace treaty was in place, the war for the souls of British North Americans was far from over. However, the very subjects these men were trying to protect seemed more concerned with the reestablishment of cross-border commercial ventures than with expelling any perceived dangerous Republican ideologies. Such forgetfulness of the recent war caused fear that the “torch of sedition” was once again poised to “scatter fire and devastation through the land.”⁹⁰ Conservative political

⁸⁷ Burns, *Thanksgiving*, 6.

⁸⁸ Easton, *Reasons*, 8-9.

⁸⁹ “Prayer of Consecration,” as found in Spragge, *Letter Book*, 12.

⁹⁰ Burns, *Sermon 1814*, 3.

ideologies were needed to ward off the tendencies of the American goals and nowhere was this seen more than in the American pursuit of material wealth. The rejection of that, along with the ideas that inspired such a pursuit, was the next defining trait of British North American loyalty.

B. Guard Against Luxury

The pursuit of wealth was not denigrated as much as the pursuit of wealth at the cost of social responsibility. Bethune argued that while every society had rich and poor the mark of “all good governments, and salutary institutions, the rich always pay for the poor, and they have reason to bless God that they are able to do it.”⁹¹ Such a sentiment reiterated the understanding that material blessings were sought not just for personal aggrandizement, but also to be used to bless others. In the rugged landscape of the post-war Canadas, community became even more important to survival. Given that the majority of the people still subscribed to an agrarian lifestyle, Alexander Spark saw in the earth a cautionary tale that he gave to his people. He instructed them with a simple lesson from their daily lives: “whatever promotes a mode or fashion of living, too remote from the simplicity of nature, in consequence of which men ruin their fortunes by extravagance, destroy their own peace, impair the health of their bodies and the faculties of their minds;—all these things do obviously diminish the strength and resources of the nation.”⁹² Once again, the strength of the nation was located within the ability and the desire of the people to unite with their neighbours and share. Such unity and combined achievements did not diminish the individual but strengthened the nation that, in turn, made it easier for all the inhabitants to realize

⁹¹ Bethune, “Letter 1815,” 2.

⁹² Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 17.

their personal dreams. In the submission to such principles the people of the Canadas could make the quality of life throughout the colony better than, as well as ideologically different from, America.

As with all things clerically related, the strongest injunctions to follow their teaching came from the words of the Bible. Reminding the people that their actions carried eternal significance, Jacob Mountain enjoined his people to thankfully and joyfully “look up to that country, whose maker and builder is God” because it was God who had built England and it was the teachings of God’s word that the subjects of England needed to heed. In order to retain a spiritual worldview he encouraged all the people to “abandon all the trifling pleasures, and groveling luxuries that, have a tendency to chain our souls to earth, and withhold their elevation to the hope of gaining admission into the everlasting happy mansions of the blessed.”⁹³ Because peace brought with it the promise of new prosperity and the return of commerce, Mountain wanted to insure that the people did not forget everything the previous war had taught them about the superiority of England while they chased after the promises of wealth. Easton also feared what the cessation of hostilities could mean to the spiritual lives of his parishioners and, using the tales of scripture, spoke the following:

Peace has its dangers as well as war. Jeshurun, living at his ease, and having plenty to eat and drink, became vain and profligate: he ‘waxed fat and kicked: then he forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation.’ Selfishness, pride, and dissipation, are the very worst diseases, which can seize the members of a community...Recollect that public virtue is public happiness. Never let the syren [sic] voice of unlawful pleasures, never let the deceitful charms of vice carry of your hearts from those duties, which, in general practice, form the strength and glory of a nation.⁹⁴

⁹³ Mountain, *Sermon 1814*, 15.

⁹⁴ Easton, *Reasons*, 16.

Easton feared that peace would undo all that the people had fought to defend and there were few threats greater than the “siren song” of material gain.

With the war over, the lure of American business was once again threatening to usurp Britain’s place in the colony. Therefore, a new concept was needed if the royal purse was no longer a strong enough motivation for loyalty and, as before, the clergy attempted to underpin their understanding of British governance through the use of Christianity. It was their hope that the people would recognize the Christian principles that undergirded all public policy and, as such, that they possessed all they needed to succeed without ever having to look beyond their own border.

C. Christianity as Guide for Public Policy

As the colony went forward into the nineteenth century, the various policies that would define the political and social landscape were to be based on the teachings of Christianity. Before the war, the desire to create a Christian society created dissension between the various denominations but, in the years following the war, the need to remain faithful to scriptural teachings became a defining issue designed to further separate the colony from the faithless republic. The following statement, uttered by Robert Easton, provides the strongest argument for the public role of faith within the colony: “As christianity [sic] is both the purest source, and surest guard of public manners; so I would recommend the faith and practice of it, as essentially important.”⁹⁵ It was Christianity that provided motivation for true loyalty because, as Sydney Wise states, “society is incapable of sufficiently rewarding its members to ensure its own preservation”⁹⁶ As James Stewart understood society, the role of the

⁹⁵ Easton, *Reasons*, 17.

