THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AND THE UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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by

Eustace Annesley

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ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

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PART 1

SCOTLAND BEFORE 1914

1. INTRODUCTION

The Rev Doctor William P. Paterson, Professor of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh, set out in February 1912 on a round the world trip.

Paterson was one of the leaders of the Established Church of Scotland, one of its Theological Professors for almost 20 years when war was declared, having taught at Aberdeen before he came to Edinburgh University. The fact that he was one of those nominated to take part in the conference held between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland in 1907, and in subsequent years, marks him as one of the leaders of Church Union in Scotland, a man acceptable to a wide range of Scottish opinion. Perhaps because of this, he was invited to be guest preacher at the Scots Church, Melbourne, Australia, a visit which took him to many parts of that land and to the United States of America, and Canada, where his son John had recently settled.[1]

One of the aims of the trip was to meet Scottish exiles and give them a picture of events at home, especially in the home church.

His trip is of interest since we can follow it in his diary, and there we can get a glimpse at the matters which seemed to him to be important. One of these matters was the development in social work and social interests by both the

main Scottish Churches.[2] He returned to this several times and records that on one occasion when he dealt with this matter, the points he made were that the social mission of the church had (a) a character building mission, (b) a philanthropic mission, and (c) a didactic mission and it was an educator of conscience.[3] As part of the philanthropic mission, he suggested 'a mission to Scotland to collect healthy neglected boys from the slums, train them on a farm and export them to Australia.'[4]

Paterson shared with others in Scotland, this idea that a return to the land was one of the solutions to the slum problem. On his way home through Canada, he would meet up with his son John, who appeared to be having trouble with his exams for an engineering career. The good professor was hopeful that the engineering career might some time be resumed, but wrote in his diary, 'All my ancestors were farmers. It is a useful and steady life, and there might be worse things for the race of the House of Paterson than to be planted in Canada'.[5]

We note two other matters on which he seemed to discourse at length. One was that of the Scottish character. 'I discoursed for thirty five minutes on the Scottish character, the formative factors in it, and the Scottish message: educational, moral and religious'.[6] In passing, we note that he told an American audience that there was no Scottish race, only a nation compounded of Welshmen, Anglo-Saxons, Gaels and Norsemen'.[7] He was,

therefore, hopeful for the racial hotchpotch of the USA. We will, however, note later that there were some impurities which many Scotsmen did not want to see in their national mixture.

The second matter he was happy to stress was 'The Presbyterian Heritage.' We are told by the editor of W.P. Paterson's Diary, that this was 'a frequently preached sermon', and that it was one of those which was selected for printing in Melbourne.[8] It was also the title of a sermon which he included in a book of sermons printed in wartime in 1917.[9]

He recorded in his diary that when he resumed his University duties in October 1912, and met the senior class, 'I talked in a rather casual and haphazard way on my experiences and observations of the last six months.' And what were these impressions? 'I told them I had returned with a deepened conviction of (a) the vocation of the English-speaking race, (b) the integrity and competence of the Scot, including the Ulster variety, (c) the vitality and promise of presbyterianism and (d) the importance and joy of the office of the ministry'.[10]

An examination of Scottish attitudes at the close of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth centuries will confirm that Professor Paterson's 'casual and haphazard' words were shared by many of his fellow citizens and churchmen in Scotland.

NOTES

1. **Diary of W.P. Paterson** edited by Rawlins, Edinburgh 1987, pp.14-24.
2. Ibid April 29th, 1912, p.43.
3. Ibid May 14th, 1912, pp.45-46.
4. Ibid May 14th, 1912, pp.45-46.
5. Ibid April 28th, 1912, p.43.
6. Ibid June 28th, 1912, p.56.
7. Ibid August 28th, 1912, p.69.
8. Ibid August 28th, 1912, p.68 and notes 17 and 21 at p.302.
9. **In The Day of Ordeal.** Paterson, p.132. Edinburgh 1917.
10. Paterson op cit October 9th, 1912, p.75.

2. THE VOCATION OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING RACE

Over the centuries, Scotland had been a land from which men had gone out for business, for military service, as missionaries or as emigrants.

There was perhaps, a change of outlook at the close of the 19th Century. One writer argued that, 'After 1896, there was an orgy of Imperialism which for the first time, became a popular cause...of this programme sought to link the political right and centre in the imperial cause...the sting would be removed from the class war by the export of the proletarians to the new empire, or by the help of imperial loot to native industry'.[1] We have already noted that Professor Paterson was not averse to exporting children from the slums.

Many of Scotland's leading citizens saw Scotland's future being closely tied in with the Imperial cause, in which the churches were entitled to speak to the nation since they were an essential part of national life. As Paterson wrote in his diary, the Church had 'a didactic mission as educator of conscience'.[2]

In this groundswell of Imperialism, the Scottish Churches were not ashamed to teach patriotism. 'Religion and patriotism go hand in hand'.[3] So Dr Reith told the U.F. Assembly in his Moderatorial Address in 1914, and at the same time emphasised the right of the churches to speak on social matters.

In the same year, the Established Church stated their view that 'They trust that chaplains will exert a beneficial influence in promoting the union of patriotism and religion'.[4] The previous year *Life and Work* expressed the view that young people should be encouraged in their love of country. 'While we must not shut our eyes to the fact that there is a great world outside the borders of Scotland, we must beware lest we forget that local patriotism is the basis for worldwide Imperialism...Let us steep them in the history and traditions of the race from whence they sprung and they will be at once better Scotsmen and Scotswomen and better citizens of the great Empire to which they belong'.[5] Scotland was a separate but a proudly involved part of the English-speaking race.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Scotsmen were, in many parts of the world, engaged in a wide range of employments.

Dr Drummond noted that, 'Britain emerged from the Napoleonic Wars, the foremost country in the world, in industry, commerce and overseas development, and a sense of responsibility for the ills of backward nations combined with her policy of aggrandisment'.[6]

Professor Paterson's son, John, was only one of thousands who left Scotland for the empire and colonies. In the years from 1871 to 1901, it is reckoned

that some 483,000 persons left Scotland. Great efforts were made through the use of port chaplains to ensure that they were received and integrated into the life of the churches in the places they were going to.[7] The Scottish Churches sent out ministers to the colonial churches, for example, the United Free Church in 1901, sent five ministers to various parts of Australia and three to South Africa.[8]

Paterson's suggestion that waifs should be exported fell into this scheme of things. To modern eyes, it may seem cruel but at that time, the children were seen as 'bricks' to be used in building for the future of the nation and empire and it was believed that they would be better bricks in the colonies than in cities like Glasgow. It was the transplanting of a good stock to where it would have a better chance to grow. It is perhaps worth noting the words of Dr Young who was the United Free Church Moderator in 1910. Referring to these emigrants, he said, 'Within the last few weeks, 20,000 emigrants left Clydeside for the new lands of the west; every day of this year, some young Scotsman leaves a Scottish home for a foreign land. Were they all men of the Book...how hopeful the evangelisation of the world in this generation would become'.[9] To a more modern generation, this seems somewhat far-fetched. It was, of course, the year of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference when hopes for the evangelisation of the world rose high. The Moderator's hope was that the emigrants, as part of the vocation of their race, would play their part in carrying with them the kingdom of God. Many of the emigrants,

however, were probably looking for a different promised land than that spoken of by the church.

At the start of the twentieth century, the missionary reports which were submitted to the two main Scottish Churches, show how the Churches had followed their members round the world or how they had followed the flag into the empire. The reports usually fill some 300 pages of close printing. The Church of Scotland had Presbyteries in places where there were high numbers of expatriates. The Foreign Mission reports show a width of work, medical and educational as well as evangelisation. The task of the church to educate was extended to the native as well as the church-goer at home.

Services were held on a joint Church of Scotland and United Free Church basis in many parts of Europe. Some of these were permanent places of worship and some were used only in the summer months. Their existence is however, an indication of Scotsmen and women being present on the Continent. Both Churches had missions to the Jews, and here too the educational role of the church is prominent. This work in the Middle East added interest during the war as there was a considerable Scottish element in the Armies which served in the Middle East.[10]

During the 19th century, ministers of the Scottish Churches, especially the Established Church, gained recognition in places and roles outside Scotland.

One of these areas was the Army and linked with that role, was the Indian Establishment. Presbyterian Chaplains had existed for a long time on a regimental basis in Scottish Regiments. The date when they were officially recognised in the structure of the Army is a matter which had been debated. The reconstituted Army Chaplains' Department in 1796 did not appear to make any provision for Presbyterian Chaplains. One writer argues that in 1827, Presbyterian Chaplains became a separate but recognised branch of the Chaplains's Department.[11] This view is followed in the Official History of the Chaplaincy Service.[12] Dr Dow, the historian of chaplains to Scottish soldiers, disagrees. He argues from the fact that as they first appear in the Army List of 1854, this is the date one assumes they were officially recognised. In 1864, the War Office agreed that the Chaplain General would cease in the future to exercise supervision over Presbyterian Chaplains in the Army.[13] It is perhaps worth noting that Dr Gleig, who had been Chaplain General from 1846 to 1875 and was a Scottish Episcopalian, in his farewell letter of 1875, blames the division in the Department on the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and speaks of Presbyterian chaplains as having been 'considerate and willing friends' of his.[14]

In 1813, the East India Company began to employ Presbyterian Chaplains. When Lord Dalhousie was Viceroy of India, he confirmed the Presbyterian Establishment in 1859. From that time there was a Senior Presbyterian Chaplain in each Indian Presidency, with an establishment for junior chaplains

whose responsibilities would appear to have included the care of those Scottish Regiments which were stationed in their areas.[15]

These posts were only given to ministers of the Established Church much to the chagrin of the Free Church. Some in the Free Church argued that one of the reasons for the growth of the Established Church at this time, and no doubt for the existence of some of these posts, was the association it had with Queen Victoria. Naturally, the Church of Scotland denied this.[16] The Church of Scotland had planned to celebrate the centenary of the work in Scotland in 1914 but due to the war it was found to be impossible to send out delegates to India to represent the Home Church.[17]

It is perhaps worth noting that in the vocation of the English-Speaking Peoples, men with Scottish connections, if not Scotsmen by birth, held high office in the United Kingdom, especially during the years 1850-1916. Scotland supplied the Prime Minister for almost half this period. From 1902-1916, Scotsmen or Scottish members held the post. Haldane, who planned the Army reforms in 1908, sat for a Scottish seat. Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary at the outbreak of war, had border connections. These were but a few of those with Scottish connections who held high ministerial office.

So it is perhaps not surprising that Professor Paterson came home from his round the world tour with 'deepened conviction of the vocation of the

English-speaking race.' He had no doubt that Scotland shared in that vocation. It was the task of the nation to go out and settle the open spaces of the empire and to bring to a wider world their insights and knowledge and religion. His sentiments would have found acceptance with many of his fellow citizens.

NOTES

1. **Europe Transformed 1878-1919.** Stone. Fontana Edn. p.96.
2. **Diary W.P. Paterson.** May 14th, 1912.
3. PGAUFCS 1914, p.46.
4. PGAS 1914 (abridgement), pp.56-57.
5. **Life and Work.** 1913, p.139.
6. **The Church in Victorian Scotland. 1843-1874.** Drummond and Bulloch, Edinburgh 1975, p.145.
7. RGACS 1914 Colonial Mission Report. pp.377 and 393.
8. RGAUFCS 1901. Colonial Mission Report.
9. PGAUFCS 1910. p.437.
10. CS and UFCS Mission Reports 1900-1914.
11. **The Army Chaplain.** Bramwell, London 1943. p.14.
12. **In This Sign Conquer.** Smythe, London. p.28.
13. **Ministers to the Soldiers of Scotland.** Vol.2. Dow, pp.15-20 Mss copy.
14. **Journal of the Royal Army Chaplains Department.** Vol 1931-34. p.310.
15. Dow Op Cit pp.23 ff.
16. **The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843-1874.** Edinburgh, 1975. Drummond and Bulloch op cit p.250.
17. RGACS Indian Churches 1914. p.819.

3. THE INTEGRITY AND COMPETENCE OF THE SCOT

Professor Paterson returned from his world tour convinced of the integrity and competence of the Scot. He had been strengthened in this belief by what he had seen during his trip, and the factors which he saw as contributing to this integrity and competence were educational, moral and religious.[1]

Scotland in the nineteenth century saw great industrial growth which gave rise to a larger middle class involved in business. There were problems of how best to manage the rising numbers of working classes and how best to look after the expanding world wide interests of Scottish business and industry. It was at this time that a number of apparently separate and unrelated developments in national life came together in an unexpected but somewhat happy way, and were seized upon by middle class business men who also were frequently the active churchmen.

One of these developments was that of the Volunteer Force. With its long military tradition, it is perhaps surprising that there was so much opposition to the Militia Forces which were suggested in the years 1797-1809. Service in these forces was unattractive to the rising business and professional classes because they were under the control of the Lairds and because Militia training would take up time which could be spent in more profitable ways.[2]

With the arrival of the Volunteer Forces in 1859, these arguments disappeared.[3] The Volunteer Force gave a place in military life for the rising middle and business classes and the artisan classes being produced by the new industries. The Crimean War, with its aristocratic mismanagement of the Army[4], suggested to the professional and business classes that they had a military role to play, and they found that role in the Volunteer Force.

The organisation of the Volunteers, with companies being formed in Universities, businesses, in factories or shipyards, or in professions, gave a military command structure which paralleled that of the workplace.[5] Recruiting in Scotland for the Volunteer Force was higher than in most other parts of the country and in Scotland, the Volunteers showed themselves more willing to ape and adopt Regular Army dress and customs.[6]

The development of railways gave the volunteer companies the attraction of travelling further afield for their annual camps, in a time when travel was not common. The Volunteers also encouraged sport, and one writer suggests that the middle class enthusiasts for the Volunteers, saw them as an answer to what they considered the problem of the increasing leisure which the working class had. It was a means of drawing working class men away from what were seen as 'brute sports' and the traditional pursuit of drink. Volunteering was seen as a way of imposing discipline under middle class control. Drill and other military training were seen as a 'safeguard against effeminacy' and

they were a help in industrial society to maintain the physical character of the nation.[7]

Volunteering was welcomed as an aid to building up the individual and through the individual, the nation. Samuel Smiles, of *Self help* fame, claimed that, 'Drill means discipline, training and education.' He almost suggests that drill was a way of turning ordinary men into new men. He wrote, 'these soldiers...who were once tailors, shoemakers, mechanics, weavers and ploughmen, with mouth gaping, shoulders stooping, feet straggling, arms and hands like great fins hanging by their sides...but now their gait is firm and martial, their figures erect and they march along to the sound of music, with a tread that makes the earth shake'.[8] Smiles, like many others in his class, was deeply interested in 'the elevating and improving of the whole class...of raising the entire condition of the working man.' He believed 'in a good time coming for the working man and woman - when an atmosphere of intelligence shall pervade them, when they will prove themselves enlightened, polite and independent as the other classes in Society'.[9]

The Volunteer Force was reorganised in 1908 and became the Territorial Force. College and University Companies became Officer Training Corps. The Volunteer spirit and ideal lived on in Scottish society, to produce factory, professional or occupation based battalions who would take their places in the New Armies of 1914.

Another change in attitudes in the nineteenth century, was a change in attitude to the Regular Army because of the Crimean War. This was a change which affected all of Britain and not simply Scotland. Reports from the Crimea had shown the deficiencies in Army Medical, Supply and Chaplaincy Services, and this resulted in a growth of societies whose aim was 'to give our suffering heroes the comforts of religion'.[10] Biographies of 'Soldier Saints' became popular and one Congregational Minister claimed that if Wellington had been alive, he would have been forced to recant his belief that 'a man who has nice notions about religion has no business to be a soldier'.[11] The Army became a mission field where organisations such as Miss Daniel's Homes, Sandes Soldier's Homes or The Mission to Mediterranean Garrisons operated. The last of these organisations came into being at Maryhill Barracks in Glasgow from where it followed the troops all over the Mediterranean area. These Homes were usually staffed by ladies of the middle or upper middle classes, supported by money from the prospering business men of the time.

It was also at this time that the military imagery found in the Bible was exploited. Sankey and Moody, the American evangelists, were responsible to some degree for this development. Their hymns, such as *Hold the Fort for I am Coming*, may reflect the time they spent working with the YMCA in American Army Camps. Even to speak of a Missionary Campaign, to some

degree reflects military language.[12] Nor was William Booth averse to calling his new movement *The Salvation Army*[13].

Drill, discipline, religion, military images, all came together in the Boys Brigade. William Smith, who founded the brigade in 1883, was a Volunteer Force Officer, as his father had been. His father had also been a Regular Soldier.[14] Smith was also a devoted Churchman, influenced by Sankey and Moody, whose missions had stimulated philanthropic and missionary work by the middle classes who were among the main supporters of Scottish Churches at that time. Smith's problem was how to control a group of unruly boys who made up his Sunday School class. The Boys Brigade was the means Smith tried.

He defined the aim as **'The advancement of Christ's kingdom among boys, and the promotion of habits of reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards true Christian Manliness.'** In 1893, he added Obedience to the aim. Smith's aim was to inculcate into his boys, who might otherwise have very little hope in life, the very characteristics which he and others believed to be the backbone of Scottish Society - the very characteristics which had established the integrity and competence of the Scot. In Smith, the worlds of Religion, Volunteering and Scottish Business came together.[15]

Smith wrote, 'it seemed to us that by associating Christianity with all that was most noble and manly in a boy's sight, we would be going a long way to disabuse his mind of the idea that there is anything effeminate or weak about Christianity; an idea that is far too widespread among boys, as no one who has anything to do with them can have failed to see.[16] In the Boys Brigade, boys were to be lifted out of those elements of their home and social backgrounds which might be holding them back in life, be given a better example to follow by his officers and beyond them, by the Church. One man said of the BB members, 'not only were they cleaner, brighter, better mannered than boys in their class generally, which shows that they have risen above their fellows on the social scale, but those by whom they are employed bear strong testimony to their increased usefulness and their uniform good conduct.[17]

Smith, however, was not the only person who was moved to attempt to uplift the less fortunate members of Scottish society or to try to set them an example of a higher way of life. Dr Charteris, when he was minister of Park Parish Church in Glasgow, organised mission work in Port Dundas. He encouraged better off church members to go into this poorer part of the city and try to help the people there. Better off families were encouraged 'to adopt' poorer families. Later, when Charteris was a professor at Edinburgh University, he was instrumental in establishing the Order of Deaconesses in the Church of Scotland. Deaconesses were recruited from those parts of

society who could afford to pay for their training and to pay for the privilege of living in the Deaconess House. The daughters of ministers, who could be expected to have the right attitudes to the under classes, but who might not be able to afford their training were supported by those who could afford to do so. The first *Lady* or Leader of the Woman's Guild was Lady Grisell Baillie, a daughter of the 10th Earl of Haddington, and the first superintendent of the Deaconess House was Miss Alice Maxwell, daughter of Sir William Maxwell of Cardoness in Dumfriesshire.[18] Charteris was clear as to what sort of leaders he wished to have, and he was not averse to using military imagery. When Miss Maxwell was set apart in 1898, he wrote to her saying, 'you are henceforth no solitary volunteer, you are on the staff of the Army'.[19] Mamie Magnusson, in her history of the Woman's Guild, kept up Charteris' military imagery when she describes Alice Maxwell as 'a general who led from the front'.[20]

Scottish thinking at this time in the nineteenth century, was influenced by the attempt to come to terms with Darwinian ideas. Henry Drummond, who lectured in Natural Science at the United Free College in Glasgow, was a great supporter of the Boys Brigade and saw it as a great means of making the boys fit or fitter for the tasks which belonged to Scotland as a nation. The Boys Brigade could assist in 'the evolution of the boy.' The boy's father was the 'primitive man.' The boy represented 'Capacity; he is clay, dough, putty...he is not good. He is not bad. He has no soul...he is simply Boy,

pure, unwashed, unregenerate boy.' To the question if anything could be done for the boy, Drummond gave the answer that there was a great invention, the Boys Brigade. 'Until the Boys Brigade was discovered, scarcely anyone knew how to make a man, a gentleman, a christian out of a message boy...specimens could be turned out at a rate of a score or two a year, but under the new process you can have them by the Battalion'.[21]

Drummond was not the only one influenced by such thought forms. Lord Rosebery, Prime Minister 1894-95, a Scottish peer, was invited to become President of the Eugenics Society in 1911, but refused the invitation. The invitation would suggest that he was felt to be in sympathy with the Society's aims.[22] He was keen on efficiency and fitness and stressed these matters in his Chesterfield Speech in 1901. In the preface to a book entitled *Great Japan*, he applied these ideas to party government, which he felt had the flaw of excluding the fittest from office. His address as Rector of Glasgow University in 1900 spoke of the need for a healthy race. 'An Empire requires...an Imperial Race...health of mind and body exalt a nation in its competition of the Universe...'[23] He was, of course, speaking during the time of the Boer War when medical examination of service recruits showed that only two out of every five were fit to serve.[24]

Many in Scotland in the decades before the outbreak of the war shared this vision of an Imperial People. Scotland had a part to play in the vocation of

the English-speaking peoples but to do this, healthy and fit and moral people were needed to take their places in the crusade. Aspinwall, in his book *Portable Utopia*, which deals with the thought patterns which Scotland in general, and Glasgow in particular, shared with the United States of America, notes that Scottish society at this time felt that 'a growing industrial nation could not be created from an ignorant, uneducated, drunken population subject to the whim of privilege, prescription or popery. An incompetent, inefficient people lacking independence and initiative could achieve neither economic success or spiritual salvation', and that it was also believed 'that men of talent and virtue formed a natural moral aristocracy who would uplift the less able and vicious to a more advanced stage of civilisation'.[25]

Paterson returned strengthened in the belief that in the coming new age which would need competent, fit and efficient people - moral, educated, sober people - the Scots still had the integrity and competence needed. Some, no doubt, needed to be uplifted and improved but the means to do this were available in the hands of the Churches and in the nation. Whatever fears they might have, if the Scottish Churches got their act together, then they could not fail.

NOTES

1. **Diary of W.P.Paterson.** ed Rawlins. Edinburgh. 1987 p.56.
2. **The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue.** Robertson. Edinburgh 1985. pp.75-127, 114, 233/4/5.
3. Ibid p.234.
4. **Rifleman Form.** Beckett. Aldershot. 1982. p.9.
5. **The Volunteer Force.** Cunningham. London. 1975. pp.11-14 and **The Rifle Volunteers.** Westlake. Chippenham. 1982. pp.42-5, 75-85.
6. Cunningham op cit pp.46/7.
7. Ibid p.112/3.
8. **Scotland's Story.** Steel. London. 1984. p.293.
9. Ibid p.237.
10. English Historical Review Vol 76 Jan 1971 pp.46-72. **The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid Victorian Britain.** Anderson.
11. Ibid pp.48-51.
12. Ibid p.71.
13. Ibid p.68.
14. **Sure and Steadfast.** Springhall. Glasgow 1983. p.28.
15. Ibid pp.37-42 and **Pioneer of Boyhood.** Peacock. Glasgow 1985. pp.30-1.
16. Ibid p.25.
17. **Youth, Empire and Society.** Springhall. London 1977. p.121.
18. **Out of Silence.** Magnusson. Edinburgh 1987. p.58.

19. Ibid p.63.

20. Ibid p.63.

21. **Henry Drummond.** Smith. 6th Edn. London. 1902. p.58.