⁹⁶ Wise, “Sermon,” 86.

individual was to live in such a way that he or she could garner the favour of God and the more people that did so, the more the entire colony could, and would, improve. He told the people “we ought to improve general and national providences. The public mercies and judgments of God concern every man; and every one of us ought to endeavour to make them profitable to himself and to all around him.”⁹⁷ British North America was about more than just the individual or even a community, it was about a collective of people honouring God and God honouring them, that was an idea that a secular understanding of nationalism could neither capture nor understand. The God that “saw what was done in secret” rewarded such moral attributes and it was through such ways that the individual character strengthened the nation. Because, as Easton explained it, “The wisdom of God is certainly greater than the wisdom of men” the people were called to, through faith, act in ways that honoured the will of God because only the plans that had divine sanction were “effectual for the right formation of human character” that were brought about by “an enlarged knowledge, and a steadfast belief of the gospel.” Therefore, for the sake of the nation, Easton beseeched the people to “study your Bible, to make yourself familiar with the word of God... By being able to act in this wise manner, you will reap the advantages, and so will your country.”⁹⁸ Christianity was not placed in the private sphere of individual tastes and proclivities but was considered, from the perspective of Easton and many others, to be on public display in order to strengthen the colony and further distance it from the faithless Americans.

That was how loyalty to the empire was manifest in ways that united Great

⁹⁷ Stewart, *Providence*, 5.

⁹⁸ Easton, *Reasons*, 17-9.

Britain with the Kingdom of God without necessarily equating the two as one and the same. Because of the ubiquitous belief in the power of providence, faith could not be left to the personal decisions of people without a deeper understanding of how faith impacted the formation of the colony. Religion and loyalty were enmeshed with each other and, in that, lay the concern within the ranks of the clergy who truly believed—along with all their other less than noble goals—that the strength of British North America lay in its connection to England and England’s strength lay in its connection to, and worship of, God. Robert Easton defined that divine relationship, and the actions that such a relationship demanded, in the following way:

You may well ask, what better are we, than others of our fellow subjects, who have not had the same advantages? In shewing you so much indulgence, God expects that his bounty will return to him, in the warm effusions, and upright services of devout and grateful hearts. If you withhold this tribute; if, instead of applying your preserved lives and increased [sic] substance to wise and righteous purposes, you abuse these favors of the Almighty; he may be provoked [sic] to hide his face, and leave you to read your ingratitude in some direful punishment.⁹⁹

Since providence was seen as the source of all human hope, religion could never belong to only one but had to be considered in light of the larger community and the transatlantic world.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Easton, *Reasons*, 11-2.

¹⁰⁰ In his celebration of Napoleon’s defeat, Alexander Spark saw God at work not just to vanquish a foe but also to defend the beloved British Constitution, the document that sought to honour God through the governing of the English nation. Spark preached: “This great scheme was to be the death warrant of the British Constitution, and to secure universal empire, to this new unprincipled Power, which affected to be the Arbiter of nations. But here, we behold interposed, the hand of a just and avenging Providence. We see the wicked caught in the snare, which he himself had spread. To adopt the language of the Psalmist, (Psal. 7, 14), ‘Behold he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch, which he made . His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate’ . . . By the just judgment of, Heaven, defeat and ruin were the rewards of his temerity.” Spark, *Sermon 1814*, 11. Napoleon received justice for his actions but it was not just historically significant leaders that needed to heed the warnings of providence, it was every person that desired to remain within the will of God.

Although the Americans could make the same claim about the Christian nature of their own constitution, that only served to further highlight the differences between the two lands and the dangers of Episcopal Methodism. It was in the fact that both nations ascribed their character to scripture, that both lands read the Bible in the same language, and that both lands came to drastically different conclusions about how to best serve God in national governance that the danger of American Methodism for colonial subjects could be seen. Public policies had the power not only to shape the culture of the colony but also to differentiate between what was British and what was American. Throughout the century, as the leaders of British North America struggled to define and assert British policies in the colonial setting, the rules, guidelines, concerns, and policies were destined to shift and evolve. However, in the years immediately following the War of 1812, the clergy recognized that the only hope a policy had for increasing the prestige and safety of the Canadas was in its ability to reflect the teachings of Christianity. James Stewart summarized that idea:

Previous to the war we laid out some of our property, which God had given us, in building this house of worship, sacred to his worship; and we also erected places of education for our youth...we have studied to prevent injury and injustice taking place on our frontier, and to maintain peace and good will with our neighbours...The providence of God has smiled on these measures...We have also exercised charity, in commiserating the sufferings and contributing to the relief of our distressed brethren in Upper Canada; and this good work, no doubt, has tended to bless and secure our property...The public circumstances which I have mentioned, have in some degree, I am persuaded, recommended us to the particular favour of Providence.¹⁰¹

God had blessed the people of Upper and Lower Canada, God had prevented the flood of war from washing away all that they held dear, and, as long as the people continued to grow and define their land through the inspiration of scripture and the

¹⁰¹ Stewart, *Providence*, 15.

expulsion of any idea deemed to be anti-scriptural they had no cause to believe that God would not also care for them and bless them in the unsure days that awaited them.¹⁰²

Implicit in all of this dialogue was a challenge to the people of the Canadas to be wary of whom they welcomed as their neighbour. If too many American ideas and people began to infiltrate the British colony there was a chance that this bulwark of safety and independence for the entire world could be corrupted by notions of wealth and personal freedom that led to war and chaos and the rejection of what these churchmen believed was essential and inspiring about the British Kingdom.

IV. Interpreting the War

A. Creating “British” Natives

One policy that was destined to be both influenced by religion and of special importance for the development of British North America up to, and beyond, Confederation was the issue of the Native population. Given their importance in securing numerous victories against the Americans, the post-war issue became one of maintaining a positive and mutually beneficial relationship, an issue that became complicated when the Native land concerns were wholly overlooked at Ghent.¹⁰³ In keeping with the theme of expelling the faithless foe, the role of the Native tribes was

¹⁰² Another example of how public policy was called to be influenced by Christianity: “if seeming expediency should become the rule of political conduct; and equity, benevolence, and piety be regarded as rather fitted for private life than for the cabinet and the field...the sun of England would set in darkness, and her glory wither for ever!” Mountain, *Death*, 22. Also: “‘Never,’ says our great Lord Bacon; ‘Never was there found in any age of the world, either philosophy, or sect, or religion, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the *public good*, as the Christian faith.’” See Mountain, *Humane*, 6. Italics part of the original quote.

¹⁰³ “[T]he Treaty of Ghent preserved the future of British North America by establishing a foundation of security from American incursions that ensured its survival. Combined with a new sense of selfhood that was fostered by the performance of the Canadian militia during the war, the conditions of peace set British North America on the path that would in less than fifty years see the emergence of Canada as a distinct nation.” See Zuelhke, *Honour’s Sake*, 390. Nowhere were the Native contributions listed as central to the military campaigns and Tecumseh’s vision of a Native Confederacy died with him.

important for the peacetime development of British North America. Because many Natives remained in the Canadas following the war, it became the mission of the Anglican Church especially to help cultivate these “sons of nature” into proper, civilized, British subjects. The concern that the uncouth and volatile frontier Methodist religion might be more appealing to the Natives made evangelizing them a matter of internal security. Their significance in the numerous early British victories in the War of 1812 was well known even if not widely heralded and to have these people unduly influenced by American religion was inexcusable to the British churches. In addition to that, the ability to convert the warriors over to the Anglican or Presbyterian fold would show that England, not America, was the truest friend of the Native.

The means of attaining “friendly intercourse” with the Natives of British North America, from the clerical perspective, was through the sharing of the gospel in order to save the Natives’ souls. Present day critics of religion see in this an ulterior motive of colonization that, while not altogether wrong, does dismiss the prevalent worldview of the time that all people possessed an eternal soul. With such a belief in place, it was the Christian’s responsibility to educate as many people as possible about that fact in order to win them over to Christ.¹⁰⁴ A reflection from the Annals of the Colonial Church reported that among the Native chiefs and people there existed “a desire for religious instruction, and at the same time [they] are so humble and sober in

¹⁰⁴ “That highly favoured country, to which we have the happiness to belong has set a glorious example” and the attention paid to the translation of the scripture which “reveal the way of Salvation to mankind” into multiple languages for the evangelization of the world proved that even something as dire as war could not prevent God’s mission from being realized in the world. Looking forward to a future in which the land he lived was no longer burdened by war, Reid rhetorically asked: “If such works as these have been accomplished in time of war, what may we not expect in time of peace?” See Reid, *Thanksgiving 1816*, 14.

their expectations, and so grateful, that it is a pleasure to have communication with them, and to show them favour.”¹⁰⁵ The humility of the audience inspired the banality of the teachers and, in that dialogue, it was hoped a mutual respect could be nurtured that would be beneficial to both parties. James Strachan quoted in his record the report of a journalist listed as “N.N.” who argued that religion was no respecter of race and that “the human mind, whether enclosed in a white, red, or black tabernacle, exhibits the same qualities and powers, when subjected to similar discipline; and the scripture account.” He went on to argue that race was an illegitimate delineator, because “we are all the descendants of one common parent, [and this] is corroborated by the natural history of our species.”¹⁰⁶ Although Methodist sentimentality and emotionalism might have more common ground with the Native customs that proved only that Methodism was too close to paganism and, as such, could not be counted on to achieve the same kind of change within the Native culture as was desired.