22. **Eugenics and Politics.** 1910-1914. Searle. Leyden 1976. p.15.

23. Quoted in 'Physical Education in Scotland' by Ian Thomson. **Scottish Education Review** Vol X/2 1978.

24. Ibid p.17.

25. **Portable Utopia.** Aspinwall. Aberdeen 1984. pp.xiii/xiv.

4. THE VITALITY AND PROMISE OF PRESBYTERIANISM

This was one of the matters to which Professor Paterson returned on a number of occasions both on his world wide tour and later. Indeed the editor of Paterson's Diary notes that the sermon on *The Presbyterian Heritage* was a 'frequently preached one'.[1] Paterson included that same sermon or one on the same topic in his book of sermons which was issued in 1917 under the title *'In the Day of Ordeal'*.[2] The sermon started from the address to the Church at Ephesus, in the Book of Revelation, in which the Church at Ephesus is praised for its inability to endure evil men, and for its toil and patient endurance. This is applied to the Scottish Church, with 'the persecutions...and the heroism and self-sacrifice which they evoked'. He does admit however that they 'should hardly single out patience as a distinctive quality of our Covenanting heroes'.[3]

However, Presbyterianism has been the source of benefits to the Scottish people and through them, to a wider sphere. What were the benefits? There was the educated minister with 'an unusual high average of learning', with 'individuality and force of character'. Laymen had a 'recognised place and effective voice'. Their role in the Courts of the churches had developed in them 'devotion, liberality and voluntary service of which any church in the world would be proud'.[4] Calvinistic Presbyterianism, he claimed, had put iron into the blood of the race and nerved it to do things even willing the nation

to suffer for their beliefs.[5] The belief of Scottish church members in the sovereignty of God and the discipline exercised in Scottish society by the Civil Magistrate who was seen as the representative of God, exported a 'peculiar Scottish combination of spiritual religion and patriotic fervour' to the colonies, which he claimed, (rightly or wrongly), resulted in an 'extraordinary response' from this group of exiles to the call of the war.

Presbyterianism, Paterson claimed, produced a character, 'diligent in business, truthful in word, upright in deed, cautious and moderate in judgement, though with a reserve of dogged determination and moral indignation, clean in heart and mind, loyal to friend and to principles, reticent in religion but possessed by the fear of God, by a deep reverence, by a warm attachment of the Church visible, by a courageous faith in the gospel of Christ and the world to come'.[6] Paterson, and no doubt many others, had a goodly pride in what their religion had done for the Scottish people, even if their pride was somewhat misplaced. Scottish womanhood, not unexpectedly was also seen to share this benefit. Among other things claimed for them was that they were 'superior in unselfish and self-sacrificing devotion'.

Presbyterianism was a key factor in producing 'men of talent and virtue' who formed a natural moral aristocracy who would uplift the less able and vicious to a more advance stage of civilisation'.[7] British and German Churches shared in this common heritage of protestantism. Over against it Romanism

was seen as a force to undercut the freedom of men and nations. It stood for a policy of self-seeking and expediency and since the days of the reformation was a source of strife and confusion. 'Natural freedom and the cause of righteousness...form no part of her creed'.[8]

The Roman Church was a hindrance to the development of men and women of character and ability. Presbyterianism was one of the main driving forces supplying the vitality needed to build up new men and women. Professor Paterson was proud to claim that this was so.

NOTES

1. **Diary of W.P.Paterson.** Ed Rawlins. Edinburgh 1987. pp.48, 68 and 302.
2. **In the Day of Ordeal.** Paterson. Edinburgh 1917. p.132.
3. Ibid p.133.
4. Ibid pp.136/7.
5. Ibid p.140.
6. Ibid p.145.
7. **Portable Utopia.** Aspinwall. Aberdeen 1984. p.XIII.
8. RGAUFCS 1918. Church Life and Work and Public Morals. pp.5/6.

5. THE IMPORTANCE AND JOY OF THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY

The Church of Scotland and those churches belonging to the same family claimed to put a great value on education.

The aim of Knox to have a school in every parish was frequently stressed, even if the standard of these schools varied. One of the aims of this school system was to ensure that people could read so that they might be able to study the Bible. The Scottish Churches claimed to have an educated ministry which had its role in building up sound men and women, even if by the start of the twentieth century they had to a large degree surrendered control of their schools.

It is not surprising therefore that Professor Paterson was able when speaking in Australia, to claim that the Church had 'a character-building mission', and that it had 'a didactic mission as educator of conscience'.[1]

To some degree there was a feeling among Scottish Churchmen towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries that the Churches were failing in this task. The Church of Scotland carried out in the 1890's an examination of 'The Religious Condition of the People', which noted that in certain groups, church attendance was low and that there were

rising counter-attractions to church attendance such as football.[2] In the early twentieth century, both the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church were worried about the drop in the number of Baptisms which had been dropping for some time. The answer, the only one possible, was the education of parents and others in the meaning and value of the Sacrament.[3] Both Churches carried out extensive programmes of youth education and an examination of the subjects put forward for study by the young people would indicate that those entering had to do a fair amount of work for the examinations.[4]

The rise of interest in social issues in the early years of the century give us a clear illustration of the role and place of the ministry. Scottish Churches had become worried about the gap between the churches and the working classes. They set about trying to cross the divide. The Church of Scotland undertook a survey of what other churches and religious groups were doing in the sphere of social work and decided to set up Homes and various Institutions to meet the needs which the Church saw in society around them. The United Free Church undertook a series of discussions with the infant Labour groupings, the Trade Unions and with Christian Socialists. Both Churches agreed that the churches had at least a contribution to make to solving the problems of society, if not the solution itself.

Some of the enthusiasts formed the Scottish Christian Social Union whose aim was defined thus, 'To claim for the christian law, the ultimate authority to rule social practice...to investigate and study social problems and to take action...'.[5]

Some Church leaders suggested that Chairs of Sociology should be established as in American Universities so that students for the ministry should 'receive adequate instruction in the economic and moral causes of the degrading poverty which is one of the chief hindrances to the diffusion of true religion'.[6]

On the United Free Church side, the suggestion was that a Department of Church and Labour should be set up, with the aim 'to interpret the church to the working man, to interpret working-men to the church and to interpret employer and employee to each other through education, inspiration, meditation, evangelisation and twentieth-century methods of Christian work'.[7] The head of this department was 'to study social problems as they affected the church ' and 'reduce to a science, Christian work amongst working men'.[8] It was thought possible 'to arrange conferences between employer and employee...at which masters and men can talk things out upon a Christian basis'.[9] It was admitted however, that this was most likely where the workers had a church or mission connection and so shared common beliefs with those which employers were expected to have.

The Kingdom of God was defined as a 'Spiritual Reality' and also a 'Social Ideal'. The Kingdom is a brotherhood of men and women living simple, happy, free lives, serving one another in love'.[10] It was the task of the Church to 'lead the way in the exhibition of practical brotherhood...it can carry culture, faith, love down to the loveless, the ignorant and the lapsed'.[11]

There was a message which had been committed to the Churches. By discussion and study, this message could be clarified and 'reduced to a science'. The church could take this message and apply it as a cure to society and by sitting down with the parties to an argument, act as a sort of arbiter. The kingdom of God could be established, and it was the task of the church to be a leader to that brotherhood. It was the bearer of culture, faith, love, down to the loveless, the ignorant and the lapsed. In this, the key men were, of course, the ministers, and so we could speak of the importance and joy of the ministry. Men imbued with the power of the Gospel and the hopes of the age they lived in, could build a new world if the message and the means were got right. The ministry was a task to satisfy any man.

NOTES

1. **Diary of W.P.Paterson.** Rawlins. Edinburgh 1987. p.45.
2. RGACS 1891-3. On the Religious Condition of the People.
3. RGACS 1914. Home Mission Report. p.329.

   RGAUFCS Church Life and Work and Public Morals 1913. p.7.
4. RGAUFCS, Youth of the Church. 1911. pp.6/7.
5. **Philanthropy in Scotland.** Checkland. Edinburgh 1980. p.37.
6. **Layman's Guide to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1904.** pp.123/5.
7. RGAUFCS 1909. Church Life and Work p.10.
8. Ibid p.10.
9. Ibid p.11.
10. Ibid p.14.
11. Ibid p.16.

PART 2

THE DECLARATION OF WAR

6. THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

Churches which believed that they had a right to teach and direct society, and who believed that through discussion all industrial and international problems could be solved, perhaps should have been more shocked at the outbreak of the war.

Some, like Professor Paterson seemed to find it hard to take the rumours seriously. He accepted an invitation to a Peace Conference at Constance which was to begin early in August. It was not until he got to Paris that he decided that it was wiser to return home.[1]

When he read of the outbreak of war, and the rejection by Germany of the Ultimatum that had been sent by the British Government, Paterson recorded in his diary, 'A miserable day'.[2] There is no note of joy at the outbreak of war, and we perhaps can make a guess that it was a miserable day since the kinship which Britain had with Germany and their common ties, had not been able to prevent war.

British Churchmen were not blind to the fact that there were those who had been fostering the spirit of suspicion and distrust between the two nations. Professor Denney referred to them when speaking at the 1913 General Assembly of the United Free Church. He called them 'spurious patriots'.

He saw 'no reason why their country and Germany should be in anything else but the friendliest terms...they should seek peace with Germany...the Germans were most akin to themselves, and they had a large interest in common in the spiritual future of mankind'.[3] His address was received with applause. His views were evidently approved of by the majority of members.

Nor did the early issues of the Church magazines display any great jingoism over war. *The Record* of the United Free Church was the first to deal with war in its pages. The editor did not think that there was any great gain to be obtained by denouncing those who started it. 'Better look for reasons for being hopeful for the future...for the ultimate good of humanity'. War, he suggested, would only stop 'through the increased play of reason, understanding and good feelings and it is the special providence of the church and her supreme aim to create the atmosphere in which these can grow and develop'. 'The War', he noted, 'does not mean the failure of Christianity, but only the failure to apply it to all the circumstances of our lives...'.[4] He was suggesting that the church had not managed to get its message across, as it should have done, and he was conscious that relationships would have to be resumed with Germany when the war was over. The church should try to allay any bitterness which the war might cause.

To the credit of Scottish Churchmen and women, we should note that there were voices raised to try to calm the war fever which arose.

The Rev W.M. Rankin of Glasgow who had a son and son-in-law detained in Germany wrote to the press about the danger to the young men of Scotland from the war fever which was arising.[5] A Miss Elsie Cochrane wrote to tell how well she had been treated during the five weeks she had been detained in Germany.[6] Some wrote to remind others about the joint protestant heritage which Britain shared with Germany.[7]

The Rev A.J. Gossip made a point of checking the stories which were circulating about Belgian children and British soldiers who were then reported to be in the Glasgow area, recovering in hospital from atrocities committed by German soldiers. In no case did the tales prove to be true.[8] His aim was to try to calm the situation by defusing the stories.

Christopher Sands, a prominent Scottish lawyer, and then Procurator of the Church of Scotland, in an address stated clearly that the war 'was not so much a great thing of national honour as had often been reported', as a matter of trade and naval power and he admitted that there had been underhand international tricks.[9] He, however, claimed that there was a desire for war in the Crown Prince and among the German people which made war inevitable.

Dr Morrison, the minister of Wellington Church in Glasgow was accused of being 'inflammatory' because he mentioned that his son who was detained in Germany was being well treated. Some of his church office bearers came to his defence, defending him on the grounds that he was simply speaking as a minister of the Gospel of Peace, and claiming that he depreciated the general attitudes of Germany.[10] Dr Morrison's younger son was killed in action in 1918.

However, there were rising voices attacking those who spoke in Germany's favour. A number of British professors, who wrote to the main national papers on 1st August 1914, a few days before war was declared, no doubt hoping to influence public opinion, spoke of the way in which Germany had led the world in the arts and sciences, and argued that war with Germany would be a sin against civilisation. They protested against the country being drawn into a struggle 'with a nation so akin to our own and with whom we have so much in common'.[11] One of those who had added his name was Professor Ramsey of Aberdeen University. Men like Ramsey were forced to retract at least to the degree expressed in his words that 'admiration...(for Germany)...changed to condemnation when she misuses her influence in the world to trample on international law'.[12]

However, for most people, if a scapegoat were needed, Germany could be used for that role.

Professor Cairns contributed an article to *The Record* on 'The War and After', which carried a subtitle 'From a Christian Point of View'. Cairns was one who at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference spoke of how crucial the ten years after the Conference would be for the history of the world. In his article he speaks of the outbreak of the war as being 'the closing of one epoch'. It had been an epoch of the failure of statecraft, diplomacy, education and science as well as the failure of the traditional life of the Church. 'It may be that we are witnessing not simply the death of an old order but the birth of a new'. 'There may arise the fabric of a nobler civilisation...inspired by faith in a God who does not need lying and violence to help him govern the world'.[13]

He was among those who began to see the war as a national purification. This was reflected in the magazine of the Church of Scotland. 'This is a solemn crisis which could lead to purify the nation. The nation could return the people to simplicity of life with discipline, honour and courage'.[14] Perhaps, sadly, their view of the cost of national purification was spoiled by comparing the distress and agony of the military campaign with 'the saddening and gruesome spectacle that can be seen any night in Piccadilly in London or the Boulevard des Italians in Paris'.

We may, perhaps, draw the implication that the editor of *The Record* glimpsed that the War might last for some time, by the fact that he asked the convenors of the main Assembly Committees to hazard a guess on how their work might be affected. He printed their views in the October issue, and by then the Foreign Mission convenor could report that work in Nyasaland had been affected by military action from the neighbouring German colonies. Work in the Middle East and on the Continent of Europe was also affected.[15]

But God was on Britain's side, or perhaps, Britain was on God's side. Professor Paterson acted as summer supply at Newtonmore in the Highlands for the month of August and published his sermons under the title *The Day of Muster.* 'Are we entitled to cherish the hope that in this conflict God will be found on our side?' he asked. Then he gives his answer. He made two points. There was a principle of Retribution, under which wrongdoing is inevitably punished and there was a second principle that God preserves and suffers a nation which he requires for the execution of His plans in the world. God needs Britain. We have already noted how Paterson saw the English-speaking races as having a special task in the world. 'Our nation and empire are still required as fellow-workers with God', and 'we have reason as a nation to hope for the continuance of the divine protection and favour.'[16]

The outbreak of the war which had not really been expected by the Scottish Churchmen, forced leaders to give a quick initial response to guide their people through areas which they had possibly never considered deeply.

NOTES

1. **The Diary of W.P.Paterson.** Rawlins. Edinburgh 1987. p.113.
2. Ibid p.114.
3. PGAUFCS 1913. p.298.
4. **The Record.** September 1914. p.383.
5. G.H. Sept 7th 1914.
6. Ibid Sept 18th 1914.
7. Ibid Sept 19th 1914.
8. Ibid October 8th 1914.
9. Ibid October 12th 1914.
10. Ibid Feb 5th 1915.
11. Ibid August 1st 1914.
12. Ibid August 14/15th 1914.
13. **The Record.** Sept 1914. pp.387/8.
14. **Life and Work.** Sept 1914. pp.257/8.
15. **The Record.** October 1914. pp.435-9.
16. **In the Day of Muster.** Paterson. Edinburgh 1914. pp.18-21.

7. A ROLL OF HONOUR

At Christmas 1914, Dr RT Drummond the minister of Lothian Road United Free Church wrote to the 152 men from his congregation who had enlisted in the Forces. He wrote as follows, "You all know me for a man who has many and many a time set his face against everything that would encourage the military spirit. You may ask why I can say 'God bless you' now. It is because I firmly believe that our cause is a righteous one, the cause of international truth and honesty, the cause of the weak and oppressed. I believe we did our best and utmost to maintain peace. I hope this war will be the death blow of militarism. Indeed, I believe we are fighting not only with and for our allies but even for the deliverance of the German people from the curse of an intolerant incubus. Therefore 'God bless you"'.[1]

It is not surprising that he had these names on a **Roll of Honour.** The war was in the nature of a religious crusade. Those taking part could be blessed in God's name and they, and the nation were undertaking a task which demanded that all dedicate themselves to the crusade.

Church publications bear testimony in the early days of the war to increased attendances at public worship and at Holy Communion. They bear record of how Territorial Force Battalions met for worship before they left home. We read in the December issues of *The Record* of how the 2nd Battalion of

the 9th Royal Scots met in New North Church for a service of Holy Communion confined to themselves alone. There is perhaps a glimmer of the old Covenanter tradition, indeed a custom which went back to Bannockburn, of soldiers of Scotland worshipping before battle. We are told that 19 officers and 217 men communicated and 600 adherents were present. All wore uniform, and the fact that all the elders were officers probably reflects on the leadership of the Scottish Churches at that time. Ministers of both the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church took part.

In one report we are told that 'several who participated in the sacrament had absented themselves from the Lord's Table for years, but were glad to take advantage of an opportunity to remind themselves afresh of things that do not change'...'Five of those present were young communicants...it is expected that considerable further additions to the Church of Christ will be made. In the midst of all our Christian anxiety it is something to know that the new situation in which our lads find themselves is aiding them to be better and not worse men'.[2] Other entries speak of 45 young men in one battalion making profession of faith.[3] It was recorded that at a service in England some 700 men communicated. The following week, two of the battalions to which they belonged went to France. 'One was cheered by the thought that so many took advantage of the opportunity given to them of pledging themselves anew to be soldiers of Christ'.[4] This was but one of the examples given of Communion Services for Scottish soldiers during their training in England prior to their departure for France.

Some stories told of elders arranging meetings for their fellow soldiers in the absence of chaplains.[5] These meetings were along the lines of the Brotherhood and the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon movement.

Stories and letters from France told of Communion Services behind or near the Front. One letter quoted, said, 'There may be coldness at home but there can be no doubt of the spirit which prevails among the young men in the trenches. They are so close to death that they are seeing visions of things unseen and eternal'.[6] The Church magazines of both main churches reported services, including Communion Services, in farmhouses or whatever buildings were available. We are told that at a Communion Service in a loft 50 men joined that Church that night.[7] At one service held in the dark, we are told of ...'the chaplain and those assisting him moving about like ghostly figures in the darkness...distributing emblems of the dying yet undying love'. Another spoke how 'There we stood...with our rifles at our feet, waiting to partake of the Lord's Supper'.[8]

It is perhaps not surprising that young men joined the Church in these circumstances. The unknown to which they were going no doubt made some think and decide what had been in their minds for some time. Many of those who enlisted at the start of the war were in many ways those close to the Churches, if not in them. They were those who passed through the Boys

Brigade and kindred organisations. They were those who in normal peacetime circumstances were likely to become church members perhaps when they moved up the social ladder or when they married or sought baptism for their children. But some Churchmen saw their move to join the church as a sign of religious revival caused by the war.

As a nation set out on a Crusade, some Churchmen saw indications that the nation was purifying itself in readiness for the struggle. 'The war is raising moral standards and these could be raised further, in private life, in public life...The war has done service to the religious life of the country already. One cannot doubt that some effects of it will be lasting'.[9] A few months later, the editor of *Life and Work* quoted from the daily press, with approval, the words 'No feature of the war has been more striking than the religious feeling it has evoked'.[10]

The same issue noted that the first Sunday in January had been set apart to be observed as a Day of Intercession. 'Everywhere the Churches were filled with deeply earnest people'. It was noted that it was a day of Intercession not a day of Humiliation which would have been the usual Scottish term for such a Day of Prayer, but King George had followed the custom set by Queen Victoria when Lord Aberdeen had suggested a day of Humiliation during the Crimean War. 'The great queen' we are told wrote 'to say, as we probably should, that the great sinfulness of the nation has brought about this war,

when it is the selfishness and ambition and want of honesty of one man and his servants which has done it, while our conduct throughout has been actuated by unselfishness and honesty, would be too manifestly repulsive to the feelings of everyone, and would be a mere bit of hypocracy'.[11]

Professor Cairns expressed the view that 'what we are witnessing is not simply the death of an old order, but the birth of a new; that out of the ruins of the outworn world there may arise the fabric of a nobler civilisation'.[12] The service man and the church had to play their part in this time of purging.

From the Front in France, the Rev J Esslemont Adams, who was one of the first Territorial Force Chaplains to go with the troops wrote to *The Record*, his letter being dated 3 November 1914, and paid tribute to how the army was living up to the challenge given to it by Lord Kitchener, 'Remember that the honour of the British Army depends on your individual conduct...you may find temptations both in wine and women...you must entirely resist both temptations...' Only one in 5000 yielded to these sins. Adams told of the bravery of the wounded and of those who had died of wounds and he concluded his letter 'Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. These men are our heroes and God's own children'.[13]

A later issue of *The Record* expressed the hope that 'Perhaps this world upheaval will lead Christians everywhere out of the commonplace, and by

giving them a clearer realisation of the spiritual needs of the world at home and abroad, inspire them to mobilise their forces on a bigger and more effective scale'.[14]

Even when casualties began to mount, or perhaps because casualties began to mount and it was felt that something had to be said which brought comfort, the idea of purification was held on to. 'The spirits of just men do not reach a precipice and drop into nothingness when life comes to an end. The principle that has been at work - call it evolution or anything else - does what it has always been doing, it holds on to what is finest and best and continues its activities under new conditions'. The article was entitled 'Killed in Action'. Those who lost their lives were seen as continuing their work after death and their death in action was a form of purification.[15]

Perhaps the story of **The Hero** sums up much of what was felt. This was a tale of a **ne'er-do-well** who enlisted and found himself cut off by the enemy along with a number of his pals. When he saw the Germans coming near to the house where they were hiding, he ran out and was killed but he distracted the enemies attention from the others who were able to hide until the area was retaken. On the grave of the **ne'er-do-well** his friends put the inscription 'HE SAVED OTHERS. HIMSELF HE WOULD NOT SAVE'.[16] The implication seemed to be that in his sacrifice there was something akin to the divine sacrifice.

Among those who enlisted as soldiers and who are perhaps especially worthy of note both because they enlisted and because of what was written about them, were the divinity students.

The average number of students at the United Free Church College in Glasgow 1909-14 was 84. The year 1914 started with 71 and ended with 28. The year of 1915 began with 8 students. Many had enlisted, some were on munition work.[17] We may assume that the other colleges and the Church of Scotland student numbers were affected in somewhat similar ways.

The obituaries which were printed in *The Record* before paper shortages reduced the size of the publication are worth noting. While the Church of Scotland did not print obituaries, we may assume their feelings were similar. One such was that for WDH Scott, 'the first of our New College men to make the supreme sacrifice in the struggle for liberty and truth'. Mr Scott was shot through the head at Kemmel and evidently was respected by his fellow soldiers who laid out his grave with care. He would appear to have been a member of the OCF while at university for he had applied for a commission but he could not wait and enlisted as a private. Of him *The Record* said, 'War had in itself no attraction for his sensitive spirit, but duty was sacred. He was a true knight of the Cross, brave, chivalrous and true; he never flinched in doing the right thing at whatever cost'.[18] We note the emphasis of knightly virtues.