The traits that were desired were, as always, the ability to function as proper, respectful, and contributing members of the colonial society. Therefore, the Native population needed to understand, and acquiesce to, British institutions that included the church and the heightened call to morality. Although Strachan had argued in 1812 that the Natives’ military abilities were best utilized by being channeled rather than changed, his beliefs about their position in culture did not mirror his wartime convictions. Strachan asserted: “Already the Indians have acquired more correct ideas concerning marriage – a strong desire to have their children educated like the

¹⁰⁵ Hawkins, *Annals*, 197.

¹⁰⁶ James Strachan quoting journalist N.N., *Visit*, 151-2.

whites.”¹⁰⁷ In such a statement the reader is shown that Strachan believed that it was through the family that one was educated about societal responsibility and, given his role as an educator to the young men of Upper Canada, it is not surprising to read his pleasure that the Natives appeared, from his perspective, to be desirous of such an education.¹⁰⁸ However, he also condemned some of their other cultural traits and explained to his recipient that the Natives he had spoken with desired to “raise the condition of their women,” as well as alter the nature of their religious practices, something he held little respect for as is evidenced by this quotation: “[They desire] to abjure idolatry, their prophets, and the medicine-bag,” before he concluded with a comment about the ferocity that had earned the Natives such animosity, fear, and respect. Strachan wrote: “[They possess] a growing sense of the sinfulness of murder, drunkenness, implacable enmity, and revenge.”¹⁰⁹

For Strachan, the argument was always centered on the superior Christianity of the British Empire, an empire that was charged with bringing stability, peace, and Christian values to the world. He was able to claim the desires of the Native people to emulate British Christianity as proof that what he had predicted would happen during the war had in fact taken place. In arguing that the Natives were open to Christian influence, Strachan celebrated his earlier assessment related to the use of Natives in the war and offered one more reason why England had to win because it was

¹⁰⁷ Strachan as found in Hawkins, *Annals of the Colonial Church*, 197.

¹⁰⁸ The importance of the family on the larger society was spoken of by others as well: “Nor can I well understand how a sense of religion can be maintained in a family without the exercise of daily devotion in it. Families are but little societies, as societies are larger families; and therefore religion, which is confessedly the best bond and cement of union in states and larger communities, is likewise so in little domestic governments.” See Stewart, *Prayers*, 48.

¹⁰⁹ Strachan as found in Hawkins, *Annals of the Colonial Church*, 197.

faithfully answering the spiritual mandate to bring the light of the Gospel to the pagans of the world.

B. Trajectory of Interpretation

The focus on the blessings that peace could provide, the desire to convert the Natives, the lament over the continued presence of Episcopal Methodists, and the increased attention to British customs, manners and immigrants were all designed to strengthen the land internally and ward off further American incursions. The frequent post-war references to American innovations, the continued and growing threat of Methodists from the States, and the clerical calls for improvements to infrastructure in the wilderness found their impetus in the awareness that to negate such demands was to invite further, and likely more successful, American campaigns. As in the days prior to Madison's declaration, the churches used theology and biblical tales to strengthen their arguments about the love that God had for England and the disreputable ideas characterized by American thinking. What changed from 1812–1815 was a clearer understanding of why loyalty was so important, the ability to single out people who had proven their loyalty and, most importantly, the proof needed to convince an audience that honouring American manners was akin to flirting with disaster.