Professor Cairns wrote two lengthy pieces in tribute to Ian D Munro and John Keith Forbes, both of whom were students at the United Free Church College at Aberdeen when the war started. Munro was 29 years old when war was declared. His family, church and college background are given. He had planned to go as a missionary to Manchuria but as there were no vacancies there he accepted a post at Calabar. Cairns wrote, 'Munro characteristically faced this new call to our hardest and most dangerous field and was on the eve of ordination to the new work when the great storm broke. In the new call for volunteers, he recognised essentially the same crusade as that which had so powerfully attracted him in the home and foreign field, and this the more as at that moment it was impossible for him to go to Nigeria'. The tribute ends thus 'His body lies in the shadow of the little Flemish Church at Chambrin. No truer symbol of his life could be found than the cross which they placed on his grave'. And then the following lines are quoted in *The Record*:

> 'Know, fellow-mourners, be our cross too grievous,
> That He, who sealed our symbol with his blood,
> Vouchsafes the vision which shall never leave us
> Those humble crosses in the Flanders mud
> And think there rests unheeded in the grave
> A life given freely for the world He died to save'.[19]

Forbes was 31 when war was declared - past the first flush of thoughtless youth. Forbes' Old Testament professor, Professor Selbie, bore testimony that Forbes might well have become an Old Testament scholar. Cairns quotes one of Forbes' fellow students, 'I know that I say the truth when I say that there isn't one of the college men who wouldn't gladly have died instead of John Forbes. He, of all of us ought to have lived'. Cairns wrote, 'When the last session began, like so many others, he had to make his decisions as to what he ought to do, and for a while was in some doubt, but once had reached his decision, he acted on it with characteristic rapidity. He could easily have got a commission, but he wanted to be alongside of men in the ranks, and even at first tried to avoid being put among his friends in the more congenial university company'. The Rev Lachlan Maclean Watt who visited the Army in France met Forbes in Normandy and wrote in *The Scotsman* about the Scottish Student who carried a Hebrew Psalter with him. In fact Forbes carried a copy of Job in Hebrew, and sent home a manuscript commentary on Job. Cairns went on, 'I possess some letters which are extraordinary graphic and moving, revealing the heart of a real evangelist and lover of men who had even deep in his soul the wish to make Christ real to his fellow soldiers, but at the same time the most vivid perception of the actualities of war and a joy in battle and adventure as well'. He ends, 'The last thought is that such sacrifices call us to look more deeply into the spirit of our own lives. We are being bought anew for humanity with a great human price. Therefore, let us glorify God. If such lives have any meaning

at all, it is a call to see that they did not give their blood in vain for the divine causes that lay nearest to their hearts, the kingdom of God'.[20]

Here we have again the emphasis which we have already heard. There was the divine call to war, there is the note of sacrifice to purify and renew the nation, the kingdom of God and the war are linked closely as part of one crusade. Divinity students could not but enlist. And when they did, they appear to have made good soldiers. Forbes seems to have established quite a reputation as a sniper and after his death a book was published about him and his exploits entitled *The Student and the Sniper Sergeant.*[21]

So many ministers and divinity students enlisted, many of them in the Royal Army Medical Corps, that at one time they formed their own Theological Society at the RAMC Training Centre at Aldershot.[22]

We started with a quotation from Dr Drummond in which he spoke of **The Roll of Honour** which his church had drawn up. He had written to each man whose name was on it at Christmas.

Early in the war, *Life and Work* noted that in the Parish Supplements to that magazine, the absorbing topic was the war. It recorded that many parishes had a **Roll of Honour,** containing the names of those who had rallied to the call to arms. 'Such a Roll should be kept in every parish. It is a cause of

pride to see it now; it will be an honourable memory to look at in after years'.[23] It would be reasonable to guess that these rolls must have been started not long after the war had broken out as they were all ready for printing in the October Supplements. The magazines of both the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church gave lists of the congregations with the numbers who had enlisted. The writer noted that as time went on the words 'killed', 'wounded', 'prisoner of war', were being added after the names. It would be tempting to think that the publication of these lists which was done with pride, was of a competitive nature but several writers suggest that they should be a basis of prayer.[24] Presbyteries and central church bodies kept a record of the numbers of those who had enlisted.[25]

One of the original suggestions for **Rolls of Honour** came in a letter in the *Glasgow Herald* from a John W McConnell in Ayrshire. He suggested that the **Rolls of Honour** should be placed in Public Halls. Perhaps he felt that as the men who had enlisted came from all sections of the community and were dying together, then they should be listed together. Post War, in some places, War Memorials were put in public places for this very reason.[26]

Professor George Adam Smith, in his closing address as Moderator of the United Free Church of Scotland in 1916 noted with approval the practice of Lady Glenorchy's Church in Edinburgh. There, every Lord's Day before the Intercessory Prayer, the names of those in the Forces were read out. His

comment on this practice was that 'This has proved a very great support to them in the labours and dangers of war'.[27]

The act of the Rev Duncan Cameron of Kilsyth in drawing up the Manse Roll of Honour and the numbers recorded on it, perhaps demonstrates as clearly as anything can as to how the ministers and their families felt about the war. He wrote to the *Times of London* commenting on his work 'Ninety percent of the sons of the Scottish Manse are now serving in the forces of the Crown. With very few exceptions all the manses of the Church of Scotland have given every available son to the service of their country. Sons of the manse have returned from all parts of the world to join some home regiment, and many sons are serving in the various Dominion contingents. The sons of the manse have always rendered distinguished service to the State, but never, in the long and wonderful history of the Church, has their devotion been so complete and so splendid as it is today.[28]

Before we end this section, we note that ere long some began to realise that the expected religious revival was not coming. When the Rev JD Robertson of Leith presented his Report of the Church Life and Work Committee to the General Assembly of the United Free Church in 1915, he spoke thus, 'Let me say in closing, that this is the last opportunity I shall have in presenting this report and I should like to have been the means of conveying to this House the thought that we are witnessing a great spiritual revival in

Scotland. It has not yet come; war has not brought it, so far. But our confidence is, that as a result of this tide of sorrow and tears and blood, there shall be greater consecration of the people to God'.[29]

And the Rev JA Tweedie, wrote home from Gallipoli, 'I confess I find myself unable to endorse much that has been said about the religious influence of life at the front...I cannot help believing that the influence of war is heavily on the side of the deterioration of human character, and I am quite unable to take any comfort out of what one sees of the spasmodic pieties of the danger zone. The urgency of danger often drives a man to prayer for safety from shot and shell who never in the past prayed for salvation from sin and who won't do so in any future time of peace: the threat of death urges him to hasten any belated effort to woo the pity of Him who rules the hereafter, but such prayer is too mean to offer or for a God to answer, and I am afraid that a good deal of battlefield piety is just like that'.[30]

Some at least suspected that there was another side to the story.

NOTES

1. **Record.**January 1915 p.12.
2. Ibid December 1914 p.537.
3. Ibid December 1914 p.525.
4. **Life and Work.** December 1914 p.363.
5. **Record.** April 1915 p.150.
6. Ibid July 1915 p.278.
7. Ibid do.
8. Ibid December 1915 p.511.
9. **Life and Work.** December 1914 p.357.
10. Ibid February 1915 p.37.
11. Ibid p.52.
12. **Record.** September 1914 p.388.
13. Ibid December 1914 pp.530-1.
14. Ibid January 1915 pp.1-2.
15. Ibid June 1915 pp.231-2.
16. Ibid August 1915 p.451.
17. G.H. October 14th 1914.
18. **Record.** May 1915.
19. Ibid November 1915.
20. Ibid do.
21. By WM Taylor and Peter Diack. Hodder & Stoughton 1916. Reviewed in **Life and Work.** January 1917.

22. **Record.** November 1914 p.476 and December 1914 p.526.

25. G.H. December 8th 1914 and Appendix to the Report of General Interest Committee to GAUFCS 1915 p.6.

26. G.H. August 17th 1914.

27. PGAUFCS 1916 p.403.

28. **Life and Work.** June 1915.

29. PGAUFCS 1915 p.204.

30. **Record.** January 1916 p.7.

8. THE SCOTTISH CHURCHES AND MINISTERIAL RECRUITING

If the cause was righteous and the nation was seen as a weapon in the hands of God, in the defence of truth and justice, then we cannot be surprised if some churchmen felt that it was their duty to encourage recruiting. Because the Scottish Churches felt that they had a role in teaching and in directing and leading their people, then it was to be expected that they would attempt to do so, in sermon and resolution.

Professor Reid of Glasgow University, early in the war, preached a sermon which was reported in the press under the title *Morale and the War.* He started from the passage in the Book of Numbers where God promised that He would come and strengthen the seventy who were appointed to assist Moses in ruling over the people. God promised that He would take some of Moses's spirit and put it on the other seventy. Reid applied this to those enlisting in the Army. 'Spiritual and moral qualities are transferable from man to man, not by miracle or magic but by association and sympathy, example and authority'. He expressed the fear that 'one cowardly or corrupt man may affect a whole neighbourhood'.[1] The implication was that those who were volunteering or who were about to volunteer should be protected from the possible malign influence of others.

Many Presbyteries passed resolutions to encourage recruits. One such resolution was brought before the Glasgow United Free Presbytery by the Rev WM Rankin. He said, 'It was well that the united voice of the Church should tell their soldiers and sailors that they might go to war with a good cause and a good conscience and that the Church admired the stand they were making and their spirit of self-sacrifice'. The Presbytery greeted this with applause. He argued that 'They ought to tell their young men that the proper place for them on Saturday afternoons was not the football fields but the training fields'.[2] This remark was greeted with cries of Hear! Hear!

At the Dundee Presbytery, Dr Cameron the Clerk, echoed the same view that 'it was sad to see so many young men rushing to football matches on Saturdays instead of rushing to join the colours'.[3] One older member suggested that there should be a 'recruiting Sunday in the churches in Dundee', and his prediction 'that the day would come, not far distant, when the Government would insist on every man doing his duty', may mark him out as one of the few who did not see a quick end to the war.

Some ministers appeared on recruiting platforms. Dr Kelman of St George's United Free Church in Edinburgh appeared on such a platform in Glasgow City Hall in July 1915. 'I do not want to see conscription', he said, 'but I see quite plainly that conscription may have to come before long. If it is a question of Britain going under or not going under, every man of us will have

to fall in'.[4] According to the newspaper report of the meeting, those attending were largely older men and younger women, possibly those who were in positions to pressurise the younger men. Some days later, letter writers to the newspaper, suggested that the meetings would be better with speakers who were soldiers back from the front, not men going home to a good dinner and a comfortable bed.[5] This may well have been a veiled attack on those who were speakers at the meetings.

Ministers did not hesitate to use the pulpit to urge enlistment. On one occasion at a Church Parade of the 5th Battalion of the Scottish Rifles, the chaplain, the Rev John White noted that 'Our men have done nobly' but then he asked, 'Where are the others for whom Kitchener was calling? There were some who still held back from duty'.[6]

Churchmen, even to the end of the war, were proud of the volunteer spirit and despite all the death and loss were proud of the part which the church had played in encouraging volunteers. The Rev PD Thomson, who presented the Church Life and Work Report to the 1918 General Assembly of the United Free Church said, 'The Church might claim that since the beginning of the war it had exercised a far-reaching influence on the life of the nation. The inspiration which had induced the flower of their young manhood to rally to the great cause, long before conscription was introduced, had come from the Church and was fostered by it'.[7] Even to the end, the churches did not

feel that it was necessary to deny the part they had played in encouraging recruiting.

But in fairness to the ministers of the Scottish Churches, they themselves joined in considerable numbers both as chaplains and as combatants. *Life and Work* by October 1914 could claim that 150 ministers had volunteered for service. The editor had no qualms in writing, 'Perhaps there has never been a war on which the British nation entered with a clearer conscience...No wonder, therefore, that the patriotic spirit of ministers of the Church of Scotland has been deeply stirred, and that so many of them have placed their services at the disposal of the War Office'. The report noted that among the volunteers were eloquent preachers, distinguished scholars and accomplished athletes. It is also noted that some had experience with the Territorial Force, the OTC, Boy Scouts, Boys Brigade, some had skills from the Red Cross Society, some had served in the Boer War, some could shoot, cycle, ride or drive a motor car.[8] They were described as an **'embarrass des richesses'.** With hindsight, we can see that there was no very deep understanding of what the conflict into which the nation had entered would be like, but in their favour we should perhaps say that for some time there had been efforts in Government circles to incorporate the Boys Brigade and Boy Scouts into the Service Cadet Forces.

Not all ministers who enlisted were in the first flush of youth. The Rev AM Mclean, of Paisley Abbey was 51 years old when he first went as a chaplain. He officiated at the marriage of his daughter to an officer in his Regiment.

John White was 48 years old when he went as a chaplain in 1915. He had a son killed in action in 1917. The Rev WW Beveridge of Port Glasgow UF Church had some 25 years service with the old Volunteer Force and Territorial Force, having been commissioned in 1890. He must have been about 50 years old when he went on service in 1914. Some, like the Rev JPR Sclater and Dr Kelman, two of Edinburgh's leading United Free Ministers, had their kit and uniforms ready before they were rejected on medical grounds. One of the difficulties was that there was no organised system to deal with the release of men from their parishes, or to vet and clear those who wished to serve, in a war which many thought would not last over long, and so, if one was to become involved, there was little time to lose.

The enlistment of ministers as combatants, drew attention to an area where the Scottish Churches differed from the Church of England. Early in September 1914, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Randall Davidson, expressed his opinion that the role of an active combatant was incompatible with the position of anyone who sought and received Holy Orders.[9] In Scotland there was disagreement with this view and the matter rumbled on,

kept on the boil by ministers who wished to enlist as and with 'the ordinary man'. Some ministers had obligations arising from being on the Reserves but to some degree the problem arose because there was no clear ecclesiastical precedent which could give guidance. Under the Presbyterian system, no definitive answer could be given until the supreme court, the General Assembly, met. When a ruling was sought from the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in November 1914, the Moderator, Professor Nicol, ruled that the matter could not come before the Commission. He declared that the Church of Scotland had no rule on the matter and that the Commission could not declare or initiate any new law. The decisions in this area would have to be left to individual conscience and to Presbyteries.[10] And so Presbyteries who could not change the law of the Church were left to take responsibility for supervising the terms under which ministers were to be allowed to leave their parishes for war service.

A year later, the Church of Scotland Commission was to express its view thus, 'The Commission finds no special law in this Church dealing with the question of the participation of ministers of religion in the combatant service of the country, and in these circumstances there must be liberty of individual judgements as to the propriety of voluntary enlistment by ministers in such service'. The Commission went on to express their sympathy with ministers caught up in the apparent conflict between what they saw as their duty to their country and their duty to congregations placed in their spiritual charge.

Ministers were reminded that they were subject to the discipline of the Presbytery in all matters relating to the discharge of their duties. Ministers were also reminded of their responsibility in arranging for their duties to be covered if they were allowed to enlist.[11] Having so ruled, the Commission proceeded to set up a committee to help in cases of difficulty.

Dr MacEwan, the United Free Church Moderator in 1915, spoke along similar lines in his closing address to the General Assembly. He addressed some words, as a friend and fellow-minister, and not as one in authority, to his younger brethren who were struggling with the problem, asking 'if it was not their duty to set aside for a time the calling to which they have been ordained and to serve God and Country in the Army'. Referring to the view of Anglican Bishops that 'A soldier's calling involved him in conduct in compatible with ordination vows', he expressed his opinion that this could not be accepted by Presbyterians without 'important abatements'. The Assembly received this statement with loud applause, so, it evidently expressed the feelings of the Assembly. He went on, 'There are emergencies which supersede the claim of a religious vocation', and he mentioned danger to women and children, invasion, and he argued that there was little difference between actual invasion and a defeat which would make invasion certain.[12]

So ministers applied to be freed for military service and they were free by the Presbyteries under whose jurisdiction they found themselves. We may take some examples.

In September 1914, the United Free Presbytery of Galashiels was asked by the Rev Mr Mathieson of St John's Boswell, for leave of absence to serve as a chaplain for three months, with the 4th Battalion KOSB. Mr Mathieson was a Territorial Force Chaplain. In passing we note that chaplains were released for three months, as the war was not expected to last too long. The men to whom the chaplains ministered were enlisted for the duration of the war, and this setup cannot but have caused ill feelings. Mr Mathieson arranged to pay the locum who would look after his parish in his absence.

The same Presbytery meeting dealt with the request of Mr Naismyth of St Boswell's who had been called up due to his being on the Special Reserve for the Royal Artillery. Mr Naismyth too, had arranged a locum. Locums were probably easier to find among probationers and retired ministers at the start of the war than they were later on in the war. The Presbytery Clerk had obviously been pondering the matter of releasing these ministers, since he stated that he knew of no precedent in the United Free Church for such a leave of absence. However, he attempted to find one, and went back to Ebenezer Erskine who wet out to the defence of Stirling in 1745. He went on that they could only use their common sense and decided that Mr

Naismyth 'was doing the right thing, the noble and manly thing in serving his country in this way'. The Presbytery expressed the hope that both men would come home safe and sound.[13]

The case of Gavin Pagan, minister of St George's Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, perhaps reflects the generally held views of most Scottish churchmen. Pagan was a member of a very prominent ministerial family, the son of a Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the nephew of two others, the cousin of a fourth, as well as being the cousin of Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of York and later of Canterbury.

When war was declared, he wrote to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, expressing his opinion that since he was 'physically fit and otherwise free', he wished to enlist in the City Battalion of the Royal Scots. In his view, it was not those who wished to join who should have to defend themselves, but those who did not enlist, at this 'supreme crisis in the history of our country and Empire'. The supreme necessity of the hour, he claimed, was for a body of men who would place themselves at the disposal of the Government to be trained to fight. 'He had to consider whether he should not be among these men'. There were possible excuses, one being that he was a minister - and fighting was for laymen. 'He could not see any difference between ministers and laymen in this matter. A minister's work was important, but he was not indispensable. There were plenty of ministers around'.

By 1916, ministers available to fill gaps left by those who had enlisted, had become fewer on the ground, and this made some argue that ministers should not be conscripted. However, in 1914, the Kirk Session of St George's Church raised no objection to Mr Pagan being allowed to enlist, since adequate supply was available in his absence.

Professor Paterson who supported Mr Pagan's release, said that 'he depreciated the apologetic note that was sometimes used as if when a minister joined the fighting, he was doing something degrading or comprising his whole profession'. Paterson held that it was as fit for a minister to shoulder a rifle as it was for him to carry a wounded man from the trenches to a hospital. One job was as christian as the other. He too attacked the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, asking what right they had to sit in the House of Lords and join in involving the country in the horrors of war and at the same time argue that ministers had no reason to fight. Professor Paterson rejoiced in Pagan's action which 'was for him a matter of conscience'.[14]

In his farewell sermon to his congregation, he said, 'We are learning a new pride in our country and Empire and a new affection and loyalty towards each other. He had proof of this this week which made him profoundly grateful for which he thanked them with all his heart. There would soon not

be a man worthy of the name who would not wish that he were able to take part in this struggle, and if he had claimed this privilege, perhaps at their expense, he begged them to bear with him and to greet it freely and joyfully and to wish him strength for such honourable service'.[15]

Pagan's views and the opinions expressed as he enlisted, sum up the general feelings in the Scottish Churches. This was a crusade. Any man worthy of the name wished to be involved. Men should even be grateful to be allowed to face this hour and its challenge. The war was a grave threat to the Empire, which stood for a new world, and therefore had to be defended. There was no reason why ministers should be excused from this task because of their profession. Indeed, they had an opportunity to set an example and to stand beside ordinary men.

Pagan was 41 years old when he enlisted. A 'Country Minister over 40' wrote to the *Glasgow Herald* about Pagan's decision. 'By joining the colours, our young ministers would encourage many of the young men in their congregations to follow their example'.[16]

Perhaps we can take one more example. The minister of Kilmaurs, a Mr Thomson, asked for permission to join the Army. At his own expense, he had arranged for a locum to do his work. The minister who supported his application said that 'he was amused at discussion round the country on

ministers going to war. They were men before they were ministers and it was as a man that Mr Thomson had taken the step for which they admired and thanked him'. Mr Thomson joined the University Company of the Edinburgh City Battalion of the Royal Scots.[17] Gavin Pagan had enlisted in the same battalion and it is perhaps a reasonable guess that they had links with it from their student days.

It is not surprising that the Scottish Churches and ministers, being convinced of the righteousness of their cause, and that God had committed a duty and task to them, should encourage young men to enlist in the Forces. The influence of the Boys Brigade and the place of the Volunteers in Scottish Society encouraged younger ministers to lead not only by word but also by example. Younger ministers, and some not so young, and the sons of the manse were keen to show their solidarity with the man in the street. Ministers were not a breed apart and so they took their place with those who had volunteered for war service.

NOTES

1. G.H. October 19th 1914.
2. G.H. November 11th 1914.
3. G.H. December 3rd 1914.
4. G.H. July 7th 1915.
5. G.H. July 10th 1915.
6. G.H. December 4th 1914.
7. PGAUFCS. 1918. p.213.
8. **Life and Work.** October 1914.
9. G.H. September 4th 1914.
10. G.H. November 19th 1914.
11. **Minutes of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1915.** (Abridgement). p.70.
12. PGAUFCS. 1915. p.343.
13. G.H. September 18th 1914.
14. G.H. October 29th 1914.
15. G.H. November 2nd 1914.
16. G.H. November 6th 1914.
17. G.H. December 1st 1914.

9. JUSTIFICATION OF WAR

When friends fall out, the temptation is for the parties involved to attempt to claim the moral ground.

While some strove to avoid any breakdown of relationships with German groups, knowing that after the war, life would have to go on, there was the temptation, into which others fell, to blame the enemy for the outbreak of the war.

Germany, or at least German Kultur, had lost its way. The word KULTUR was used perhaps because the germanic ring of the word made it sound more dangerous. The agents for this loss of way were named as Nietzsche, Treitsche and von Bernhardi.

Nietzsche was the German philosopher who had spoken of 'Superman' and of 'the death of God'. Treitsche had written a history of Germany in which he had proclaimed the supremacy of the state, one of whose instruments of policy was war, and whose right to make war in defence of national honour and interest could be impinged.[1] Peace was stagnant and decadent, and the hope of perpetual peace immoral, while war was purifying and invigorating and unifying for the nation.[2] Von Bernhardi was a military theorist who applied the theories of the other two to military matters, in his book

Germany and the Next War which was published in 1910. He spoke of Germany as being 'at the head of all progress and culture' and claimed that war was a 'biological necessity'. Germany had to choose 'world power or downfall' for she was 'compressed into narrow unnatural limits'.[3]

Such writers may have been in the minds of men like Dr Denney, when he spoke to the United Free Church General Assembly in 1913 referring to the 'spurious patriotism' in Germany and Britain, and of those who were 'assiduously fostering the spirit of the suspicion and distrust and ill-will which had in it many of the possibilities of war'.[4]

On the other hand, Dr John A Hutton, one of the older leaders of the United Free Church, wrote in a book which he produced in September 1915, 'We in Great Britain, since the war began, have been reading...with surprise and terror, books on Treitsche, Von Bernhardi and others'. He writes that the feelings which they have against those who are at war with them, are akin to those 'which we should have towards people who have often taken a meal with us, about whom we have just learned that all the time they were carrying about in their pockets a wonderful formula for poisoning the soup'.[5] He seems to suggest that it was only when war had been declared and they had examined what was happening that they discovered the poisoned chalice in the Germans hand.