The reality was that the new immigrants coming to the colony from England lacked sufficient bias against America and some even seemed somewhat enamoured of the “republican giant” to the south. These indifferent attitudes toward the United States caused some tension with those who had fought so hard to maintain a

transatlantic identity.¹¹⁰ The relative slowness of the rebuilding campaigns, the financial devastation the Napoleonic Wars leveled on the empire, and the need for renewed commerce all guaranteed that America, as a nation and as a birthplace of exciting and alluring innovations, would remain an active presence within, and not just next to, the Canadas. For the remainder of the century issues as diverse as naturalization, healthcare, education, and government reform would be influenced both by prominent clergy as well as the War of 1812.¹¹¹ However, while Strachan and the Methodist Egerton Ryerson would utilize the war throughout their various political rivalries, these would not occur until the following decades. Strachan used the war as evidence that American-based Methodists should not be allowed to teach at

¹¹⁰ “In that way, loyalty became arguably the defining trait of the provinces as individuals and groups attempted to show why their voice should be heard based on their history of supporting the land that was supposed to offer them such avenues of change and reform. In his work on the Irish in Ontario during the latter part of the nineteenth century, Donald Akenson correctly interprets this tendency as the post-war colony was greeted with a greater amount of immigrants, each of whom were bringing their views of the British Empire to bear on the colony. He states that such interpretations of empire were not always greeted warmly by the more established people and writes, “a ‘moral’ justification for the privileges of the early settlers was to be invoked: their loyalism in leaving the American colonies and, more important, the loyalty shown in the war of 1812 by themselves, their offspring and, crucially, by their later arriving neighbours entitled them to whatever advantages they held in the competition with the post-1815 immigrants.” See Akenson, *Irish*, 118. Therefore, the responsibility the people took from 1812-1815 to defend the rights of the British Empire within the provinces demanded that such loyalty be returned, in kind, to them.

¹¹¹ “By 1837 power had passed to the new men in Niagara; they held all of the elective positions and like Methodism, they were becoming ‘respectable.’ The old ‘loyalty issue’ had lost its magical charm in the floods of immigration and the remnant of the old elite slipped into proud obscurity. The old order did not cling to a tenuous existence of dependence upon the centre; the Tories, like the radicals were embarrassed by their leadership. Reform was in view, rebellion unthinkable. The District of Niagara, after two decades of violent political debate, had decided upon a sensible middle course in which the old order was left behind to perish quietly from old age.” See Nelles, “Loyalism,” 114. Ironically it was the influx of British settlers, having no personal past with the republican giant of the south, and with little claim to the loyalty that was born in the War of 1812, felt less threatened by American ideals. This, in turn, ushered in more understandings of empire from the centre which, as shown in the first chapter of this work, was actually somewhat enamoured by the American experiment rather than opposed to it. The arrival of these immigrants began the denigration of loyalty—that is loyalty tied to the War of 1812—in the Canadas and ushered in ideas of reform, moderation, and even acceptance of American influences like Methodism as long as they were, in Nelles’s words, “respectable.” Thus did the development of nineteenth-century loyalism replace peripheral understandings of imperial beliefs as central to be considered a good and decent citizen and replaced it with a more general sense that as long as one kept the peace of the land, one was acceptable.

King's College or that American-born citizens should not be allowed to be naturalized or that people with American connections should not be able to define government policy, but each of these was a much later development.¹¹² Ryerson contradicted Strachan and argued that Methodists' actions in the war proved their loyalty and that place of birth should not disqualify a person from becoming a British subject and that the pervasive number of Methodists in Upper Canada necessitated their presence on King's College faculty, but these too were arguments that occurred decades later. What is noticeably lacking in the few years immediately following the war is the presence of such arguments, and while tensions related to the interpretation of the war existed, the use of the war as a foundational moment for the colony seems to be a development of the following decades' political issues. However, even in the four years following Ghent, the trajectory for how the war would be interpreted was established. The continued presence of American Methodism and the ongoing struggle for establishment by the British Churches displayed that while the faithless foe of the American nation had been expelled, the perspective of many of these clergy was that the faithless foe of American religion remained.¹¹³

Peace, while celebrated by every church, proved an elusive term to define and ultimately it was the material blessings of that peace that usurped the spiritual

¹¹² In regards to the importance of education in Lower Canada: "In many parts of them they are destitute of Schools and School-Masters. Now, that the Population in most of them is considerable, this ought to be remedied... It is desirable that the first principles of religion, morality, and loyalty to the King, should be early instilled into the rising generation." See Stewart, *Townships*, 16. This is one of the arguments that would be utilized by Strachan in his bid for an all-Anglican faculty at King's College in 1828.