Church magazines took up the matter. *Life and Work* had an article dealing with Treitsche, speaking of his 'predominant teaching...the glorification of heroic action and war'. It noted that Treitsche was a professional historian in whose work there burned a conviction of the world-destiny of Germany. The article argued that Treitsche claimed 'among all political sins, the sin of feebleness is the most contemptible, it is the sin against the Holy Ghost'. Then reaching for the high ground, *Life and Work* goes on 'it is against this sordid creed that might is right and self-interest the only law, our soldiers are fighting...because our nation is fighting against a pagan ideal and on the side of civilisation and a Christian concept of life, we can bid our heroic soldiers God-speed...and say (to the mourner) Courage: the man you love died nobly; he died for his country and for God'.[6]

The United Free Church *Record* of December 1914, went back to Luther to quote his opinion on war 'one of the greatest plagues that can afflict humanity' and then turned to Nietzsche who 'on the other hand glorifies brute force, cruelty and unscrupulousness... denies Christianity and Christian morality, and declares pity and honour and righteousness to be a weakness. It is on this pagan doctrine that the military party of the modern Germany has been nourished...and we see the result of their work on the battlefield'.[7]

It was admitted that these influences were not absent in Scottish thought. Carlyle was one of those who were attacked, and in his case because of his

history of Frederick the Great, whom he had pictured as a hero. Carlyle was also condemned in the public press. 'When people are condemning Treische and Nietzsche for the present depraved temper of the German people, it is impossible overlook the fact that our own Carlyle (much as we admire him) must bear as much of the blame...his doctrine of heroes, his praise of despots like Cromwell, became interwoven with German thought...'.[8]

It is perhaps surprising that Scottish Churchmen make no reference to Nietzschean influences among some of the younger Scottish writers. Alan Bold, in his biography of Hugh MacDiarmid notes the influence which the German philosopher had on the group in which MacDiarmid moved. Bold notes that Nietzschean assumptions permeate MacDiarmid's poem *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, which while it was written in 1926, reflects a thread which had been growing in Scottish thought since the start of the century.[9]

Professor AE Taylor of St Andrew's University attempted to defend Nietzsche in the public press and argued that he was being misrepresented, but this did not cut much ice with the public, including some of Professor Taylor's former students.[10]

Germany had gone astray. Britain had advanced beyond men like Von Bernhardi. So argued men like Professor Cairns. 'Our own statesmen had advanced from the position of Bernhardi - that between nations there was no

morality - to the conception of justice to all. The ideal was that the actions of nations as well as individuals should be guided by the seeking of the Kingdom of God throughout the world'.[11]

In one blow, British superiority and German deviousness are established. Germany had lost her way and gone badly astray. It was useful to have stick with which to beat the enemy and it was necessary to explain that the responsibility for the break in friendship between the nations lay at someone else's door. How could the churches explain why all their words about peace seemed to have borne so little fruit? The War had to be given a moral justification.

When war broke out in August 1914, many church leaders had been on holiday, and it was a time of year when Church Courts did not meet and when Church organisations were not very active. There was little official response until Presbyteries began to meet in September and make their views known.

The Dundee Presbytery of the United Free Church met on 9th September 1914. The Rev John Mansie's resolution ran in part as follows: 'deploring that the peace of the world has broken down and that Christian Nations were at war with each other, but recognising the righteousness of our cause, we recommend the people to unite in every good work for the support of those

who are defending us by sea and land'. He noted that 'there was of course a justified bitterness at the barbarism and inhumanities of which they had heard, but in the cause of the war itself, he thought that there was a strong feeling that they had been privileged to stand at this time and help to break one of the greatest despotisms of the world and one of the great barriers to true progress and civilisation'.[12] The breakdown of peace is deplored, the allied cause righteous, they were privileged by God to undertake this task and Germany had become a barrier to progress and civilisation.

On the same evening, the Church of Scotland Presbytery met in Edinburgh and resolved thus: 'deploring the outbreak of European War, puts on record its conviction of righteousness of the cause of the Allies.[13] The Glasgow Church of Scotland Presbytery also claimed the righteousness of the cause and went on to denounce the atrocities of the German Forces.[14]

Some churchmen who had been supporters of peace in the past felt that they had to explain their change of mind. One such was Dr Carslaw, a retired minister of the United Free Church. He admitted that 'he had been a hater of war and found himself that day in a position he had never expected to occupy'. But 'The Germany of between 50 and 65 years ago which he loved and which had done so much for him, no longer existed...in its place was a cruel despotism which had cast its shadow over their generation and suddenly plunged the whole world into a welter of blood and tears'.[15] Dr Carslaw like

many other Scottish Churchmen evidently felt the need to explain why they seemed to have forsaken the cause of peace which they once had espoused.

When the Synod of Lothian of the Church of Scotland met in November 1914, it 'put on record its profound sense of debt which Christian Civilisation owes to Belgium for her heroic sacrifice.[16] We have already noted that some churchmen attempted to see what truth there was in reports of atrocities in Belgium, but the fact that no basis was found for these accusations does not seem to have hindered others from using them to explain their support for and justification for the war. It is not surprising then, that the Churches 'commend the patriotism of the people, the Government's call to arms and rejoices in the response that is being made to the appeal'.[17]

The sacrifice of Belgium (see note 16 above) perhaps led naturally to the summons to similar sacrifices from the men of Scotland. The Presbytery of Dumfries of the Church of Scotland called on the people 'to render whatever service and sacrifice should be required of them in the defence of the country'.[18] The Synod of Lothian spoke in similar terms, 'in the judgement of the Church, their cause was worthy of the sacrifices they were making...it was a sacred cause and fell very little short of being a holy war'.[19] One retired minister wrote to the *Glasgow Herald* that 'if I had youth on my side...I should go and take my place in the fighting line in the spirit of a crusader'.[20] The war was a crusade.

Professor Paterson may well reflect accurately the feelings of the Scottish Churches, in one of his sermons, preached at Newtonmore in August 1914. He warns against thinking too highly of themselves yet 'we may gather courage from the fact that, notwithstanding our many sins and backslidings, our nation and empire are still required as fellow workers with God...we may believe that - until at least a more efficient organ appears to replace it - God will preserve this great instrument from being broken into pieces, and will maintain it in being for the further advancement of the interests of His kingdom'.[21]

For Paterson, Britain was indeed a land of hope and glory. It was the home of freedom and its bounds had not yet been set. God still had a use for it in His plans. Germany had gone astray. While the British could claim to love peace, they had no choice but to fight this war to defend the weak, to support the cause of justice and truth. It was a holy war which called them to sacrifice and service. Britain and her allies were instruments in the hands of God and this war was part of their continuing role in building a new world.

NOTES

1. **Proud Tower - A Portrait of the World Before the First World War.** 1890-1914. Tuchman. London 1980. p.243.
2. Ibid p.249.
3. **August 1914.** Tuchman. London 1980. pp.82ff.
4. PGAUFCS 1913. p.98.
5. **Ancestral Voices.** Hutton. London 1915. pp.40 and 70.
6. **Life and Work.** November 1914 p.323.
7. **Record.** October 1914. p.431.
8. **Life and Work.** February 1915. p.37, G.H. October 1st 1914.
9. **MacDiarmid.** Bold. London 1990. pp.61, 64, 78 and 231.
10. G.H. September 9th and 10th 1914.
11. **Life and Work.** February 1915. p.39.
12. G.H. September 10th 1914.
13. Ibid.
14. G.H. October 1st 1914.
15. G.H. October 27th 1914.
16. G.H. November 4th 1914.
17. G.H. September 10th 1914.
18. G.H. October 8th 1914.
19. G.H. November 4th 1914.
20. G.H. September 7th 1914.
21. **In the Day of Muster.** Paterson. Edinburgh 1914. pp.21-22.

PART 3

A TIME FOR RECONSIDERATION

10. INTRODUCTION

At the outbreak of the war, Scottish Churchmen saw the conflict as a necessary crusade and encouraged their people to enlist. Not long after the start of the war, one correspondent in the *Glasgow Herald* spoke of the good sermons being preached in Glasgow Cathedral and in other places, and urged readers to go and hear them. He suggested that the sermons should be delivered in the open air for more to be able to hear them.[1]

He provoked a response from one correspondent who objected that 'on Sunday there was no respite' as we still listen 'to the thunders of damnation launched at the Kaiser'. He argued that people were now going to church for peace and charity and they were only getting the same atmosphere of strife and hatred.[2] Another writer objected to hearing from the pulpit about the errors of German philosophers and writers. Pastors should keep to the gospel of the Prince of Peace. He did not object to prayers for the Army and Navy but 'much of the declamation I have heard recently contains more of an exhibition of human learning than an invitation to the Divine Mercy and Grace'.[3]

The Rev W.L. Sime of Smailholm wrote to tell of his experiences while attending church on holiday. 'Immoderate language about conflict', he reported. He claimed to have heard 'Damn the Kaiser' in East Lothian and

in a Cathedral he heard the words 'May the accursed Kaiser see his bloody sword broken before his face, may he be caught and interned in the Devil's Isle'.[4]

Some wrote to support war sermons. If a minister could be calm and unmoved in the face of the 'wanton casualties of the Kaiser's minions' then it said little for his soul and sense of sympathy and righteousness. The war, it was suggested might even cause a return to a prophetic ministry which of late was missing from the pulpit.[5] One correspondent said that it was easy to 'blame the clergy' but a minister who was in touch with sad and anxious hearts was bound to think of these events.[6]

Ministers were, perhaps to a degree they had not experienced before, being faced with the question as to how they were to apply the gospel to the situation in which they found themselves.

As the war went on, the problem became more difficult, as we perhaps can see in the altered titles of Christmas sermons in 1914 and 1915. In 1914, among the titles were these: *A War for Enduring Peace, The Spirit of Heroism, Christendom and the Child, The Ideal and the Real.* By 1915, titles such as *Sorrow and Self Sacrifice, The Message to Those Who Mourn, The Test of Faith,* were offered.[7]

As the war proceeded and the casualties mounted, ministers were faced with the question, 'What shall we say?' or 'What can we say?'

Life and Work took up the problem. 'Ministers find it difficult to think or speak of anything else. But it is possible to be too warlike'.[8] In the same month, *The Record* noted that the church 'had a great opportunity at the present of acting the part of consoler to its people'. 'The Church should be the great optimist', it concluded.[9]

In his closing address to the United Free Church General Assembly in 1915, Dr MacEwan, the Moderator, commented on the problem. He said, 'the difficulty of preaching as we ought about the war itself is manifest'. The minister had a patriotic duty but he also had to preach the gospel of goodwill and peace. To do this, the Teaching Office of the church was supremely important in this crisis. He suggests that the doctrine of the atonement should be stressed with its motive of self-sacrifice. The equality and brotherhood of man should be stressed as should be the doctrine of immortality 'a belief greatly in demand', as he called it. There was a need for public and private prayer.[10] He put little stress on reconciliation with enemy. Maybe this cannot easily be preached in time of war and can only be applied after victory is won.

Dr MacEwan had spoken of self-sacrifice and the Churches had sent their young men out on something near to a religious crusade. By mid 1915, the cost of that crusade was becoming clearer.

By July 1915, the newspapers could give some idea of the losses at Gallipoli where the 52nd (Lowland) Division was involved. 8085 killed, 3640 missing, 29883 wounded or ill. There were many in this campaign affected by dysentery and other diseases which arose from the conditions under which the troops had to live.

It is therefore not surprising that leading articles appeared in some papers with titles like 'Pessimism and Criticism', articles which suggested that the war was going to last longer than first expected. It was not now going to be a short, sharp, glorious campaign, but perhaps a lengthy and bloody one.[11]

When the casualties for the Battle of Loos in September 1915 were released, the headlines in the Scottish press were 'Casualties in the New Army', Scottish Losses', More Scottish Losses', Heavy Scottish Losses'.[12] Two Scottish Divisions, the 9th and the 15th, both Divisions of the New Army, in which many of the flower of Scottish manhood had rushed to enlist in 1914, were involved in this battle.[13]

In September, the casualties for the first year of the war were given. 75,960 killed, 251,059 wounded, 54,967 missing.[14] Many of the missing would later be added to the lists of those who had been killed.

The casualty lists cause the Church Magazines to ask 'Is there a God in Heaven?' The 'ghastly casualty lists' were referred to. Church leaders obviously were not sure what they ought to say. One article went so far as to argue that the losses in Flanders were less a test of faith than the loss of 30,000 earthquake victims in Italy. The line of argument was that 'War was man's fault', and came from man's 'pride and ambition and self-will'. Recalling how Robinson Crusoe's Man Friday asked why God did not kill the Devil, it noted, Robinson Crusoe had no good answer. Neither do we'.[15] There was little help in being told that the problem was an old one to which there was no simple answer. However, the Church, proud of its teaching role, was prepared to admit it had no answer.

No doubt reports in Church Magazines of how wounded soldiers were being ministered to by leading surgeons, may have been of some help to relatives who could not, because of distance and cost, travel to see their sons and brothers and husbands who were wounded.[16]

So as the second year of the war was entered, the editor of *The Record* could speak of how 'the nation had settled down in quiet determination to rid the

world, for all time, of the domination of tyranny and injustice and is hopeful of the result'. He further noted that Christianity was a religion of courage and hope and so the title 'Fear Not' could and was given to the magazine's leader. 'There might well be many trials and much suffering to endure amid the coming months', but, the burden can be greatly lightened by a living faith in the care and guidance of an over-ruling God'.[17] Some people however, may have wondered where the overruling God was.

Not surprisingly, articles appeared which stressed the Christian message of Consolation. *Life and Work* had an article on **The Empty Place**, another drew lessons in consolation from Job. The Rev Dr George Reith wrote about **The Waste of Life: a Word of Comfort**, and Dr George Morrison wrote on **The Love of God.**[18] Here, speaking about consolation, the Church was to some degree on fairly secure ground.

Reviewing Dr John Oman's book *The War and its Issues: an Attempt to Christian Judgement, The Record* noted Oman's view that the war was a necessity because the world had not advanced beyond war but 'no serious Christian judgement can accept war as the ultimate basis of society'. Oman had concluded in his book that 'if the war resulted in a transformation of the churches, it would be the best security for other victories'. He was seen as holding out a 'great vision before them and the hope is expressed that they might rise to the height of this privilege'.[19]

So it was back to the teaching office which the Churches claimed to hold. Dr MacEwan had referred to this office. Was the teaching office, the ministry, up to the challenge being set before it? What was the Church to say in the situation in which they now found themselves? Would people respond to a message from the Church which perhaps they did not want to hear? Did the Church, which believed it had an important role in national life, have the ability to swim against the tide if the situation should demand this? Did the Churches have the necessary knowledge, and information, to analyse the situation which they found themselves in? Did the Church know in what direction it should lead?

Events in 1915 and the years to follow were to bring many hard questions home to the churches in Scotland.

NOTES

1. G.H. August 22nd 1914.
2. G.H. September 23rd 1914.
3. G.H. September 24th 1914.
4. G.H. September 25th 1914.
5. Ibid.
6. G.H. September 26th 1914.
7. G.H. September 26th 1914 and G.H. December 27th 1915.
8. **Life and Work.** April 1915 p.114.
9. **Record.** June 1915 p.235.
10. PGAUFCS 1915 pp.334-346.
11. G.H. July 9th 1915.
12. G.H. October 1st, 2nd to 9th 1915.
13. G.H. October 4th, 25th 1915.
14. G.H. September 15th 1915.
15. **Life and Work.** April 1915 p.114.
16. Ibid. January 1916 p.6 'A Base Hospital in France'.

    Ibid. February 1916 p.38 'A Hospital in Wartime'.
17. **Record.** October 1915 pp.417/8.
18. **Life and Work.** March 1916 p.65 The Empty Place.

    Ibid. September 1915 p.266 Job.

    Record. August 1915 p.331 Reith.

    Ibid. December 1915 p.510 Morrison.
19. Ibid. July 1915 p.227.

11. CRITICISM OF MINISTERS

To add to the problems faced by the Churches, the ministry, that group of men commissioned with a role to teach and lead the nation, were criticised for their failure to live up to the fullness of their calling. This criticism came on two lines. The first one was criticism of the way in which chaplains were carrying out their duties.

One of the Divisions at Gallipoli was the 52nd (Lowland) Division and, like other units there, it suffered considerable casualties and considerable sickness. A CO in 'a Lowland Brigade' wrote to the *Glasgow Herald* in response to letters written by chaplains in the Army. He claimed that 'it was now time to tell how they behaved in this war. They were appointed...to go wherever the troops went'. Then he went on to complain that a few days after the troops had landed, the chaplains had gone off, left their units and taken shelter under the Red Cross Flag, in one or other of the Field Hospitals. 'They have never been in the trenches for weeks at a time, neither I, nor the men, has ever seen a chaplain'. Because of the 'religious feelings which were strong among the troops', a 'Golden Opportunity' was being missed by the chaplains. He ended his letter urging that 'The sooner the matter is investigated the better'. Why he wrote to the press and did not seek redress through military channels is not explained.

This letter stirred up a considerable correspondence. One writer, 'Parson', urged that if chaplains did not go on 'Trench Duty' when warned for it, then they should be charged with desertion. The CO should not have gone 'whimpering to the press'. A Sub in Lowland Division supported the CO. Another correspondent claimed that his men saw a chaplain twice in two months and then at dusk on a Sunday night. He put forward the important point that a good minister at home did not of necessity make a good chaplain.

A Wilfred Moyes wrote to say that his experience of chaplains in France differed from that reported from Gallipoli. He was accused of bias since he was a son of the manse. Another writer claimed that the Roman Catholic chaplain visited the trenches regularly but the Presbyterian one was only seen by troops in the billets. 'A Royal Scot' wrote on the other side of the discussion, to tell that his battalion had two chaplains during the year it had been in the line. Both were 'brave self-sacrificing men'. They visited the trenches several times each week.[1]

Part of the problem may well have been that it was difficult to define a standard role for chaplains. One report stated that 'a chaplain's work hardly takes him into the firing line'.[2] The Rev Cameron Reid wrote from Gallipoli and part of his letter ran "When I go up the line, they generally hail me with a 'have they not got you yet, Padre?'" He was the only one left from eight

officers who had shared a table on the ship on their way to Gallipoli. Five had been killed and the other two were severely wounded.[3] Church magazines were sent out to the troops and it could well have been letters like Reid's which sparked off the Commanding Officer's letter.

On the other side of the problem, the Rev WM Goldie of Dalmuir, who was also at Gallipoli, tells that, on the suggestion of the CO of the 1/5th Royal Scots Fusiliers, he left the trenches and attached himself to the Field Ambulance which had just arrived.[4] Cameron Reid wrote some months later that a chaplain 'gets to know the men far better in the trenches than anywhere else'.[5] The Rev A Macdonald told how he had just returned from a tour of the trenches with the CO of the 5th Camerons. It could, of course, have been a one-off tour. Others like the Rev FD Langlands wrote of how he had placed himself with the Regimental Doctor, helping with the wounded as best he could, and lending a hand with the stretcher bearers.[6]

Some tales were almost suitable for Boys Own type magazines. One chaplain wrote 'I wish you could see me after a round of the trenches. I was a pillar of mud from head to foot, and on one occasion got completely stuck over the knees in glue-like mud and had to be dug out'. He told of the four day routine in and out of the trenches and how he tried to do something fro the men while they were in billets.[7] Alongside all these reports perhaps we need to set the prayer of another chaplain, who probably summed up the hopes

of most of them. 'I wish I could do something worthwhile for our gallant men'.[8]

Donald Cameron of Montrose, told of the early morning attack and how the regiment moved up to the firing line. Cameron and the Regimental Doctor moved up to a forward trench as the artillery barrage went on, the attack began and the soldiers behind them moved over the doctor and chaplain who then set up a Field Dressing Station to deal with the expected casualties. Cameron may well have been aware of the debate about the place of the chaplain in the battlefield, for he remarks that it has been argued that the place of the chaplain was back with the Field Ambulance behind the firing line, but that had not been his experience. He went with the doctor since 'The men lying wounded there had to wait some time for the ambulance and one could render some service. Even the giving of a cup of water meant much to some of them'.[9]

The reports would suggest that chaplains had difficulty in deciding what they should do and where they should station themselves. They had been taken from parishes where they had a very definite role, and were placed in situations for which they had never been trained and which they had never before encountered, and which were beyond the experience, initially, of most soldiers in the army. What could they do? What had they to offer? What was expected from them? Initially, they were unsure of where they were in

the Army Establishment. One historian says that when the BEF first went to France 'No chaplain was shown on any mobilisation table except that for the 3rd Echelon of GHQ, where there appeared a Principal Chaplain and a clerk. There was no establishment for chaplains for divisions or attachments to hospitals nor to the base units. No provision had been laid down for their attachment, rations, accommodation or any other essential need.[10]

It was perhaps no wonder that chaplains did all sorts of jobs from visiting the trenches, to organising concerts and football matches, supplying papers and magazines or assisting in the Tent work which began to develop. No doubt, basic to the chaplain's work, was his relationship with commanding officers and obviously not all chaplains lived up to what was rightly or wrongly expected of them.

The experience of a Father HC Day SJ may illustrate the problems under which some chaplains at least worked. In his memoirs, Father Day, who served at Gallipoli and later in France, tells of how on one occasion at Gallipoli, he met the Brigade Commander who ordered him on no account to go into the line during the coming battle. He was to stay with the Advanced Dressing Station. 'Argument was of no avail' wrote Day. If the battle continued, Day would be allowed to ask for permission to go forward. However, Father Day records that when the Brigade Commander changed, the orders were ignored and he began once again to go into the firing line.[11]

The other area where ministers became the subject of criticism, was that of double pay. In their attitude to pay and appointment, some ministers appeared to show that they were not always as highly motivated as they might be.

We have already noted how ministers were allowed to enlist when war broke out. The normal arrangements seem to have been those made by men like Mr Naismyth of St Boswell's who arranged a locum when he enlisted as a combatant.[12] This was probably fairly easy to do at that time as there would have been a considerable number of probationers and retired ministers, available to fill in during the comparatively short period which the war was expected to last.

A reading of the minutes of the Churches Committees which appointed chaplains indicated that the pay and terms of service of chaplains was not fully understood. So it was that the War Office was asked by the Church of Scotland Committee to clarify what the rates of pay were for chaplains. The Committee did not know what the terms were.[13]

It appeared that chaplains were to receive 10 shillings per day except for those who retained higher rank if they were mobilised with Territorial Force. Territorial Force chaplains who were enlisted individually, reverted to basic

pay. Allowances were given for the purchase of essential kit and uniform, but the allowance was claimed to be inadequate and if a set time was not served, some of the allowances had to be refunded. Some chaplains reported to the committee that they had not received any allowances. Chaplains who served only at home do not appear to have received these allowances.[14]

It was perhaps because of this situation, that one minister, even at a later stage of the war, could write to the press that he had not been keen to enlist, and had refused several invitations to become a chaplain since he would be required to expend £30 for a kit, and he could not really afford it. He implies that it would have taken 2 months pay to fit himself out. No doubt chaplains would also have some living expenses, especially if rationing, etc remained a problem. He argued that on 10 shillings a day, no one could make money.[15] One may well ask the question why he was a TF chaplain if he was not willing to enlist.

The question of chaplains making money from the war arose in 1915. An accusation was made against the Church of Scotland Chaplains Committee, that appointments were gained through influence. Good men, it was argued, were not getting their chance to serve. The Convenor, Dr McClymont should consult more widely. The complainant went on to compare chaplains pay with that of combatants. Chaplains got their stipend, a £2 supply fee, and their chaplains pay (10 shillings a day), while the combatant had his stipend,

and 1 shilling and 2 pence a day as a private and no supply fee.[16] One minister was accused by name of having obtained his appointment by using influence.[17]

The matter of ministers drawing two pays continued to be raised. Letters to the press spoke of selfish and money grabbing ministers. One minister complained that there was competition for posts which paid well and little competition for the poor paying ones. He was labelled a 'disappointed man' in the papers a few days later. One minister was reported as having three salaries, stipend, military pay and pay as a prison chaplain. The United Free Presbytery of Ayr appointed a committee to look into the accusations, which might be taken as implying suspicion that there was some truth in the accusations.[18]

Not every minister took all the possible income. When the Rev RT Cameron of Galston was granted 12 months leave of absence to serve in France, a locum was appointed who was to be paid £3 weekly, with the use of the manse, Mr Cameron's military pay would go to the church but he would keep his stipend. Mr Cameron stated that he hoped that this would clear up any question that he was gaining from the appointment.[19] He was unlikely to make this remark if there were not strong feelings on the matter. Cameron served with the YMCA in 1916 and as chaplain 1916-17 and again 1918-19. Cameron was married a few weeks before he enlisted, and we can guess that his wife stayed with her own family while he was away.

Despite discussion of the problem at meetings of the General Assembly, the Scottish Churches do not appear to have solved this problem, until a step forward was made when the terms for enlisting Territorial Army Chaplains were rewritten in the 1920s, laying down that chaplains must be available for mobilisation with their units if the situation should demand it.

The Scottish Churches with no real system for the appointment of chaplains or for dealing with the attendant problems, found themselves in a situation which revealed jealousy among ministers and possible selfishness and love of mammon among men who claimed the right to instruct and teach others a better way. Many ministers, when they looked at what was going on, must have been disturbed at what they saw in their profession.

And so the question as to how the man or woman in the street, or even in the pew, saw ministers began to be aired. 'What did he mean?' was the title of a small comment in *The Record.* It told of how a United Free Church chaplain was asked one Sunday evening by the unit doctor, 'Padre, do you ever get into trouble with your brother ministers?' 'No - Why?', asked the minister. And then we are told that the doctor went on to say that what the chaplain had told the troops that Sunday morning was so human and correct that he, the doctor, could not imagine many other ministers agreeing with him. The note ends, 'The question is, what did he mean?'.[20] The article is

somewhat stunted in form and could well have been a bit of kite flying, but even if that were so, we are left with the question, why fly the kite?

How ministers were seen by others was explored by AH Gray in his book *As Tommy Sees Us.* Gray had served with two battalions of the Highland Light Infantry in France and his book is based on his experiences there. One of the first things which he argues needs to be done is to let some fresh air into the churches, since young men and women see them as cold and stuffy. He asks, 'Do we really understand young male christianity? I doubt it. And if not, may it not be the case that we are all the time unconsciously asking young men to conform to a type of godliness which ought not to be theirs?'

His chapter on 'Parsons' is perhaps the most disturbing as far as ministers are concerned. He tells of two young officers whom he had met, lawyers by profession. They were good men. He was proud to call them his friends. Gray discussed with them the problem that he had in getting young men to know him, to come to his home. The young men smiled and when he asked them why they were smiling, they said that they would not dream of going to the houses of their ministers, and if they knew that the minister planned to call at their homes, they made sure that they were out if that was possible. They did not know their ministers and did not want to know them. They saw them at funerals or in the pulpit, but seldom spoke to them. Gray wrote, 'But for the kindly compulsion of a new and rough life, I suppose I could

never have had them as friends'. He went on 'and these two men were typical in this respect of the great mass of men in our day'.[21]

The churches and their chief representatives were under criticism. Ministers were being marginalised even if they did not know or accept that this was so. Some, however, were now prepared to speak out openly and challenge the churches.

NOTES

1. G.H. November 19th, 22nd, 23rd, 27th 1915.
2. **Life and Work.** April 1915. p.100.
3. Ibid July 1915 p.205 and August 1915 p.241.
4. Ibid September 1915 p.278.
5. Ibid November 1915 p.335-6.
6. Ibid December 1915 p.362.
7. **Record.** March 1915 p.111.
8. Ibid May 1915 p.193.
9. Ibid July 1915 p.282-3.
10. **The Army Chaplain.** Brumwell. London 1942. p.16.
11. **Macedonian Memories.** HC Day. London 1930. pp.137 & 141.
12. G.H. September 18th 1914.
13. Minutes of Church of Scotland Committee on Chaplains 1914. p.157.
14. Ibid pp.176, 202, 235.
15. G.H. September 25th 1916.
16. G.H. June 19th 1915.
17. G.H. June 17th 1915.
18. G.H. January 26th & February 17th 1916.
19. G.H. May 10th 1916.
20. **Record.** July 1915. p.279.
21. **As Tommy Sees Us.** Gray. London 1917. pp.22, 28 & 33.

12. WHEN THE BOYS COME HOME

'The boys' had been recruited and sent on a crusade to save Christian civilisation, and as they went, we have noted that some church folk saw something of a religious revival.

This spirit and outlook survived into 1915 and it is illustrated in the formation of **The League of Spiritual War** which was supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Scottish Moderators among others. The aim was to enlist service men into an organisation and 'to impress on them that when they came home, there will still be waiting for them, a great spiritual war'. It was asked 'is this newly awakened religious enthusiasm to be wasted in the after years?' In this battle which was to be fought at home, it was pictured that the soldiers would be in the front line and there would be a 'second line' made up of the YMCA, Church Guilds and so on. There was little suggestion here of what might be done for the returning soldier, it was what he could do for the nation.[1]

By the end of 1915 and the start of 1916, there are indications of a change of attitude coming in. No doubt the rising tide of casualties which we have looked at had a lot to do with this changed outlook. It was noted that 'Hopes had not been fulfilled'. This remark is made in connection with a 'Solemn Day', which had been urged by the November 1915 meeting of the

Commission of the Church of Scotland General Assembly. Ministers and congregations were urged to 'set apart the first Lord's Day of the coming year as a day of special prayer for the Nation and Empire'. There was a call to confess the sins 'of which conscience makes us ashamed and which hinder us in the defence of our beloved land'. The sins listed were intemperance, impurity, class conflicts, avarice and selfish sloth. The United Free Church's New Year message listed the same sins. These were the sins seen as hindering men and women becoming what they might be. The United Free Church message spoke of 'our manifold trespasses which debar us from complaining of God's judgements'. There is something of a contrast here from the previous year when the churches acquiesced with the wishes of the King, not to speak of a 'Day of Humiliation', as the sins were all on the German side. Now, the Churches were prepared to admit that there were sins on the British side.[2]

And so the year 1916 began with the United Free Church calling for 'long views'. This is the title of an article published in *The Record* of January 1916. It noted that the great religious revival expected from the war had not appeared. Chaplains returning from the front were surprised 'at the calm acceptance of the present conditions, the apparent indifference to the highest things'. They were engaged in 'the greatest military struggle in history...but the people at home are mere spectators in it...their spiritual understanding is confused by the problems it raises'. It is perhaps not quite clear what the

writer is getting at but he pleads for 'long views'. Perhaps he indicates that there was a gap in understanding of the war which was growing between the men at the front and people at home. Maybe this was because news filtered through slowly and because details from the front were censored but at least he suggested that it was time for the church at home to pause and think and to consider the situation in which the nation found itself.[3]

In the same issue of *The Record*, there were a number of letters home from Chaplains at the Front. One recorded an agonised cry of agony which rose from the heart when the wounded were brought in. 'O God, what demonical forces have brought these things to pass'. Another Chaplain, the Rev AJ Tweedie, wrote 'I confess that I find myself unable to endorse much that has been said about the religious influence of life at the front'. He argued that the trials there were akin to the trials of life in peacetime. It all depended how a man met them. 'If a man meets them with the will to be and do his best, then he would come out a stronger and better man'. He expressed his view that war was 'heavily on the side of deterioration of human character'. He took little comfort from 'the spasmodic pieties of a danger zone...the conditions of war are an evangelistic agency'.[4] To some churchmen at least, the seriousness of the war was coming home and they began to realise that they would be forced to rethink their stance.

One of the first attempts may be seen in the results of a survey, published by *The Record* in January 1916. The survey, which had been carried out in 1914, had not been published at that time. Perhaps it was thought that the war was indeed going to bring the breakthrough which they hoped for. The fact that the survey had been carried out indicates that at least in United Free Church circles, there was concern about the effectiveness of the church. It asked why young men were 'disassociating themselves from religious organisations'. It was noted that large numbers of young people did not go near any church and were 'out of sympathy with the conditions that prevailed in the church'. It was noted that many young people had gone through the various church organisations but had become alienated from it later.

Since the young men had shown how heroic they were, the writer felt that it was time that the matter was looked at again. The war, it was assumed, will have changed the outlook of many of them and 'they will return with a higher view of life and a clearer vision of their responsibilities and will be eager to do serious and noble work'. This assumption probably tells us more about the writer than it does about how the troops would feel when they came home.

The survey covered three areas:-

1. The young men had been asked why they went to church. It was noted that this was perhaps the first time many had tried to formulate an answer to this question. Church attendance was often a matter of custom and family habit. Some saw church as a sort of social cement. These reasons were not scorned but when other attractions, like football, came along, habits could be changed and other social cements might appear.

2. It was asked how could the church appeal more to young men. Little response was given to this question and the answers seemed to run into those given to the third query.

3. Do you think young men ought to be given more to do in the church? The fact that these two questions were run together may suggest that the young men and the churches found it easier to deal with organisational problems in the Church than with theological ones which might indicate a crisis of belief.

Some said that they stayed away because they might be asked to do something such as reading a paper at a meeting - an indication of the wordy and cerebral nature of much Scottish church life. Some felt that if young

men had work to do in the church it would anchor them there, but then it was also noted that there were other attractions for young men. Could the church, and ministers especially, communicate better? Young people were quick to spot insincerity. Science should be 'frankly accepted' by the church. There might be a development in the teaching ministry of the church. One response to the questions claimed 'I have sat under an able minister for twenty years and I feel I have nothing to show for it'. Ministers should be in closer contact with young men, not discussing the esoteric subjects ministers usually discuss, but giving young men 'a chance to work out their ideas in the church, even if they appear ridiculous'. Then, as now, the church had a problem of appearing to lay down what was right and what was wrong, rather than inviting men and women to a pilgrimage. The gap between the church and society is noted. Ministers are accused of being unaware of the struggle which young men have in their daily lives, reference is made to the unfair social and industrial conditions which exist in society. The article notes that unfortunately, there were too few replies from non-church goers to make any comment from that angle worthwhile.[5]

Why was the survey resurrected now? Was it seen as part of the 'Long View' which was needed? If the war was not an evangelistic agency, then the problems raised in the survey would still be with the church when the war would be over. The questions were still there and perhaps the church should pay attention to them.

What was to be done when the men came home? Increasing attention was turned to this challenge. The Rev Hugh Elder of Edinburgh's response was to ask 'When the boys come home, will they find the heroic (that is found in army life) in our church life?...if, when they come home, they find the Church slack, easy going, selfish, self indulgent, it will not appeal to them...they will have no use for it...if they find it a mighty army attacking sin and social evils...and marching to the overthrow of ignorance and suspicion abroad, they will flock to the banner of the cross, as they have been flocking to the colours during the war'.[6] Elder, perhaps unconsciously, reflects the misunderstanding of what the war was like and why men like Tweedie could not see the war as an evangelistic agency. Military service has always been, in many ways, moments of excitement in a sea of boredom. Even the companionship and brotherhood of soldiering was often experienced in circumstances no one in their right mind would wish to be involved in. In the war of 1914-18, there were, in addition, mud, disease, at times bad organisation and supply. How could one speak of getting a church into training? How could a heroic church be spoken of in the same sentence as heroism for example in Flanders? Sadly ministers, like Mr Elder, felt that they had to speak on matters about which they had little first hand knowledge.

Perhaps only those who in some way shared with or watched the suffering of the wounded men, could pose the genuine question facing the nation and the churches. So AH Gray asked 'For What are Our Soldiers Dying?' Drawing on his experiences as a chaplain, he could write 'I stood, one afternoon lately, by the side of a man in mortal agony. Cruelly wounded, he was yet very strong and life left him slowly. Meanwhile, he suffered unspeakably, torn by the pain, he could hardly speak, and because he was brave he could not cry out. He was finishing his 'bit'. For several hours he was the one on the cross. As someone had said, he might have truly declared, "My broken body thus I give." And about sunset God frees him.' Gray went on to speak of how simple men who had never dreamed that they were heroes were laying down their lives daily, in the belief that this was the price which had to be paid for some greater good, and so they paid it without complaining. But, what, he asked, justified these mangled bodies? It is you at home who must answer this question'. The men at the front, at times, fear that some tragic muddle has gripped the world, and that the world and society will become no better. He noted that 'For a great cause a man may dare to die; but if his life is thrown away in a wrangle that bears no fruit, his lot is bitter indeed'.

Looking back from our present day standpoint, we may feel that Gray overdid the blending of religious imagery with military sacrifice. Such blending was commonplace for his age - after all, if you sent young men out on a crusade, you were entitled so to speak, and their sacrifice while on the

crusade should have some purpose. While the war did not measure up to the picture which many at home had of this crusade, nevertheless, good could come from it and should come from it and the nation and mankind could be uplifted through the right use of the soldiers sacrifice. Gray uses the opportunity to urge the people at home to live lives worthy of the men at the front. 'Is it possible for a dying soldier to say "my broken body thus I give - for that?" and the 'that' was the music hall, sport, the public house, the stock exchange at home, which 'are objects of more sincere interest than faith or truth or art or the Church of God, or justice or brotherhood?'.[7]

On the Church of Scotland side a similar note is struck. Praise is given for the comforts which are being sent to the troops 'but they also need our help in making the homeland ready for their return...time enough cries the careless when they do come and the war work is done, and we have leisure for other things'. The writer warns that the time to get ready is now, not when the men come home.[8]

Churchmen noted that politicians were beginning to talk about post-war planning for the country and empire, business men were starting to think about post-war business (even if part of their planning was to consider how Germany might be excluded from post-war world trade). So it was asked 'Is the church to have no plans? Is the Church alone to sit back and wait and see?'.[9]

Perhaps the Rev EC Houlston, writing from France may be allowed to summarise what, at least, some churchmen were beginning to sense: 'It is problematic what the effect of the actual experiences of the horrors of trench warfare will be upon the men', he wrote. 'I find a great difference in susceptibility between those going up the trenches and those coming out. We must beware of being mislead by what is spoken of among the men as 'Trench Christianity'. There will be much work for our parish ministers to do 'When the Boys Come Home'.[10] Sadly, this is the only part of his letter which is recorded. We might have received more insight into his thoughts from the rest of the letter. Nevertheless, he reflects the way in which chaplains were beginning to look more deeply and closely at what effect the war was having on men. Because of the numbers of the casualties and the fact that there was no end to the war in sight, they coming away from the earlier ideas and ideals of the war and beginning to raise questions for which there were no simple or easy answers, but they were questions to which the Churches were being challenged to turn their minds and thoughts.

The Churches, perhaps not unexpectedly, set up committees to consider the situation in which they found themselves.

NOTES

1. **Life and Work.** November 1915. p.327.
2. Ibid. January 1916. p.12. **Record.** January 1916. p.4.
3. **Record.** January 1916. p.1.
4. Ibid. January 1916. pp.7 & 9.
5. Ibid. January 1916. pp.27-29.
6. Ibid. February 1916. p.41.
7. Ibid. April 1916. pp.110-111.
8. **Life and Work.** Guild Section. April 1916. p.44.
9. Ibid. June 1916. p.147.
10. Ibid. June 1916. p.152.

13. THE END OF THE VOLUNTEER ARMY

January 1st 1916 saw the introduction of a scheme of limited conscription. The 'Derby Scheme' which had been tried in October 1915, was an attempt to balance the demands of the Forces with those of Industry, but it had not been over-successful. By June 1916, universal conscription existed to all intents and purposes.

The need for conscription must have come as a considerable shock to men who had put so much stress into voluntary spirit. Some churchmen, when facing the accusation that christianity had failed, gave as their answer, that 'the tremendous uprising of feelings against the methods of the Central Powers had been based on the root principles of religion. In our own case, the wonderful thing is that the great army which has sprung into existence within a year, is a volunteer army'.[1]

Even at the end of the war, some churchmen like the Rev PD Thompson of Glasgow, could state boldly, 'The inspiration which induced the flower of their young manhood to rally to the great cause, long before conscription was introduced, had come from the church and was fostered by it'.[2]

At one time, the fairness of voluntary recruiting had been discussed, and it had been suggested that those who did not volunteer were shirking their duty,

but the keenness for a volunteer army prevailed.[3] As the end of 1915 drew near, advertisements appeared in the newspapers with the legend 'The Final Appeal'...or 'The Last Rally'.[4] It was the last chance being given to men to enlist so that they would not be classified as conscripts, but would be able to use the term of honour 'a volunteer'. There were of course some financial advantages as some employers such as Glasgow Corporation granted an allowance to their employees who enlisted to compensate for any loss of pay suffered by joining the forces. The final date for enlistment so as to qualify for these allowances, was given in the press as the 30th November 1915.[5] Conscription was yet another pressure to which the churches had to respond, as they strove to make their response to the larger questions being posed by the whole situation in which the nation found itself.

Some attempts were made to encourage the Churches to think about the problems which they were facing. The editor of the United Free Church *Record* wrote to some 120 ministers asking them what their response to the war, and to the returning men, would be. Of the 120 asked, only 50 replied. Some who responded confessed that it was difficult to suggest anything that might be helpful in the situation. We have to agree that this was, in many ways, a very honest response. Some, who appeared to have given little attention to chaplains who were warning that the war was not an evangelistic opportunity, continued to speak of the purified characters who would come home. Some, however, saw that there would be 'moral as well as physical

wreckage after the war'. Some went so far as to declare that the young men would welcome the challenge of enlisting in the Diaconate after the war, or find a challenge in collecting for Foreign Missions, and there were those who hoped that the churches would 'be able to draw forth from the young men a new patriotism for the kingdom of God'. Church membership had to be shown as 'active service, not on Sunday alone, but in every department of life'.[6]

But what were the Churches to do? How were they to react? Churches, like most human organisations, when the pressure is on, react in traditional and well known ways, and so the General Assemblies of the main Scottish Churches were overtured in 1916 to appoint a National Day of Humiliation and Prayer.[7] They were, in fact, being asked to take action along similar lines to those suggested by most British Churches. The Scottish Churches were somewhat upset that the Day appointed would be a Sunday and not a week day. They argued that giving up a week day would be a greater sign of national humiliation, but the Government of course did not, perhaps rightly, wish to lose any munition production.[8]

The General Assemblies, at their 1916 meetings, resolved to appoint bodies to look at the whole question of the meaning and purposes of the war. In the case of the Church of Scotland, it was decided 'to appoint a Commission of the Church on the war in relation to its spiritual and moral issues....to

promote the work of self-examination, self-knowledge and repentance throughout the Church and nation and generally take such steps....as may forward the purpose of preparing the Church and nation to understand the present visitation, and to meet the requirements of the time according to the mind of God...'[9]

The United Free Church appointed 'a Special Committee to take into consideration the present situation as affected by the war, and to devise such means and make such recommendations as may enable the Church, by God's blessing, to meet the requirements of the time in the truth and power of the Gospel...with power to confer, and cooperate as may be found advisable, with representatives of other Churches'.[10]

Meetings for prayer were held. The question of a National Mission was raised, and it was agreed to follow up this suggestion. It was suggested that Conferences might be held to encourage discussion in the Churches. In the years of the decade before the outbreak of the war, such Conferences had been thought useful when the Churches were trying to decide what their reaction should be towards Social Questions. The hope of churchmen no doubt was that ministers and others should be given the opportunity to become involved in the discussions.

At last, the churches showed that they realised that they were in a large and somewhat confusing situation. The war had not progressed as they had hoped and prayed. It was not leading to a great religious revival. Their fine young men had made the supreme sacrifice and now conscription had proved necessary. It was time for the churches to begin to give deep and serious thought to the situation and to what was the way for the Churches and nation in the years ahead.

NOTES

1. **Record.** November 1915. p. 463.
2. PGAUFCS 1918 p. 213.
3. G.H. December 8th 1914.
4. G.H. October 4th and 23rd 1915.
5. G.H. November 19th 1915.
6. **Record.** June 1916 pp. 159ff.
7. a. **A Laymans Guide to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1916.** p.37.
   b. PGAUFCS 1916 p. 353.
8. PGAUFCS 1916 pp. 353-358.
9. **Laymans Guide.** pp. 53-57.
10. RGUAFCS Report of the Committee on the Present Situation as affected by the War 1917. p.1.

14. THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT 1916 AND MINISTERIAL ENLISTMENT

The coming of conscription in 1916, brought to the fore once again the question of military service by ministers, and demonstrated the confusion which still existed in the thinking of Scottish Churches. By way of an excuse for the Churches, we could accept that they never seemed to have time to pause and think, and in all their reactions, they were to some degree prisoners of their past history.

The Moderators, in November 1915, felt that they had to respond to the view expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in correspondence with Neville Chamberlain, who was then Director of Recruiting. The Archbishop had expressed the view that clergy should be excluded from conscription, not only because of Canon Law, but because clergy had other equally important roles to carry out in society, in maintaining a religious basis for society.[1]

The Moderators, Dr. Paul and Dr. MacEwan, claimed that while there was no law in their churches which discouraged ministers becoming combatants, yet ministers had to remember 'their responsibility under God to their Presbyteries for the sacred charge into which they have been instituted'.

While some ministers might feel that their place was to serve God and their country in the Army. 'They were bound before committing themselves to any irrevocable step to turn to their Presbyteries for guidance'.[2]

Presbyteries were to set up advisory committees to offer ministers guidance on what road they should follow, but the question as to who was exempted from service was not clear.

And when the question of advisory committees was raised in the Edinburgh Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, Professor Paterson took the opportunity to sound off about what he had termed in 1912, the vitality of presbyterianism. 'Presbyterians took a more virile line that Lutherans and Anglicans...the Church of the Covenanters held that when a ruler violated his part of the contract...there emerged the moral justification and duty of rebellion. The same held good in regards the duty of fighting... It was not contrary to the law, creation and instinct of the Church of Scotland'.[3] Leaving aside the question of how fair he was being to other churches, his attitude did little to solve the problems being faced by the Scottish Churches.

On some of the occasions when ministers asked permission from their Presbyteries to enlist, we can see indications of the sort of problems faced by the churches. The Rev. P.C. Millen of Forfar, was refused permission to enlist as his parish was a new one and needed continuity of ministry.[4]

The United Free Presbytery in Edinburgh, decided to appeal against the ruling of the Tribunal set up under the Military Service Act in the case of Mr. Jardine of Portobello, on the grounds that Mr. Jardine had only been in his parish for a few months and was beginning to pull the parish together once again.[5] The Advisory Committee of Paisley United Free Church decided to release none of the six ministers who had asked for advice and to appeal their cases if it so proved necessary.[6]

Reports in *Life and Work*, indicated that because of the numbers of probationers and ministers engaged in war service, 'Many ministers find it impossible to get assistants and it is becoming increasingly difficult to make arrangements for the supply of the places of the absent'.[7] Dr. Paul appealed for ministers in smaller charges to offer to help out in larger charges.

The status of students and licentiates under the Military Service Acts also caused problems. The Scottish Churches claimed that the students of other churches were treated better than Scottish students were.[8] The problem sprang from the fact that while deacons were ordained, licentiates fell into a no man's land, and the Presbyterian Churches seemed unable to appreciate the problem or to deal with it.