¹¹³ The following example of the persistent nature of Anglican disdain of, and fear regarding, Methodism follows: "A true faith must lay the foundation of everything...the obligation of *obedience* to the *Commandments* of *Christ*; the necessity, of that strictly *virtuous*, and *moral* conduct, by which the Christian is to shew his faith... Our self-titled Evangelical Preachers, are too apt to overlook these obligations—obvious, and incontrovertible as they are." See Mountain, *Charge*, 18-9. Italics part of the original quotation.

concerns of the Anglican clergy as they sought to use the war with America to end the clerical influences of the churches from America. Just as in the days prior to the struggle, the Anglicans found themselves numerically and culturally unable to sustain their position of establishment. The religious landscape was further complicated after the war by the Presbyterian desires for co-establishment and the Wesleyan ability to attract subjects to British-style Methodism that, while not as abhorrent as American Methodism, still weakened the Anglican Church. Debates and animosity on a number of issues survived the war and there was no evidence to suggest that the end of the War of 1812 meant the end of the religious struggle. The events of the war became just another weapon in the arsenals of these various groups and insured that even something as cataclysmic as national conflict proved unable to supersede ecclesiastical concerns. While the post-war colony was rapidly growing beyond the isolationism of the pre-war version, a fragmented religious ethos, albeit one influenced by the War of 1812, was destined to remain.

Conclusion

Even though the actual phrase “expel the faithless foe” was not used in any of the religious discourse of the time, the idea was ubiquitous throughout. The idea of expulsion is of special importance because it implied the notion of pushing back against invaders that had entered into space that did not belong to them. For the Anglicans and Presbyterians, the Revolutionary War had proven the “faithless” character of the American nation. Their belief that the British Empire was God’s chosen instrument to bring light to a dark world meant that the revolution was to be condemned as it stood in opposition to the will of God. The religious threat came from the abundance of Episcopal Methodist missionaries who were invading the loyal provinces and attempting to inculcate the colonists with improper doctrine and ill-conceived church structures. The American Methodist focus on individualism, exciting and loud worship, lack of educated clergy, enthusiasm, and perceived adherence to the Republican ideas dominant in the culture of the United States, were viewed as antithetical to the more British focus on social responsibility, sober teaching, and adherence to the British king and constitution.

With the 1812 declaration of war, the churches with stronger transatlantic connections were presented with powerful proof that their suspicions were based in reality and that the need to expel the faithless national foe of America from British soil coincided with the clerical need to expel the faithless doctrines of the Methodists as well. Strong in the belief that the empire was essential to the Providential plans for the world, the colonists were encouraged to see their sacrifice as service to God and

their defense of the Canadas as defense of the British Empire. The characteristics of that empire were lauded as proof of the Christian character of England and offered as encouragement that loyalty to such an empire would insure the colonists' personal success as well. While the military campaigns were completed by the beginning of 1815, the return of Episcopal Methodism to the post-war provinces served to show just how pervasive American ideologies had become in even the loyalist province of Upper Canada.

Therefore, the end of the national war invigorated the renewal of the religious war as the "faithless foe" of the American nation dissipated only to be replaced by the "faithless foe" of American Methodism. Whether critiquing the United States or the frontier religion that was deemed too similar in its teachings and practice, the Anglicans, Presbyterians and—to a lesser extent— Wesleyans were constructing a more British version of British North American culture in order to combat what they perceived to be the growing threat of faithless, American values. These arguments found their impetus in the mixed composition of colonial inhabitants, the dubious loyalties of the American-born farmers, and the events of the War of 1812. In order to unite such disparate peoples, the clergy defined and celebrated England's Christian character to demonstrate to that fragmented and diverse collection of inhabitants the benefits of being loyal subjects of God's empire rather than foolish citizens of a faithless nation.

This work has presented research from an important but overlooked segment of Canadian religious and intellectual history. Through examining the clerical discourse of Upper and Lower Canadian Protestant clergy during the War of 1812,

this research challenges popular notions about the war and the development of Canada as a nation. Instead, this research offers the understanding that the churches were constructing an imperial identity informed by concerns prevalent within the colonial setting. Phyllis Airhart's understanding of churches being nation builders is sustained by this work but only with the understanding that the churches were attempting to build a nation defined by proximity to, not independence from, England. With such an understanding in place, popular notions like the contest being a "war for Canada" or that anti-Americanism formed a large portion of the post-war culture can be challenged and altered to more accurately reflect the writings of those who lived through the events. This work demonstrates that the rejection of American principles in the colony was not the birth of Canada but is better understood as a watershed moment that inspired a renewed call for a transatlantic relationship with Britain.

The purpose of the first chapter was to introduce the sentiment present within much of the Anglican and Presbyterian discourse that Methodism was seen as a faithless version of Christianity that needed to be expelled from the British territory. Through examining the origins of the denominations being explored in this dissertation, it was shown how religion influenced, and somewhat defined, the larger colonial culture. The pressing issue of the pre-war colonial religious climate was isolation and uncertainty regarding where the various colonists' loyalties lay. In the juxtaposing of English versus American religion, as general as the definitions might have been, the Anglican and Presbyterian clergy were attempting to construct a spiritual border that delineated their beliefs from their perceived ecclesiastical rivals.