While some voices were raised to point out that 'the church could not afford to cut out the supply of ministers',[9], others like Professor Cairns, spoke of war service as 'a great human university with all classes open. No man can pass through its work faithfully without a great enrichment of his own inner life'. He argued that those congregations which allowed their ministers to go, would gain in the long run, 'for the men who return will have a new power of serving their people and a new influence with our youth when they come home'.[10] To describe war as a university and recommend it for the completion of the education of ministers points to a misunderstanding of war and of what was happening to the nation. Cairns appealed for 250 men for various forms of service and in a few months he had received some 160 responses.

The problems which had to be faced in releasing these men, shows how scarce ministerial manpower had become in Scottish churches. One article in *The Record* speaks of congregations having to set aside cherished traditions and established arrangements in order to meet the unparalleled situation which had arisen. Congregations joined forces so as to release the ministers, each in his turn. Sometimes in a triangular set up, two ministers did the work of three, and released their third colleague. On occasion these joint setups involved the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church parishes.[11]

One such example was in Falkland, where the Church of Scotland minister had joined the forces, leaving the United Free Church minister to look after the joint congregations, who worshipped in the Parish Church.[12]

Various suggestions were made as to what service ministers might like to offer to the war effort. Munitions, secretarial work, agriculture were suggested as possible spheres of service. [13] One minister resigned his charge to go into munition work. He had been an engineer before ordination.[14] Perhaps not surprisingly, in the light of what we have already noted, some asked if ministers were going to keep their extra pay they might receive.[15]

Other ministers took boys from Glasgow to help with the harvest in the country, combining a holiday for the boys, hopefully, with some help for the farming community.[16] So important was it to be seen to be to convince the Government and others that the Churches were pulling their weight, that the Presbytery of Glasgow asked that all ministers should report any work that they might be doing so that it would be known about, and no doubt recorded, and reported to the appropriate authority.[17]

The problem of the enlistment of ministers continued with each change in the Military Service Acts. In September 1917, it was decided by the War Office that Chaplains should be enlisted for two years instead of one year, and the Army Council suggested that, to avoid calling up men in Holy

Orders, no one should be ordained unless they had been graded in medical classes B3 or C3 or who had been rejected medically for military service.[18]

The Military Service Act of 1918, again raised the matter of the conscription of ministers and clergy. The bill was discussed in Parliament at a time of great national danger and when the Army had its back to the wall in France. The Church of England at last accepted that the clergy could not be exempted from service, but by the time the bill became law, the provision to include clergy was removed, in Davidson's opinion because of their potential refusal of Irish Roman Catholic priests to serve.[19] Even at this point, the United Free Church General Assembly in 1918 could say 'Nevertheless ministers were not free from moral responsibility to respond to the call to serve'. Ministers were to consider the call to serve and the Churches were to set free, as many ministers as possible. To speak of a call to serve in the forces, was to use very ecclesiastical language. It suggested that they still saw the summons to serve King and Country as a call from God. Presbyteries were instructed to adjust ministerial relations and ecclesiastical arrangements, and congregations were urged to adjust times of worship and places of worship so as to free ministers for military service.[20]

The debate at the United Free Church General Assembly, however, indicated that the Church still had problems over the recruitment of ministers. One minister, the Rev. A.N. Bogle, queried the exact powers of the committee

appointed to advise ministers and presbyteries. Noting that ministers were under the authority of the Church Courts, he asked if it would not be wiser if the committee surveyed the overall situation, and then approached specific ministers with a view to making changes. Who was to initiate changes? Did the committee have to wait until they were approached by a Presbytery, or did the committee have the power to initiate discussions? Bogle felt that ministers had the right to expect some direction from the Church authorities as to what they might do.[21]

The problem which the church had in coming to grips with the situation, is shown by Professor Martin who had presented the report to the General Assembly. When he came to respond to the discussion on the report, he spoke warmly of suggestions by men like Bogle, but he made no effort to follow the suggestions to their conclusion. The last paragraph of his reply shows the confused nature of Professor Martin's response. The Professor 'found great comfort in feeling that he was a soldier in an Army, and must await orders. He submitted that that was the right position for them all to occupy...he urged that they should stand a good deal upon the Church's inherent authority over her servants and leave the initiative, not to individuals but to the Church...they were a Presbyterian Church, and the Presbytery was the only authority that he could recognise...it was for Presbyteries to survey the situation in the light of recent events...it was for every Presbytery to consider whether there was any further contribution of man-power it could

make to the nation's need'. He then proceeded to propose a new paragraph to the deliverances of the report whose main effect was to weaken the power given to Presbyteries in the original deliverance.[22]

Dr. Martin in his response, sums up the problems of the Scottish Churches in the realm of ministerial enlistment. Caught between ministerial freedom and liberty and church discipline and the power of Presbyteries, Dr. Martin did not find it easy to grasp the hard and difficult decisions which has to be made by the Church. It was simpler to send them back to local people to sort out, without giving them the required authority to deal with the problem.

NOTES

1. Bell. **Randall Davidson.** London 1935. pp. 756-6.
2. G.H. November 8th 1915.
3. G.H. November 25th 1915.
4. G.H. November 16th 1915.
5. G.H. January 5th 1916.
6. G.H. January 12th 1916.
7. **Life and Work.** February 1916 p.56.
8. G.H. March 18th 1916.
9. PGAUFCS 1916 p.395.
10. **Record.** January 1916 p.5.
11. Ibid February 1916 p.31.
12. Ibid January 1916 p.3.
13. G.H. March 1st and March 14th 1916.
14. G.H. March 14th 1916.
15. G.H. March 5th 1916.
16. G.H. March 17th 1916.
17. G.H. May 10th 1916.
18. **Life and Work.** September 1917 p.131.
19. Bell op cit. pp. 887/8/9.
20. RGAUFCS 1918. Report XLII pp.2/3.
21. PGAUFCS 1918. p. 105.
22. PGAUFCS 1918. p.106.

15. THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCHES TO PACIFISM AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

The passing of the Military Services Act inevitably brought this problem to the fore. Pacifists who until now could keep quiet and conceal their views, now had to declare them when they were summoned to enlist. They received very little sympathy from Scottish Churchmen.

The feelings which were fairly common in Scotland were reflected in the response in *The Glasgow Herald*, to a resolution which had been passed by the Merthyl Tydfil Branch of the I.L.P. It declared 'Pacifists may believe themselves to be the salt of the earth. Most of us think that the humblest 'Tommy' who offers his life to his country, proclaims more of the virtues of citizenship and even Christianity than the whole crowd of Conscientious Objectors'.[1] That was a reasonably accurate reflection of the views of most Scottish Churchmen.

Not surprisingly perhaps, some of the grounds on which men appealed to be excused military service had a biblical flavour about them. What was meant by dependants? Could single men have dependants? Tribunals ruled that they could not.[2] The son of a widow appealed to be excused and was exempted for a month.[3] Unfortunately there is no indication as to what the long term decision was and we can but assume that in the long run he was

required to serve. A teacher recently married, asked for exemption under the Deuteronomic law which excused newly married men military service from the first year of their marriage.[4]

But those who asked for exemption came under strong attack from Churchmen. The views of the Church of Scotland can be seen from an article in *Life and Work.*

The article recalled the many sermons which had been preached justifying the war, and went on to note 'that there are still a certain number of Christian Scotsmen who cannot reconcile their consciences with the prosecution of the war with Germany'. The writer of the article noted that many good people suffered from confusion of thought. 'If (the war) it is just, it should be fought with both hands and not with one, and the Government should be supported by every honest citizen in their effort to do their best', and then the writer continued 'it seems to be the general impression of sober and fair-minded men that the exhibition made by the majority of the applicants for exemption for military service on the ground of conscience had not tended to raise respect for the modern conscience'.[5] Having thus dismissed the matter of Conscientious Objection and Pacifism, the matter scarcely raised its head in the Church of Scotland for the duration of the War.

It was perhaps not unexpected that the United Free Church, being the more radical of the two main churches in Scotland, should have had more trouble with the problem of objection to war service.

The Moderator of the 1916 General Assembly in his Opening Address made the following claim: 'It is not necessary to discuss whether a compulsory system is compatible with democracy. Government of the people, by the people, had in such questions a moral authority equalled by no other form of rule, and in our own free constitution the power of the state to call men to arms has long been inherent and unchallenged'.[6] Professor George Adam Smith, the Moderator, saw no grounds to challenge conscription. But if he thought he had settled the matter for United Free Churchmen, then he was mistaken. The next month, June 1916, a conscientious objector appeared before a Tribunal in Lanarkshire, with documents from his United Free Church minister supporting his request for exemption. The Tribunal debated whether or not to accept the letters, and do not appear to have done so.[7] Another applicant for exemption, told the Tribunal that he had left the United Free Church because of the attitude of its ministers to the war, and he had joined the local Bethany Hall, but that did not obtain his exemption.[8]

The question of conscientious objection was one which would disturb the churches into the post war years, especially the United Free Church.

Dr. Drummond, moderator of the United Free Church in 1918, a man who pre-war had been anti war, referring to the holocaust of young human life which the war had entailed, claimed that 'The most vehement of conscientious objectors could not speak more strongly of this (holocaust) than do multitudes who as conscientiously believe it their stern and lawful duty to engage in this mighty conflict for righteousness, liberty and international honour.'[9] He appeared to suggest that conscientious objection was something of an irrelevance.

But the Moderator's views did not stifle discussions at that Assembly of 1918. When the Assembly was discussing the Military Services Act, one minister, the Rev. W.H. Hamilton of Barrhead, proposed a resolution to enable him to express his opposition to conscription. His resolution invited the Assembly to support the rights of individual conscience, to invite the Government to release those who were in jail for their views, and urged all ministers to consider where their duty lay and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.[10] It was in the nature of a tactical move, for when the competence of the motion was challenged, he withdrew it stating 'that those ministers of military age, who like himself, were conscientious objectors, did not desire to be exempted'.[11] We may assume that if he and those who thought like him, had been forced to enlist, then they would have refused to soldier and would have used the occasion to make a political statement which would have had theological overtones. In the early days of the century, the floor of the

General Assembly was a reasonably good platform from which to make such statements.

The other side of the matter was raised, when the report **On the Present Situation as Affected by The War** was discussed, in a section which dealt with Church and State relations. The report suggested respect for conscience but suggested that there were circumstances when 'a society wisely concerned for the higher interests of its citizens, rather that risk the doing of violence to the least of them, will prefer that its claim upon the individual be waived'.[12] Some objected to this paragraph and its apparent support for conscience. One objector was the Rev. W.R. Thomson of Bellshill. He claimed that the Report 'contained a doctrine of the Church, a treatise on social philosophy, and a section of the relation of the state to the individual.' He argued that to deal with the question of conscience at that time, was of necessity to deal with the question of conscience and its relationship to the war situation. His argument was that there was a section of the report open to misunderstanding. 'He was sure that in certain quarters the Assembly's approval of the paragraph would be made use of. There were people who would say, Oh, the great Assembly of the United Free Church has cast the mantle of its approval over those who refuse their assistance to the nation in the day of war'.[13]

Like Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Thomson was not against using the Assembly as a platform to get his message across, and noting that many in the galleries of the Assembly Hall would have lost sons, brothers and friends, he stressed that 'it was not a time for them to weep tears over conscientious objectors; the young men of their country were dying for them as they were dying for the conscientious objectors also, while he was secured in all his liberties and comforts. The State had dealt very tenderly with the conscientious objector, and the thought that there was no need that the General Assembly should make the State more foolishly tender still'.[14]

It was difficult for those who had supported the war as a Crusade, to give much sympathy to those who wished to be exempted from the war. They were seen as men who were failing to meet the challenge of their destiny and the destiny of their nation.

But the Conscientious Objectors were not without their supporters. One such supporter was the Rev. Charles Robson of Alloa. In the debate on the Report On the Present Situation as Affected by The War, he proposed a resolution which requested the Assembly to ask the Government to review the cases of all the conscientious objectors who were in jail.[15] He mentioned some of those who were involved. One was a John Marshall, who when he was being sentenced, received a strong expression of sympathy from Lord Sands, who had been Procurator of the Church of Scotland at the outbreak

of the war and who had been one of those who did not place all the responsibility for the war on Germany.[16] Robson also referred to 'a young man of their Church' who that week had finished his third term of imprisonment and who at that time was waiting a further court-martial.[17] A Mr. Nicholson, who supported the Rev. C. Robson, spoke of 'his friend and fellow student' Donald Grant, a man who was 'steel true and blade straight'. Grant, he claimed was a man 'whose genuineness and sincerity not even his worst enemies - if he could be imagined having an enemy - could call into question: when he thought of that man beginning that endless round of punishments and ignomies, when he might be devoting himself to the uplift of the fallen and the comforting of the bereaved, he could not help feeling that here had been a grave miscarriage of justice.'[18] While this plea, we are told, was greeted with applause, both Thomson's and Robson's amendments were rejected, that of Mr. Robson, by a 'large majority'.[19]

Perhaps the best that can be said for the Church, is that despite rejecting both amendments, the Church realised that to some degree they were on the horns of a dilemma, and that after all they had been through and after all they had said since the outbreak of war, they were not quite able to strike out on a new path, and so they were unable to give support to conscientious objectors or to rethink to any degree the situation in which they found themselves. Perhaps it ought to be noted to the credit of the United Free Church that the speakers on both sides of the debate received applause from

the Assembly, and this applied to those whose motions were lost by large majorities.[20]

The discussions rumbled on into 1919. Conscription was of course still in force when the Assembly met in May. The Rev. Colin Robb raised the matter of the conscientious objectors who were still in jail. Gibb stated that he had never been a pacifist or conscientious objector, 'nor did he plead for the shirker or for the revolutionary conscientious objector - if there were such - who would resort to physical force to introduce a revolution. He pleaded for the conscientious objector who had devoted his life to carrying out what he believed to be the teaching of Christ, and who believed that the will of Christ for him was that he must not lift any lethal weapon to take away the life of his brother'.[21]

Opposition to Mr. Gibb's motion was lead by the Rev. W.S. Mathieson who had been one of the first chaplains to enlist in 1914. He argued, supported by Dr. Harvey the Clerk of the Assembly, that 'it would be more in keeping with the position of the Church if they dealt first with their own soldiers who were still serving in the Army of Occupation...to exercise clemency on behalf of those who had not been fighting for them was misdirected zeal'.[22] Mathieson claimed to know six objectors who were living in a hotel after their release. Only one of them was a religious conscientious objector, 'a weak sort of man, but a religious man - while the other five were men always

up against the Government, and had Bolshevik tendencies'. It was claimed that many objectors were of that type. 'The first duty of the church, it seemed to him, was towards the men who had endured hardship and deprivation in fighting for their country and its liberty'.[23]

Even in the post-war years there were those who found it hard to forgive the pacifist or the conscientious objector. It would take more time and perhaps time for the older leadership of the church to depart before a change could come and a deeper understanding of the pacifist be exhibited. It was perhaps, too much to expect a nation which had suffered so much to make such a radical change so soon.

NOTES

1. G.H. November 29th 1915.
2. G.H. November 9th 1915.
3. G.H. November 1st and 2nd 1915.
4. G.H. March 11th 1916.
5. **Life and Work.** May 1916 p. 135.
6. PGAUFCS 1916 p. 53.
7. G.H. June 6th 1916.
8. G.H. July 21st 1916.
9. PGAUFCS 1918 p. 45.
10. PGAUFCS 1918 p. 100.
11. PGAUFCS 1918 p. 19.
12. PGAUFCS Report on the Present Situation as Affected by the War. 1918 p.8.
13. PGAUFCS 1918 p. 147.
14. PGAUFCS 1918 p. 149.
15. PGAUFCS 1918 p. 149.
16. G.H. October 12th 1914.
17. PGAUFCS 1918. p. 150.
18. PGAUFCS 1918. p. 151.
19. PGAUFCS 1918. p. 154.

20. PGAUFCS 1918. p. 151.

21. PGAUFCS 1919. p. 247.

22. PGAUFCS 1919. p. 264.

23. PGAUFCS 1919. p. 264

PART 4

RESPONSE TO THE WAR

16. THE COMMITTEES ARE SET UP

At the General Assemblies of 1916, the two main Scottish Churches set up organisations to consider the situation in which they found themselves due to the war.

The Church of Scotland set up a Commission in response to an overture which read 'For as much as recent events and the present distress make it evident that God is calling the earth, and is pleading with his people; and forasmuch as it is the office of the Church to endeavour the interpretation to its own members, and to the world, of those things which the Lord is speaking from heaven, and to call its members to repentance and prayer and the world to humble itself and seek after God; and forasmuch as, by reason of the many grievous evils which now afflict the nation; and the needs which in future will arise when God's compassion the present conflict is ended, this duty is, and will continue to be, urgent, lest for all these things we repent not to give God the glory'.[1] The members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh who brought the overture, obviously thought that the Church had something to say to her members and to the world.

The duty given to the Commission was to 'consider the need of the time and prepare the way, and in due season.... call the Nation to penitence, faith, and hope to hear and obey the word of God who has mercy on us'[2], and they

were further instructed 'to promote the work of self examination, self-knowledge and repentance throughout the Church and Country: generally to take such steps...as may forward the purpose of preparing the Church and Nation to understand the present visitation, and to meet the requirements of the time according to the mind of God'.[3]

The remit, which was given to the United Free Church Committee which had the title 'The Committee on the Present Situation as Affected by the War', was somewhat simpler than that which the Church of Scotland Commission was given. It was 'to take into consideration the present situation as affected by the War, and to devise such means and make such recommendations as may enable the Church, by God's blessing, to meet the requirements of the time in the truth and power of the Gospel'.[4] Both Churches gave the committees power to confer with one another and with any others considered suitable. In this cooperation we see signs of the way in which the two churches had been growing closer, a movement which had grown in the forces between soldiers and especially among chaplains.[5]

The United Free Church started by collecting the views of a number of chaplains, Hut workers, YMCA staff and combatants and, it was claimed, 'Much valuable information was obtained'.[6]

It was noted that the revival expected at the outbreak of the war had not come and church attendance, organisations, etc., had suffered because of Sunday work which was demanded by the war effort.[7]

As the committees examined the problem remitted to them, they were still of the view that Germany had to bear a great deal of the blame.[8] On that they had not changed their views.

It was felt that a number of questions had been raised and these needed to be answered. 'Is God Omnipotent?', 'Is God to Blame?', 'Is the world an Iceberg or a Ship?'.[8a] The Church would have to answer these queries and indeed many others. The Churches were faced with a great educational task. But the main question to the Churches was could they read the signs of the time? Those who could not, it was noted, suffered the reproach of Jesus. 'Unless we can in some measure apprehend the divine significance of the catastrophe, we can learn nothing from it'.[9]

In 1916, the Churches did not doubt that they could rise to occasion. As at the start of the century, the churches believed that they had the power to speak to the churches and to the world. So the committees set to work.

While the reports were awaited, the United Free Church made, what we might call, an attempt to 'revive' their ministers. A number of 'retreats' were

held in areas outside the main cities. They were paid for by some wealthy members and the aim was to give rural ministers a few days at one of the many Hydros which then existed in Scotland.[10]

Melrose, Moffat, Forres, Strathpeffer, Oban, Deeside were some of the places where they were held.

We were told of the ministers who came to one retreat, that 'as the conference went on, a remarkable change came over their spirits. The load seemed to lift, fresh hope and strength flowed in, and finally all consecrated themselves afresh to the service of their people, and went away with a new feeling of confidence and joy and enthusiasm in their ministry'.[11] This no doubt was the aim of the meetings, to encourage country ministers who suffered from loneliness and isolation.

At Oban, one subject discussed was the 'shortcomings and impotence of the church'. There was a summons for the ministers to return to Christ. There was a degree of soul searching and how the ministers had failed their age, and how they might improve their work, what better methods they might bring into use.[12] These conferences, were no doubt, of considerable value to those who attended, even at the basic level of providing a rest, and renewing them to some degree mentally and physically.

No answers were provided at this time, that was to be expected, but it was hoped that when the Committee and Commission met and did their work, some answers would be produced.

Both Churches planned to produce pamphlets to cover various matters and while these, and the reports from the main committees were awaited, a number of Congresses were held to deal with social and other question. It was hoped that christian brotherhood would carry forward lessons learned at the Front, materialism was noted as a danger to be dealt with, and how, it was asked was the world to find Industrial Peace, and International Peace. Such Congresses had been held pre-war when social problems were being explored. The Congresses demonstrated the claim of the Scottish Churches to speak, not only to their own members, but to the nation as a whole. One minister noted 'Perhaps the most notable feature of the congress was that it showed the concern of Christ's Church in Scotland to answer the calls of its living Lord'.[13]

Another minister recorded that he came away wondering what effective changes he could make when he returned to his parish. 'Probably the outstanding feature of the Congress was the address on *The Unchanging Gospel.* After all is said and done, the man who has the positive message of the Christian Church to give his people, is the man who will attract the returning soldier. If we are to have a National Mission, this must be its keynote'.[14]

Those who were there evidently felt that a process had begun in which the Churches would examine their lives and witness, and attempt to apply to it the situation in which they found themselves. However, they approached it still convinced of the vocation of the English-speaking race, the integrity and competence of the Scot, the vitality and promise of the Presbyterianism, and the importance and joy of the office of the ministry.

We must now turn to look at how this worked out.

NOTES

1. RGACS. 1917. **'Commission on the War'**. p.724.
2. Ibid. p. 274.
3. Ibid. p. 725.
4. RGAUFCS. 1917. **'Situation as Affected by the War'**. p.1.
5. see notes 3 and 4 above.
6. RGAUFCS. ibid. p. 2.
7. Ibid. p. 4/5.
8. RGACS. 1917. **'Commission on the War'**. p. 733.

8a. Maclean and Sclater. **'God and the Soldier'**. London 1917.

9. RGACS. 1917. **'Commission on the War'**. p. 736.
10. **'The Record'**. November 1916. p. 274.
11. Ibid.
12. **'The Record'**. November 1916. p. 274, January 1917. p.12, November 1916. pp 276 and 278.
13. **'Life and Work'**. May 1917. p. 67.
14. **'Life and Work'**. May 1917. p. 67.

17. THE NATIONAL MISSION OF 1919 - A RECALL TO NATIONAL VOCATION

The Church of England National Mission carried out in 1916 may have been the spark which caused the Presbytery of Aberdeen to overture the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1916, to the effect that a National Mission be held in every parish in the late autumn or the early winter. The overture was referred to the Commission on the War which was appointed by that Assembly.[1]

In 1917, the commission was to report 'that as it was impossible to carry out a Mission on national lines without an adequate number of qualified deputies free to devote themselves solely to this work, for the time being, the General Assembly instructs the Commission on the War to consider this urgent matter, and, if found practicable, to submit the names of such, together with any other proposals they may resolve upon, to the November Meeting of the Commission of the General Assembly, with instructions to deal with the whole matter in the light of the circumstances as then emerging'.[2]

It was late 1918 before the preparation for the Mission really got under way, and the Mission was held early in 1919.

The aim of the National Mission was, however, given in the 1917 report thus 'The opportunity is great, the divine call is clear, and our earnest prayer is that the blessing of God may rest upon the work of the Commission, whose purpose is to labour towards the great aim which is always before the Church of a 'revived and regenerated Scotland' and the extension of the Kingdom of God throughout the world'.[3] The same report noting that 'the war is a visitation' goes on to argue that it was 'a call of God...a new vocation opens...a nation must have a mortal life founded on obedience to God...modern civilisation apart from Christianity, is bankrupt...'. After criticism of German 'Kultur', which had been claimed by some as the basis of progress, a note which was sounded at the outbreak of the war, it was noted that 'The main question which must henceforth be asked of 'progress' is 'progress whither?'. It is claimed that true progress "'is to seek first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness' that is, to make conformity with the mind of God the standard of corporate as well as of individual action, and to act on the assurance that what is right will prosper - 'all these things shall be added on to you"'.[4]

Even a man like Herbert Gray, who was one of those who drew the attention of the church to the gap which existed between the men in the Forces and the Churches, and especially the ministers, could write in this way. 'It is only the Church that can spread through the nation the spirit that will make the new experiments successful. it is of little consequence what

form of experiment is tried; unless there is this new spirit we cannot have a stable settlement. I can imagine the day coming when the State, perplexed and wearied by its own failures, will come to the Church and ask,' can you not generate a new spirit to make a new social system workable? But that would be the ideal relationship between the Church and State. We are already under orders from our own master to preach this morality and inculcate this new spirit...I do believe that it matters more just now what the Church does than what statesmen do. We are far nearer the root of Things'.[5] Gray obviously saw the churches in positions to influence what went on in the life of the nation, they were institutions whose help the state would ask when statesmen discovered how powerless they themselves really were. Yet, in a way, he was expressing a common understanding of the churches and the gospel at that time.

Professor Cairns seemed to express the view that the war was an interlude, an abberation from the tasks which faced the churches in their missionary tasks and coming victory, in the twentieth century. He expressed his feelings thus in 1917; 'The only position that is worthy of Christian men is, to see that we bend all our prayers and plans to win the whole of the youth of our country for the Kingdom of God. The position may be compared to the position we had before us at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. What gave the conference it's spiritual power? Was it not that we took for granted then, in reliance on God, that the whole world might be won for

Him? We took believing, and not despairing, ideas about the world. That is what we ought to do now about the youth of the whole nation'.[6] While we would not wish for a moment to suggest that men like Professor Cairns, should or could, have lost faith in the Gospel, we perhaps can be forgiven for wondering if he, and others, should not have queried to a greater degree the fundamentals on which they build their hopes and strategy of mission.

We cannot dissent from many of the opinions which were stressed in the various church reports. Indeed we can quote a lot of it with approbation and praise. 'In the service of the state of the Christian finds one of the noblest spheres of his discipleship. The enfranchised basis of the state is being broadened greatly....a fresh reminder that the responsibility for the Christian character of the State lies ultimately at the Church's door. Humanitarian thought and feeling in our time happily fostered many influences, but their enduring inspiration can only be found in religious faith. Only a Christian nation can create a Christian State.[7]

No one would deny that the service of the state was, and is, an acceptable sphere of christian service but eyebrows might be raised at the implied suggestion that a wider franchise of necessity meant a more responsible citizenry. There appears to be little doubt that many in the churches leadership thought that they had more influence on their fellow citizens than they in fact had, and perhaps after their criticism of how the so called

Christian nation of Germany had gone astray, there might have been a fuller analysis of what a Christian Nation really is.

'Nations, no less than individuals and classes of society, need to be brought more fully under the operation of the Christian law of love, brotherhood and service. No more than the individual, the family, or the class, is a nation an end in itself. It exists that it may make its own contribution to the life of the world and take its own place in the Kingdom of God'[8] Churchmen, we may suspect, had little knowledge of the social forces which were at work in society. They appeared to believe, for example, that the men had fought as they did simply because their individual courage and character while we are now aware that many other social forces held them together.

Perhaps a paragraph, in another report, gives the hopes and aims of the authors where they write 'Our aim' (that is in the National Mission), 'must be under God to make Scotland a Christian country in fact as well as in name, to realise the vision of our forefathers, and build on Scottish fields a true city of God, to construct a society based on complete recognition of Christ as lord of life for this present world, as well as Lord of Heaven and the world to come'.[9]

When the National Mission was actually held, it was a summons to the nation to enlist in this war to build the Kingdom of god. The titles of the leaflets

issued by the Church of Scotland point our clearly *A New Scotland for the Kingdom of God, A Dedicated City, A Rededication of Scotland to Christ in the National Life.* One was entitled *The State as Christian*, another *The Paramount and Universal Authority of Christ the King.* The children were summoned to enlist in the Church under leaflets which carried titles such as *The Holy War, The Great Captain, Enlisting, Comrades* or *True to Death*, [10] and when the outcome of the Mission was reviewed in the reports presented to the General Assembly, it was noted that 'It has been striking to note the unanimity in the message - the Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the clearest terms the message was delivered, that the religion of Jesus Christ means a call to every individual to submit his life unto Him and to obey Him in all things'.[11]

The newspapers gave considerable coverage to the Mission. We can see from their reports what subjects were dealt with at the Mission services. The Rev. Dr. David Watson, a Church of Scotland minister, spoke at a service in Calton United Free Church - the mission, we may note, was a joint one between most of the Churches in Scotland. Dr. Watson is recorded as emphasising the urgency of the mission, speaking thus; 'they must rebuild their shattered civilisation on the living principles of Christianity. Their only hope of a better world lay in the clear acknowledgement of the claim of Jesus Christ to rule the whole life - social, industrial and political. The Church today was called to throw aside her timidity and her fears and to undertake big things for the kingdom of God'.[12]

The Glasgow Herald carried a number of articles on the National Mission and gave leading Churchmen the opportunity to explain what the Churches were trying to do, and why they were doing it. One such article was by the Rev. J. McN. Fraser. 'Why should the Church', he wrote, 'come forward at this juncture with this particular message? Because the war had given the Church vision and a deep sense of responsibility for that vision, as the spiritual trustee of the nation. The war has made it plain that there has been a tragic discrepancy between the profession and practice of Christian people and nations, that christianity has been short circuited in practice, and that individuals who tried to do what this mission asks were heavily handicapped and oft times intimidated. We affirm, in a word, that the war was a nemesis upon the practical shelving of the Golden Rule as an impossible ideal in the world as it was. Conscious of all this, seeing a new age emerging out of the old, witnessing the super-human efforts being made to evolve a better world, and realising that the only hope of this being accomplished is through the whole hearted acceptance of Christ's ideals of life, the Church, while rededicating itself with humility and fresh purpose after full obedience, would be false to its trust did it not call to the people to rededicate themselves also to God as the necessary anointing for the high tasks before them'.[13] The newspaper article does not make it clear who had asked the question which Mr. Fraser was trying to answer. We may ask, had the war given the church a fresh vision? If so what was it? The war had indeed shown the discrepancy between faith and practice but the Scottish

Churches had protested, in 1914, that they were not really guilty of this. Were the churches jumping on the bandwagon for a better world? They were, of course, right that christians should be better people, and better christians should be still better people and that all church members needed a summons back to basic christian loyalty.

Another writer was The Rev. William Muir who began thus; 'The nation is bent on having a new earth and as that can only come if there is a new heaven, rededication alone can prevent bitter disappointment and the cruel reaction of despair. The great below must be clenched by the great above, and the great above must permeate and hallow the great below. There is only one leadership under which it is certain that the League of Nations will render war unknown, that intemperance will disappear, that vile housing condition will be impossible, as well as a kind of competition which tends to turn the life of the nation into a civil war, and that leadership can come only through rededication. That would bring everything we long for in its train, and without it nothing worthy or enduring can be attained.[14] Mr. Muir noted that the country was looking for a new earth. He was not unaware of the problem involved in founding a new earth. He mentioned the League of Nations which the post war world saw as a great white hope and in which the churches were to become deeply involved.

The Glasgow Herald carried a letter entitled 'the League of Nations - A Christian Manifesto'. Among Scottish signatories were Prof. Cooper who was Moderator of the Church of Scotland in 1918, and Professor Cairns of the United Free Church. They spoke of how 'A new system of International Law and authority, acting through the League of Nations rather than a balance of power, is a condition of just and lasting peace'.[15] Another leader, later in the year, was perhaps one of those things which helped to push some churchmen to feel that they had to take a lead in events. 'One of the great causes of the weakness of the Church in past times has been its frequent failure to take a leading part in great progressive movements' wrote the leader writer. 'The excuse for this abstention has either been, that the church should not concern herself with politics, or, that it's only possible reaction upon public life was through the individual conscience. But these excuses are no longer plausible. Men have realised that their moral responsibilities are not confined to their family and friends, but extended to all their fellow citizens and all mankind' [16] The Churches established 'the Scottish's Churches Leave of Nations Council' which had among its aims 'to quicken the Christian conscience of the country in regard to international relations, to keep before the Scottish people the ideals of the League of Nations...' [17], for 'the Council is persuaded that the League of Nations will succeed only if it had behind it, the support of the whole Christian Church.[18]

In later years a 'League of Nations Sunday' was appointed by the General Assemblies so that the aims of the League of Nations would be brought before church members.[19]

Some churchmen seemed to have little doubt that the christian religion would ultimately be accepted by the whole world. 'World Power or Downfall' was the title of an article by Professor Cairns in *The Record*. For him, as usual, Edinburgh 1910 was a crossroad of history. 'A new epoch in history had thereby opened. it was clearly impossible for the non-christian nations compelled to study and adopt modern science, to maintain their existing faiths, and the immediate, and imperative, duty of the Christian Church was to throw its full energies now, into the task of winning the whole world for God, or definitely to abandon the future. For plainly to allow the non-christian peoples to go over to materialism and the destruction of all religion, was simply to work ultimate destruction, in view of the continuance of those vast processes which were working so irresistibly for the shrinkage of the world and the unifying of the human race'.[20] But he didn't accept that a return to 1914 was easy. 'Like men and women of the New Testament, we are those for whom the end of the age has come, the end of one age and the beginning of another ... no man can say that either the international or the social structure of the old world was build on Christ ... It has come to confusion. No man can say that the religions of the non-christian world are founded on the rock. They too, are in process of transition. Was there

ever a greater opportunity in the history of the Kingdom of God? The time then has surely come for a new beginning in God, and a new advance along the whole line. Christ has come again to us along the great ways of history, and says to us, as to the first disciples: 'the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men'.[21] Cairns was suggesting that the churches were at a crossroads in their history and in the missionary history of the world, but if this was accepted as a true understanding of what was happening, then we are forced to say it led to little change.

If some churchmen were convinced of the ultimate victory of the Christian Faith, some feared the results of a renaissance of other religions. There was little, if any perception of a coming pluralist world. 'Can the world exist half 'Christian and half Pagan? Asked an article in the December *Record* of 1919. The article concluded? Our houses of civilisation is challenged openly and blatantly by the non-christian nations, and either we must win those nations by the power that come through Christ or they will destroy our heritage. If we want our children and our children's children here in Scotland to fall heir to what our fathers won for us, it can only be by way of accepting the challenge of the unbelieving world and overcoming the world. It is quite powerful enough to overthrow us if we are dilatory and only half in earnest. Foreign missions have been thought of as legitimate hobby for a few. Unless they become a passion with us all, we are going to lose our all'.[22] Missions

were important if the soul of the nation was to be preserved. In a sense this is a reflection of what we saw pre-war when we looked at the Scottish pride of race and faith.

The desire to establish the Kingdom of God was not some vague hope or dream. There was a genuine belief that the kingdom was coming and a deep desire to see it established. In 1919, The United Free Church appointed a committee to draw up a 'Declaration of the Testimony of the Church'. It was to state the faith of the church in the form of a popular manifesto. When it was published in 1921, it contained a section on 'Concerning the Kingdom of God'. It read in part as follows 'We believe that the unchanging purpose of god is the establishing and perfection of His Kingdom - a society ruled in all its parts by love and righteousness, a society of which Christ is King, and to which all belong who are themselves animated by His Spirit'...'we believe that the Kingdom of God is already among us, and that the appointed task the appointed task of all good men is to advance it, and to bring every relation of human life under the dominion of Christ. We believe that Christ is the true and only Lord of all mankind, and that those who confess to Him are bound to make Him known till all the world acknowledge Him as Lord and King... We believe that the Kingdom of God will finally dominate the life of man, and that in the world to come God will complete and perfect it, the Lord Jesus Christ being manifested in power and great glory'.[23]

Despite the war and all the death and destruction which had occurred, there was still a strong faith that with more effort the Kingdom of God might be established. Missing was the question of why the suffering had taken place, why men and nations acted as they did, but perhaps the time had not yet come to ask why moral men could act immorally. For churchmen the hopefulness which had ushered in the twentieth century still existed.

NOTES

1. **Layman's Guide to the General Assembly, Church of Scotland** 1916 pp. 56-7.
2. **RGACS Commission on the War** 1917 p. 371.
3. Ibid. p. 729.
4. Ibid. p. 740.
5. PGAUFCS. 1917. p. 172.
6. PGAUFCS. 1917. p. 188.
7. RGAUFCS. **Situation as affected by the war.** 1918 p. 9.
8. Ibid. p. 9.
9. RGACS. **Commission on the War.** 1918. p. 629
10. RGACS. ibid. pp 688-9.
11. Ibid. p. 633.
12. **Glasgow Herald** March 4th 1919.
13. Ibid. 8 April 1919.
14. Ibid. 12 April 1919.
15. Ibid. 23 Feb 1918.
16. Ibid. 1st Nov 1918.
17. RGACS. **Church and Nation Committee.** 1912. p. 605.
18. RGAUFCS. **Church Life, Work and Public Morals.** 1922. p. 11.
19. RGACS. **Church and Nation.** 1924. p. 649.

20. **Record.** November 1919. p. 248.

21. Ibid. November 1919. p. 267.

22. Ibid. December 1919. p. 267.

23. RGAUFCS. **Committee on the Testimony of the Church.** 1921. p. 5.

18. THE INTEGRITY AND COMPETENCE OF THE SCOT

A MORAL NATION

The post war Scottish Churches, as in pre-war days, held that they had a message to proclaim so that a moral and ethical nation should be formed - a nation which would reflect to a great decree the Kingdom of God. So the Church of Scotland Commission of the War spoke of the Church being 'in possession of a moral, and social message' and was being commissioned to 'make known the conditions to be fulfilled in human societies if the will of God is to be done on earth as it is in heaven'.[1]

The United Free Church spoke in a similar way of the right of the Church to instruct the young in true patriotism and honour, so that they might be able to serve the community.[2]

It was in the light of this claimed right that the Churches in the post-war years, began to try to suggest to the Scottish nation how they, as a people, ought to view and deal with the social evils and problems which were facing them.

One of the responses which was suggested as a response to the existence of city slums, was rural settlement. When the Church of Scotland moved into

Social work in the pre-war years, one of the establishments which was created was Corton Farm Colony, where men whose lives had become adrift in the cities were trained to return to the land. It did not really matter if that return to the land was at home or in the colonies. Many of the men were sent abroad under church auspices. [3] Professor Paterson for example, on hearing that his son John was giving up his studies and planned to become a farmer in Canada, wrote in his diary that worse things might happen than that his family return to the land, and 'be planted out in Canada'.[4] Norman Maclean complained in his writings that Scottish education, once the pride and joy of the Scottish people, had now become 'Prussianised' and, the result of this was that young men and women were no longer fitted for rural life. He was upset that while a great deal of money was being spent on the war, the plans to resettle the land only included a few thousand acres. The government seemed to be unwilling to encourage an exodus from 'the Egypt of the slums... and the reestablishment of the people in their true heritage, the land...'.[5] There was little doubt that some of the church leaders had a rose tinted picture of what life would be like on the land at home and abroad, a view which they shared with some of their fellow citizens in Scotland.

So when the Churches began to look at social problems, it was not surprising that bad housing came high on the list of social evils. Linked to bad housing were matters like intemperance, infant mortality, poverty, immorality and

crime.[6] The Churches held meetings to consider their response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Scottish Housing, and expressed the view that they should throw their weight behind the recommendations of the Commission and that they should help also to make the recommendations known more widely.[7]

In an attempt to encourage the Churches to discuss what they saw as the greatest evils and problems, The Church of Scotland in 1918 issued a handbook under the editorship of Professor Paterson and Dr. David Watson. Among the issues listed were Crime, Intemperance, Impurity (sexual), Decline of the Birthrate, Gambling, Decline of Discipline, and Avarice, Luxury and Waste. The problems noted for attention were Social Disintegration, Child Welfare, Adolescence and the Training of Youth, Depopulation, Destitution, Housing, Industrial Problems, Christian Ethics and Politics, Christian Ethics and International Relations.[8]

'Industrial Reconstruction' was taken up for discussion by the Scottish Churches in 1918. The Whitley Report on Joint Standing Industrial Councils, published that year, was welcomed as 'being conceived in a genuine Christian spirit' and the churches looked forward to 'a permanent improvement in the relations between employers and employees', which they believed needed to be founded on something other than a 'cash basis'.[9] The Churches were firmly caught up into the dream of a new world and were convinced that

they had a definite role to play in establishing this new world which they hoped would in many ways be close to the Kingdom of God.

In 1919, we read of the many 'study circles; which had been set up to consider the work of Paterson and Watson. The same report told of a considerable demand for speakers on social matters.[10] Pamphlets produced by the United Free Church showed that their committees worked along similar lines.

The Church of Scotland in the same year noted how difficult it was to see the dividing line between politics and party matters, and attempted to define where the division lay. The Churches duty and function was to present the teaching of Jesus Christ, but she should not go down into the arena of conflict either as a corporate body or through her ministers. Nevertheless it was noted 'that if authorities found they were up against a truly militant Church fighting for the lives and souls of the poor, social reform would go forward by leaps and bounds'.[11]

The Church and Nation Committee, the successor of the Commission on the War, took up the problems of recommending the teaching of Jesus Christ to those seeking to solve the problems of Industrial Life.[12] They defined the teaching of Jesus as the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Human personality was sacred and every souls was of infinite value to God.

Labour was honourable, and loyalty in word and work was an imperative moral duty, so that life could be lived with a sense of stewardship. What was required was a new conception of industry as a social service and not as a means of personal gain, along with a new spirit of goodwill, mutual trust, and cooperation instead of distrust, suspicion, and ill-will.[13]

The pre-war realisation of the Churches that ministers needed to be able to understand what was happening in society and what forces were at work there, was taken up again in the post war years, with suggestions as to how the divinity students might be trained in understanding society. The United Free Church carried out a somewhat wide examination of what was done by Presbyterian Churches in the USA and in the Empire, and in other Churches in the United Kingdom, and recommended that 'in all (Scottish) Theological Seminaries there should be established, wherever they do not exist, courses in Economics, Sociology and the Social Teaching of Jesus'. The way the subject was taught at the Glasgow United Free College was especially recommended.[14] On the Church of Scotland side, the suggestion was made that the subjects might be covered in the Pastoral Institutes which had been proposed in the examination which had been made into the training of probationers.

By 1921 the Church and Nation Committee Report in its section on Social and Industrial Life, dealt chiefly with gambling [15], as did the reports for the

next three or four years.[16] Industrial strife had increased. It would not be unkind to suggest that the Committee was beginning to discover that it was not so easy to sit on the fence and avoid taking sides in an argument. It was not quite so easy to define the boundaries between politics and party politics, or to deliver wisdom as from on high, which was to be applied by those who were actively involved in these matters. Nor did all men prove to be as reasonable and as sanely progressive and peace-loving as the Report of 1920 had hoped.

But there was another problem for the Churches. Other trumpets were sounding and other solutions to social problems were put forward, solutions which were, for some, to prove more attractive than that put forward by the Churches.

NOTES

1. RGACS. **Commission on the War.** 1917. p. 748.
2. RGAUFCS. **Report on the Present Situation.** 1918. pp. 6/7.
3. RGACS. **Social Work Reports** 1904 and following years.
   Life and Work. January 1930. pp. 24-6.
4. Rawlins (Ed) **Diary of W.P. Paterson.** Edinburgh 1987 entry for 28th April 1912. p. 57.
5. Maclean. **Stand Up, Ye Dead.** Edinburgh 1916. pp. 74-6.
6. RGACS. **Commission on the War.** 1918. p. 624.
7. RGACS. ibid. 1918. p. 624.
   RGAUFCS. **Report on the Present Situation.** 1917. p. 5.
8. RGACS. **Commission on the War.** 1918. p. 748.
9. RGACS. ibid. 1918. p. 625.
10. RGACS. ibid. 1919. p. 635.
11. RGACS. ibid. 1919. pp. 659-662.
12. RGACS. **Church and Nation Report.** 1920. p. 495.
13. RGACS. ibid. 1920. pp. 526-528.
14. RGAUFCS. **Committee on Social Problems.** 1920. p. 12.
    Report of College Committee. 1922. p. 2 & p. 11.
15. RGACS. **Church and Nation Report.** 1921. pp. 582-585.
16. RGACS. ibid 1924. pp. 631-2 and 1925. pp. 715-6.

19. THE VITALITY AND PROMISE OF PRESBYTERIANISM - REVISING THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH

Herbert Gray in his book *As Tommy Sees Us*, warned the Churches that to see themselves and the ministers of the churches as ordinary men saw them, was not likely to be a pleasant experience but even if truth hurt, it had to be faced. He reminded his fellow ministers that 'to win those ordinary men, no sacrifice could be too great'. [1] Gray wrote from his experiences with two Glasgow battalions, one of which was made up of old Boys Brigade members who had grown up under church influence.

But by 1916, the Scottish Churches were becoming aware that they were facing a great challenge, and a different challenge from that which they thought they were facing when war had been declared in 1914.

The Scottish Churches who traditionally had stressed their teaching role and who had claimed, rightly, that they had a gospel to proclaim, found that they were challenged on two fronts. Firstly they had to fact the question as to whether they were teaching clearly and efficiently. Secondly whether they were teaching a message which was seen to be relevant to the situation in which the nation found itself.

In 1919, the YMCA issued their survey of *The Army and Religion*, which had, to a large extent, been written by Professor Cairns of the United Free Church College Aberdeen. He had been released from his work at Aberdeen to take up duty with the YMCA. His book contained a chapter on The Failure of Education. The opinions and views of serving soldiers across the rank structure, in addition to the view of chaplains, had been sought as to the depth of religious feelings in the Army. The comments were sobering, 'Men are ignorant of the fundamentals of the Christian faith', or yet another comment 'There was really a lack of understanding of what the Christian religion really is .... Nearly all the men with whom I was dealing had church connection. Many were members, some workers .... They had been brought up in the Church, they found help for themselves in its worship, but beyond that I do not think that they had gone far'.[2]

Something of this gap was being sensed in 1916 when the Commission on the War was set up by the Church of Scotland with a remit part of which was 'generally to take steps as may forward the purpose of preparing the church and nation to understand the present visitation'. [3] It was also 'to call the church to consider its stewardship of grace and truth - both as God's appointed witness to the world and as his household of faith'.[4] As a national church, a claim also made by the United Free Church, it was their duty to teach and enlighten not only their members but also the nation.

But before the Commission of the Church of Scotland and the Committee of the United Free Church could get down to business, ministers working in the Huts and Canteens, which the Churches ran, were making efforts to teach and instruct the men.

Canteen facilities had been organised by the Churches for the Territorial Force when in camp in the years before the war. The canteens were non-alcoholic clubs with rooms for reading and writing .... places of 'improvement' where troops would not fall into the various temptations which were around. When war broke out, the canteens followed the soldiers into England and from there into France and even into the Middle East. At times, they were quite near the Front Line, and some tents were damaged by shrapnel.[5] At times, the canteens had woman on their staff who, no doubt, supplied a homely touch for homesick troops.