Despite the frequent rhetoric designed to label and condemn American religion, their efforts did little to alter the religious landscape of British North America and the spiritual border proved to be as porous as its physical counterpart. However, when Madison declared war on Great Britain, the charges that enthusiastic worship bred not only dissent but also chaos and violence received, arguably, its greatest support, and, in a way, the appearance of the war provided a victory for the churches with closer ties to England.

Chapter two examined both the ebb and flow of the war but also how the events of the conflict impacted the ministries of the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist denominations. Without question, the Methodists suffered more privations due to the war than any of the other denominations. With the declaration of their government, many of the American-based itinerants returned home and were not seen in either of the provinces for the duration of the struggle. Arguing that loyalty to the king was part of their post-war Christian message, the Episcopal Methodists posited their understanding of the empire as divinely appointed so long as it retained its Christian character. In this, they were able to argue for their continued existence in the empire as servants of both Christ and King George to the often-overlooked inhabitants of the frontier.

The Anglicans, while enjoying validation for their pre-war arguments on the evils of Methodism, also suffered damages to several of their church buildings. The Presbyterians faced similar challenges as the Anglicans, but the war also introduced a new tension between the English and Scottish churches of the colony. In an appeal to receive money for church repairs, the Presbyterians inadvertently opened up a

controversy surrounding which church could properly be called the established church in British North America. Although the two denominations had been united in their mutual condemnation of Methodism before and throughout the war, the so-called establishment controversy created a new denominational struggle in the post-war colonial religious culture.

Chapter three looked at the two components of Just War Theory—Just Cause and Just Means—in order to demonstrate how the churches defended the right for a Christian people to engage in war. The first part of the chapter looked at the justness of the British cause in comparison with the unjustness of the American side, while the second part examined discourse related to how the churches believed the war was to be fought. Equating the American motivations to French influence proved that the rebellions against hierarchy and, as was the case with the United States, Britain itself led inevitably down a path of chaos and violence that was antithetical to a professed faith in Christ. Whatever motives the Americans believed they had to declare war were considered irrelevant and unsubstantiated when compared to the greater wrong of invading a peaceful land that had not engaged them in combat. Therefore, proving that American “manners” were less than Christian provided the ground from which the questionable allegiances of the pioneers could be molded into sentiments much more desirous of a British colonial subject. In all these ways, the churches attempted to manifest the teachings of Christ out of the conviction that God was truly on the side of the nation that best reflected his character as revealed in scripture.

The second part of this chapter looked at the proper way Christians were called to behave in something as horrendous as a war. The churches preached on three

key issues: the use of Natives in combat, whether or not patriotism was allowed by Christ, and what sort of traits a Christian soldier should possess. With England as the defender of freedom and peace throughout the known world, the people were encouraged to support the cause, defend their homes, and even view something as potentially abhorrent as the use of Natives in combat as all necessary evils to maintain the greater good of an English presence in the colony. Building on the need to expel the faithless Americans from British soil, the various clergy offered up the characteristics of a Christian soldier as one who was brave, willing to lay down his life to protect his land, and not given to maliciousness, but only acts of violence deemed necessary to bring about the ultimate end of the war. These statements offered spiritual understandings to the carnality of war and showed, through biblical examples, that God was truly on the side of the British Empire. Through the justness of their cause and the piety of the people, the inhabitants could be confident that the Almighty Disposer of Events would look favourably on their actions as they expelled the American foes in defense of God's chosen nation.

The fourth chapter demonstrated how the British Empire was lauded as the champion of liberty, the reason for the colonists' material success, and God's chosen nation to spread the gospel across the globe. Such descriptions and beliefs were not mere propaganda but also offered spiritual support to encourage patriotism within British North Americans and the expulsion of the enemy Americans. The existence of the SPG and London Missionary Society demonstrated that evangelization was a central aspect of British culture and further demonstrated both the empire's benevolence as well as its Christianity. It was in defense of the British way of life that

the inhabitants of the colony were encouraged to expel the faithless ideological foes that challenged the very ideas that made Great Britain great. The churches celebrated the 1814 defeat of Napoleon because the empire had been vindicated from the man considered to be the greatest threat Great Britain had ever faced. The discourse of the time provided in ways that it was not able to do before 1814 proof that God truly was on the side of England. With the tyrant thrown down, the people of British North America were admonished to emulate England in order to procure similar blessings in their own violent struggle. Nowhere in the dialogue was there any sense that the struggles were in defense of the nation of Canada; in fact, the exact opposite was true. The victories across the sea were seen as victories for the colonists as well and the transatlantic connections were further reiterated as the people were called to celebrate the downfall of Napoleon as a watershed moment in their own struggle.

Therefore, just as England had been purified by Napoleon, so, too, was God using the Americans to do the same for the colonists. From the periphery, the idea of empire needed strong symbolic language that connected people in their imagined communities. The religious reasons offered for the defense of the empire were not academic exercises but were designed to breathe life and identity into abstract concepts with enough force and character to make them worthy of laying down one's life in order to sustain them. Such symbols were designed, and described, in ways that united the inhabitants to each other in the shared rejection of the American advance as well as uniting them to the British Empire. It was from England, God's chosen country, that the people of British North America needed to turn for their ultimate

vindication and freedom and it was in the celebration of England that British North American nationalism must be understood.

The final chapter explored both the restoration of peace and the renewed challenges the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches issued for the expulsion of American-style religious teachings from the colony. With the threat of an American military invasion waning, the threat of returning American Methodist itinerants was growing. The language of the clergy reflected a desire for the post-war colonists to return to the contemplation of spiritual matters. As the physical hardships occasioned by the war were no longer pressing, the people were cautioned to remain vigilant in the defense of their minds and souls from the incursion of American ideologies. The benefits of peace were examined and the people were reminded that the end of the war did not mean the end of their need to attend to the will of God. In fact, the people were cautioned to use their newfound blessings to support each other and return to the piety and prayer that the war had taken from them.

In one of the more interesting aspects of the war, the Wesleyan and Episcopal Methodists began to apply the sentiments of expulsion to each other. Both groups had been on the receiving end of such vitriolic rhetoric for the duration of the century but, as they struggled to return to the post-war Canadas, they became the purveyors of those sentiments to their co-religionists. At the close of the war, the American Methodists found their spiritual "land" being invaded by British Wesleyans and, while the two denominations had much in common, antagonism was bred that only slowed when the Wesleyans ceded Upper Canada to the American branch.

Prominent among many of the clergy were teachings that encouraged the people to reject new political and religious ideas, shun the pursuit of wealth in favour of community responsibility, and embrace the use of Christian teaching to guide public policy. In each of these categories, those traits that were deemed “American” were attacked and belittled and shown to be in opposition to the renewed vision of a British North American colony. The importance of such teachings found their significance in the recent war and gave an understanding that the people should not give up in times of peace what they had sacrificed to retain during the war.

The post-war struggles were indicative of the new impetus placed on the old language of loyalty. Prior to the war, such tensions were extant but lacked the evidentiary support that the struggle provided. While Madison’s declaration did more damage to the American churches than any other event, it failed to wholly remove them from their sphere of influence in either of the Canadas. Americanism remained, however the years following 1815 were noticeably different from the years 1791–1812 in that the Anglican warnings about the dangers of American religion could no longer be ignored. The deeper, and arguably more fascinating, aspect of such developments was not a new nation but a new understanding of what England meant, and how that meaning was translated into the British North American colonial setting. The unique character of the colony was that the success of expelling the faithless foe of the American nation was somewhat undermined by the failure to expel the faithless foe of American Methodism. Therefore, while the post-war religious rhetoric was overtly pro-British, the reality was that a pervasive, if more subdued, American religious element was allowed to remain and grow.

The war between England and the United States on the fields, farms, and lakes of the Americas was a war between two nations that looked to the Bible and the Christian God for guidance and protection. Faith was an essential part of the public and private lives of all the people who called that part of the world home so, as these two so-called Christian nations met in combat, the question was raised which one was truly God's chosen land. Was the British constitution, long lauded to be the most Christian way to govern a people, being usurped by growing American republicanism? Did American individualism and focus on personal rights best reflect the heart of God or was the British subjection to order and a resignation to one's station in life closer to the true faith? Thus, the churches framed the war as a spiritual struggle as well as a physical struggle in order to determine not just which nation would rule in the Americas, but which nation enjoyed the favour of God.

Before the war, the Anglican and Presbyterian desire to expel the faithless foe came from the concern that the predominantly American-born population of Upper Canada, and French Catholic population of Lower Canada could not be counted on to support the claims of the British Empire in either province. The War of 1812 was seen as just one more proof of the chaos and judgment false religion brought upon an otherwise faithful nation. The military effort against the United States was much grander than the defense of "Canada" because it was an integral part of the protection of God's chosen empire to bring about the divine plans for the entire world. Even after the successful defense of the British colony against the faithless Republican invaders, the fear remained as Episcopal Methodists returned and, once again, brought their inferior and destructive version of Christianity to the inhabitants of the

colony. Throughout all the religious writings of the time, the dichotomy was established that saw America—and the churches that were supported from there—as faithless foes that needed to be expelled; and England—and the churches with transatlantic connections—as faithful friends that needed to be embraced by the Christian colonists of British North America.

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