In these canteens visiting ministers gave talks and lectures, some of which were published and which help to give us a glance at what was said to the troops waiting behind the lines for the order to go forward again, or to go for the first time.

God and the Soldier contained talks delivered by Dr. Norman Maclean then minister of Colinton Parish Church and Dr. J.P.R. Sclater minister at New North United Free Church in Edinburgh. We are told in the preface that

'This book had its origin in one of the great camps in France .... at these meetings the problems which confront the soldiers were freely discussed'. With due modesty they inform their readers that they 'do not pretend to have arrived at any final conclusions'.[6] Nor do they claim to have given an answer to the questions which was has evoked from many troubled hears, they are only able to show how urgent these questions are'.[7] Is God to Blame? is the subject of the first lecture. What does the Church mean when she says 'God Reigns'? What is meant by saying that God is 'Omnipotent'? Their answer is that what is important is not whether the church believes in the omnipotence of God, but what meaning she puts into the term! Having said that it is not surprising that they then go on to suggest that it is a question likely to agitate the church for some time to come, since 'the doctrine of the omnipotence of God does not include power to do everything that can be expressed in a grammatical sentence.[8] They tried to deal with the problem by suggesting that God is no more to blame for the tragedies of the world that a father is to blame for the sorrows of a wilful son. The lecturers were concerned by one of the profound questions which were facing the church, but the church was perhaps neither able nor willing to deal with it.

The speaker fell back on biblical pictures, of the patience of God who sends the Good Shepherd to seek the one lost sheep in the distant hills, and so 'we believe that God is working and fighting for us and our beloved, wherefore

as they pass from us into danger, we can still confidently sing, **The Lord shall keep thy soul'**,[9] and in moving to the biblical picture, he gets away from the more difficult philosophical ground. It would be interesting to know what the troops made of all this. They were very likely men with a church background, or at least men seeking instruction and perhaps comfort. The speakers at least acknowledged that they were dealing with big problems, with which the churches would have to struggle in the years ahead and which would loom even larger after events like the Holocaust. Maybe the speaker was right to leave men who were shortly to go into action with the picture of the shepherd seeking his sheep rather than a deep, and perhaps unanswerable, theological problem.

Another lecture dealt with Sin and Redemption. Naturally in this chapter mention is made to the sufferings of Christ and it is suggested that man and women can fill up what is lacking in His sufferings. Following on from that, it is implied that the sufferings of the troops were redemptive for the nation, which had been summoned to fight a Holy War but this could only be fought by a Holy Nation, and the Churches had failed pre-war to produce this Holy Nation.[10]

Not unexpectedly Immortality and what happens after death was a subject of interest to, or considered to be of interest to, soldiers. The lecture leaves the reader with the feeling that the speaker sensed how difficult it was to square

official church teaching with popular ideas which were perhaps circulating among the men. And yet the speaker did not want to discourage the soldiers. He speaks of the 'image of God...uncovered in every soul', of the Good Shepherd who 'is not easily thwarted in his quest', who 'seeks on UNTIL HE FINDS'.[11] This subject is returned to in a lecture on life after death, entitled 'The Last Issue'. It opens with a picture of a 'kilted grim faced Scot' who objects to the idea that any soldier who dies in battle goes to heaven. It is objected that such an idea is not Christian but Mohammedan. What of the Shorter Catechism words that 'the souls of the righteous pass into glory?'[12]

The lecturer then goes on to suggest a doctrine of an intermediate state. He suggests that God's processes are slow-working processes of evolution.... and so it may well take the soul some time to grasp the gap between right and wrong. Or perhaps death is like changing school, and moving to a further stage of education. Surely these men who were contented to be blotted out so that their country and kindred might be free would be able 'to touch with groping hands the Father's fairest raiment and be launched forth on the illimitable sea with a course set God-ward'.[13]

In 1915, *The Record* applied the idea of evolution to life after death. Soldiers who die in action 'are in the end rooted in a faith in the essential goodness of things'. 'The spirits of just men when they die do not drop off

a precipice into nothingness'. 'The spirit persists in a way we cannot grasp and carried on, a new and higher form of life'. 'Death, like birth, is an excess of growth. It is not a fatality, an evil'.[14]

It might appear that here was one area where the church was prepared to adjust its theology, influenced by the current ideas in the scientific, social, and political realms of the day. The moulding which Henry Drummond spoke of, and used in the Boys Brigade, now goes on after death in the nations life and in the spirits of the departed. And so the article in *The Record* which we have already referred to could claim 'The lives of those killed in action have not been wasted, their effort and example and influence will enter into the larger life of the nation and make for the highest end; but their spirits will also pass on, and somewhere in the Father's many mansions we shall find them again'.[15] Whatever may have been the theology behind such statements, we cannot doubt that they brought comfort to those who had lost loved ones.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, the fate of those who had laid down their lives, found a place in the literature issued in connection with the National Mission. On the Church of Scotland side there were leaflets with the titles *Life in the light of Immortality* and *To comfort them that Mourn*.[16] On the United Church side the leaflets carried the titles *The Courage* and *Destiny of Those who Fall.*

Dr. W.M. Macgregor, the author of the United Free Church pamphlet, noted the commonly held belief that those who laid down their lives, 'were saved by their death'.[17] Macgregor quoted Anselm to define who, and what, a martyr was. 'He who dies for the cause of righteousness dies for the faith'.[18] He harbours no doubt about the righteousness of the Allied cause, but he seems to have realised that he was skating on thin ice for, he admits, that it might be wise not to examine the motives of those who made the supreme sacrifice too closely. Those who can best explain what they are doing, are not, of necessity, the best men. He recalls the words of Jesus that 'publicans and sinners pressed into the kingdom before many other good men'. 'Where there is no filling up of what is lacking in Christ's sufferings, there can be no enduring progress'.[19] Again, the idea appears, that soldiers and sailors by their sacrifice, 'filled up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ'.[20] Noting that Rahab's name had been added to the Hebrew Roll of Honour, he suggested that Allied Soldiers could be put in the same category.[21]

Macgregor was well aware that he was not being faithful to the teaching of the Scottish Churches on this matter, but he found himself in the situation where he could not deny hope and comfort to those who had lost loved ones, and he found it hard to say that those who had laid down their lives had not, in some way, made a contribution to the coming of the Kingdom of God and the Brotherhood of Man. The other United Free Church leaflet by the Rev.

William Watson, was entitled *The Hope of Immortality*. Drawing on his experience of conducting the funerals of soldiers in France, he too spoke of his hope that there will be growth and development after death for those who died in action.[22]

Watson, aware of the difficulty of the average soldier, to articulate whatever faith he had, referred to the popularity of semi-christlike figures such as **The Comrade in White**, or **The Angel of Mons**. He was supported in his reference to these figures by the magazines of the Churches.[23]

Other matters were of course discussed by churchmen who went on lecture tours to France. Dr. Macauley and Professor Paul delivered a series of lectures in early 1917.[24] When the book was reviewed in *The Record*, the authors were described as 'having been up against it in France'.[25] One of the topics considered was **'Can any good come out of the war?'** The authors did not claim that the war was the best possible thing for humanity, but good could come out of it and good must come out of it.[26]

Has Christianity Broken Down? was the question asked in another talk. Christianity had not failed but Germany had made the mistake of trying to live without it. We are taken back again to the role of Nietzsche and his disciples in Germany. One is left wondering what the average soldier made of all this, but whoever was the speaker on this occasion (and both men had

been students in Germany in their youth) admitted how much he owed to Germany and how he felt betrayed by Germany's declaration of war.[27]

What had the Churches done wrong? The answer given is a simple one. The Churches had not practised the gospel.[28] 'Why has the church failed?' The church had failed because more attention had been paid to creed instead of conduct, because there were class distinctions in her membership, because there were denominational rivalries and because the kill-joy attitudes of the churches drove the young away.[29]

Their answer to the question as to the possibility of universal peace was to reflect the growing hope in the churches that the proposed League of Nations would give a world structure such as had been dreamed of at the various pre-war peace conferences, a structure through which wars might come to and end.[30]

Representatives of the Churches delivered courses of lectures on 'Social Purity'. The speakers dealt with the matters of prostitution, venereal diseases and allied subjects. The Revs. W.H. Rankine and A.H. Gray were released in turn for this duty.[31] Gray became deeply involved in Marriage Guidance work after the War, producing the first edition of his book *Men, Women and God*, shortly after the war had ended. The book may well have sprung from his experiences and work among soldiers.

We began this section, referring to Cairn's book *The Army and Religion*. One of the values of Cairns book was to bring home to the churches, how distant many young men were from the churches. While the number of Scottish soldiers with a Church connection may have been higher than in English Units, nevertheless only about one in five were thought to have any real relationship with the churches.[32]

What was the cause of this situation? Various suggestions were made such as the effects of the Industrial Revolution, population displacement into cities, failure of educational and evangelistic work, and an economic environment which makes christian nurture so difficult. Behind all this there is 'the enmity' of the human heart.[33]

What is to be done about it? One church leader suggested that the church needed a true spirit of repentance, an new hope, a new sense of the value of the treasure which she held in trust. The churches needed a new vision of her vocation and a new enthusiasm for establishing God's Kingdom right here and now.[34]

If only the churches would get a grip on themselves and on their message, get their act together and fulfil their teaching message, then all would be well. The churches had the answers which the world needed. But were the

churches answering their own questions rather than the questions of those around them? But a new age was coming and the demands of Caesar were to be different in this new age from the demands of the age which was passing, and the need to render to God the things of God did not seem to be so important as it once had been, since many were no longer sure of the validity of the so called demands of God with which they were being faced.

NOTES

1. Gray. **As Tommy Saw Us.** London 1919. Preface p.VI.
2. Cairns. **The Army and Religion.** London 1919. p.120.
3. RGACS. **Commission on the War.** 1917. p. 725.
4. Ibid. p. 726.
5. **The Record.** Sept 1917. p. 179, October 1917. pp. 192/3.
6. Maclean and Sclater **God and the Soldier.** London 1917. preface P. XI. p.XI and p. 17.
7. Ibid. Preface p.X.
8. Ibid. p. 25.
9. Ibid. pp. 41-3.
10. Ibid. pp. 88 and 125-6.
11. Maclean and Sclater **God and the Soldier.** p. 197.
12. Ibid. pp. 2201-3, 205 and Shorter Catechism Question 37.
13. Ibid. pp. 208-9.
14. **The Record.** June 1915. pp. 231-232.
15. Ibid. p. 232.
16. I have been unable to trace copies of these pamphlets. They are listed in the **Commission of the War Report** of 1919.
17. United Free Church Pamphlets No. 2. pp. 9-10. **The Courage and Destiny of Those Who Fell** by Rev. W.M. Macgregor DD.

18. Ibid. p. 11.

19. Ibid. p. 15.

20. Ibid. p. 12 and p. 15.

21. Ibid. p. 12.

22. United Free Church Pamphlets No. 17, p. 136. **The Hope of Immorality** by the Rev. Wm. Watson, M.A.

23. **Life and Work.** May 1915. p. 131.

Laymans Guide to the General Assembly. p. 113

Letter of Prof. James Denney to Friends and Family. p. 193.

The Record. Jan 1917. p. 2 and **Life and Work.** March 1917

24. PGAUFCS. 1917. p. 116.

25. **The Record.** June 1919. p. 113.

26. Macaulay and Paul **Up Against It.** London 1919. p 47.

27. Ibid. Chapter 6.

28. Ibid. Chapter 9.

29. **The Record.** June 1919. p. 113.

30. Macauley and Paul **Up Against It.** Chapter 14.

31. **Life and Work.** Feb. 1918. p. 22.

32. Cairns **The Army and Religion.** London 1919. pp. 189-190.

33. **The Record.** November 1919. pp. 242-4.

34. Ibid. p 245.

20. THE IMPORTANCE AND JOY OF THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY

THE TRAINING OF THE MESSENGERS

The Scottish Churches had, from Reformation times, viewed the office of the ministry as being of crucial importance. In the post-war years, it would be essential that the ministry be able in giving leadership to the nation. But the ministry had not come out of the war years unscathed. We have already noted the feelings aroused over whether or not ministers were gaining financially from the war, and whether or not chaplains had been guilty of cowardice in failing to accompany the troops to the front line.

The Church of Scotland Commission on the War reiterated the claim of the Church to have a message to convey. 'It is presupposed', the Commission stated, 'that the Church is in possession of a moral and social message which entitles, and indeed requires it, to demand a hearing upon all such questions'[1] If this message was to be conveyed properly, it is not surprising that how the ministry, the 'officer corps' of the Church, was recruited and trained should be looked at. The battle for 'the kingdom' was not likely to be won if the troops were led by ill trained officers.

Problems with recruitment to the ministry were noted in some parts of the Scottish Churches pre-war. The United Free Church noted a fall in the numbers of candidates for the ministry in 1913, and the matter was under review by the Church's College Committee. It was noted that there might be several reasons for the fall in numbers. There was a wider choice of occupations in which young men could serve their fellow men and women. The state was beginning to take over tasks which had once belonged to the Church. The 'intense practical temper' of the age drove 'eager spirits' who might have become ministers to find their life's work elsewhere. The length of time required to train for the ministry and the level of pay, especially in the United Free Church, were not attractive to young men who had to postpone marriage for a number of years while they were students. The growing professionalism of the teaching profession meant that a minister who did not obtain a parish could not transfer to that profession. It was further felt that changes in the Scottish Educational system, which meant that young men could no longer go straight from the local parish school to university, hindered ministerial students.[2]

In the United Free Church, there was a feeling that the Credal Statements for the Churches needed to be revised so that candidates for the ministry might feel that they had 'intellectual integrity'. The Church, it was suggested, should state clearly 'its relation to Christ and His teaching, and to the work of the apostles and evangelists'. The doctrine of baptism and the future state

needed to be clarified. The last point of doctrine is interesting as it was to become, as we have seen, an issue as the war went on. Clarification was necessary so that the Church should not be lost 'amongst the rocks of echoing confusion'[3] Creed revision did not disturn the Church of Scotland to the same degree, and the Commission on the War noted in 1919, that little reference was made to Creeds and Confessions causing intellectual difficulties which held people aloof from the Church.[4]

There were problems with the ministry, and efforts were made through questionnaires, to discover what the church members felt about this. One commonly suggested failure was that the messengers did not live in accord with the message which they were appointed to teach. Young men entering the ministry needed to be 'really and truly called by God'.[5] Experience of the wider world would be a useful thing. It was suggested that a year working in a shipyard would be valuable experience of any clergyman.[6] Perhaps this was a continuation of the feelings which were evident during the war, which encouraged ministers to wish to serve in the ranks with 'ordinary men'. But no suggestion was made as to what the student might do during that year, and how he might be supported financially.

The Churches sensed that there was a gap between the Church (the ministers) and the people. The Commission on the War asked for suggestions as to how the Church could present her message more acceptably

and how her worship could be made more attractive to outsiders, especially the youth.[7] Sadly, but perhaps not unexpectedly, no earth shattering suggestions were received, beyond that the Churches should be less formal, ministers should speak more directly to their people, services of worship should be simpler.[8] It was suggested, perhaps not unexpectedly that when it came to holding the youth in the Church, 'everything rests with the minister, with his personal interests, his enthusiasm, his work in training the young'.[9]

The discussion in 1913, on the drop in the number of candidates for the ministry of the United Free Church, suggested that one of the problems was 'the low spiritual tone of the time'. [10] In the years immediately prior to the outbreak of war, the 'spiritual life' of the United Free Church was placed under scrutiny with the hope that the spiritual tone might be raised. The outbreak of war brought this exercise in self contemplation and self examination to an end.

It is perhaps not surprising that the Churches returned to this subject after the war, especially in the light of the way in which ministers had been the subject of criticism. The Church of Scotland began to look at the way in which their ministers were trained, and noted that one defect in the training given in Divinity Schools was that in many ways students were left to their own devices when it came to developing their spiritual discipline. Little, however, was done to deal with the problem except that the General

Assembly of 1921 recommended that a minister might be appointed to each Divinity Hall to undertake the spiritual training of the students. It was, nevertheless, a recommendation rather than an instruction.[11]

Practical training was another matter discussed as considerable length by the Commission on the War. An attempt was to be made to attach students to suitable parishes in the cities where they were studying, and again a minister was to be appointed to supervise the attachments, in cooperation with the ministers in whose parishes the students were sent to work. The matter of how probationers might be trained was also looked at. It was felt that it was not right that a man should be allowed to become a parish minister in a very short period after finishing his studies, with little, if any, parish experience. A probationary year was suggested in which the probationer would study how best to carry out his ministry, and also study 'the general interests and conditions of the people'. When Presbyteries were asked for their approval, the majority of them disapproved on various grounds and the suggestion faded away at that time.[12]

One task of the ministry was to lead the people in worship, so consideration was given to how this best could be done. All sorts of suggestions were made. More frequent communion services, more congregational participation, preaching which was direct, practical, simple and definite. The suggestions were summarised in one report in this way, 'a deeper note in the pulpit; a

more human note in the parish; a fatherly note towards the young; and a modern note in the services'.[13] For the Church of Scotland, it was more a matter of correcting and checking the organisation and presentation, than a problem of theology or theological interpretation. This view in the long run would be found to be wanting, but at the time the Scottish Churches did not seem to be aware that they were in a situation where accepted theological assumptions were beginning to be queried.

The 'Non Commissioned Officers' of the Church, the eldership, were also examined. The eldership, as often was the case, was seen both as one of the glories of the Scottish Churches, and at the same time something of 'a whipping boy' for the apparent failures of the Churches. What should be done with the eldership? 'Get suitable men as elders - not those who worry and trouble the minister', was one suggestion. There is a degree of sadness and cynicism in that comment. It was noted that the work of elders had to a large degree become limited to duties at the communion seasons and in connection with collections for the church. For several years the Church and Nation Committee, the successor to the Commission on the War, discussed the eldership, noted that there was a desire in the eldership to increase 'their potential usefulness'. Presbyteries and kirk-sessions were enjoined to discuss how this might be developed, but in the following year, 1922, it was reported that while some places had made progress, in others no change was thought necessary or possible.[14] In those words, we may well have a summary of much church life at the time.

And what of the prominent leaders of the Church? In 1922 deputations were appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to visit outlying Synods and Presbyteries of the Church. The success of these lead to the suggestion being made the following year, that the Moderator might be released from his parish, or other duties, for his year of office, in order to be free to tour the wider Church. Cost was the problem. The General Assembly agreed to pay the Moderator's expenses for a locum. Travelling expenses would be paid by those who were hosting the Moderator's visit. We might dare to suggest that these Moderatorial visits were akin to the tours of the Commander in Chief to his troops, with the aim of raising their morale and encouraging them to return afresh to the battle. In the light of the success of these moderatorial visits, the scheme of Superintendence was examined further, in the ensuing years, with the aim of improving it.[15]

It would be unfair to suggest that the Church no longer believed in the joy and importance of the ministry, or in the need for a well trained and educated ministry, but when it came to taking some of the steps deemed necessary to prepare the Church and its ministry for the post-way years, the Church was to find that it was not as easy to make changes in peace time as it had been to muddle through during the war. The Church to some degree appeared to lack the will to accept, or to force, the changes through, nor was it prepared to spend the necessary money to make the changes, and to pay for the extra training which they thought their students should have. No doubt some were war weary. Some saw no need for change.

NOTES

1. RGACS. **Commission on the War.** 1917. p. 748.
2. **The Record.** October 1913. p. 502 and RGACS. 1922. p. 708.
3. **The Record.** December 1913 pp. 603/4.
4. RGACS. **Commission on the War.** 1919. p. 640.
5. Ibid. p. 640.
6. Ibid. p. 680.
7. Ibid. p. 638.
8. Ibid. pp. 647-652.
9. Ibid. pp. 653-6.
10. **The Record.** December 1913. pp. 603-4.
11. RGACS. **Church and Nation Report.** 1920. pp. 502-3.

    RGACS. ibid. 1921. p. 567.
12. RGACS. ibid. 1921. pp. 578-81, & 1922, p. 604., 1923 pp.693-4 and 1924 pp. 629-30.
13. RGACS. ibid. pp. 653-6 and 674.
14. RGACS. ibid. 1919. pp. 622-3.

    RGACS. ibid. 1921. pp. 578-81, and 1922 p. 604.
15. RGACS. ibid 1925. pp. 703ff and 1926 p. 595.

21. THE RENEWAL OF THE GODLY NATION

Nations, like any social grouping, have their myths and Scotland was and is no exception.

In their history of education in Scotland since 1945, McPherson and Raab speak of the Scottish Myth, a myth which is rooted in history and which 'asserts identity, celebrates values and explains the world'.[1] They are of course dealing specifically with the myth as it relates to education, that is 'the gradual implementation of the Knoxian plan for a national educational system to secure the Godly Commonwealth'.[2]

Another modern writer describes this Godly Commonwealth as 'The Godly Vision - A Covenanted Nation', in which 'the emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, the equality of men and women before God, and the participation of laymen as elders in the government of the Church, fostered a more egalitarian and democratic outlook, albeit within the constraints of the existing order'.[3] Covenants became part of the Scottish Myth and we need not be surprised that in 1915 the picture of a simple covenanter being attacked by the cultured Claverhouse, was compared to Belgium being attacked by her cultured neighbour Germany. The myth, of course, left little doubt as to whose side God was on.

Robert Burns, the poet, whose words on the brotherhood of man were frequently quoted, was also part of the myth. He too was worthy of being summoned to the aid of the nation. In *Life and Work* of January 1915, Burns is pictured as the poet who praised liberty, who called on his fellow Scots to stand 'for Scotland's king and law'. Readers were reminded that Burns had a mother who came from covenanter stock, and a writer who described Burns and his poems as 'an ethical ideal for the race' was quoted with approval.[4] Burns Suppers were held among Scottish troops, where no doubts these ideas were rehearsed with acclamation.

To others, the Scottish myth suggested that Scots were less deferential and more democratic that their fellow Britons, especially the English, nor did 'the independent Scottish working man' make obeiscence to the boss.[5]

Storrar suggests that the Moderates, the dominant party in the Church of Scotland in the Early nineteenth century who were influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment, while they had moved away from theocratic notion of a covenanted nation, nevertheless had a vision of an enlightened nation, which they pictured in ecclesiastical terms, with social discipline, ecclesiastical order and moral improvement.[6]

Chalmers, who led the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843, began his ministry as a Moderate but after a conversation experience became an

Evangelical. He returned, we are told, to the idea of the Godly Commonwealth. One biographer of Chalmers defines the Godly Commonwealth in this way: 'In such a covenanted, or elect, nation, Church and State would cooperate in the elevation of the whole society for the glory of God...the Commonwealth would represent the rule of God on earth'.[7]

The Free Church, and the United Free Church as its successor, to some degree retained Chalmers' ideas, even if they had been cross fertilised by ideas from the United States of America or elsewhere. When the Scottish Churches at the beginning of the twentieth century began to take a greater interest in social matters, this mixture of influences was at work, as can be seen in the report on the 'Social Teaching of Our Lord' presented to the United Free Church Assembly in 1909.

'The main feature of Christ's teaching is his proclamation of the Kingdom of God', stated the report, and having described it as a spiritual reality, it went on to speak of the kingdom as a 'Social Ideal'. 'the kingdom is a brotherhood - a body of men and women living simple, happy, free lives, serving one another in love. It is a regenerated social system. Christ came to establish this. This is the social gospel in His prediction of the consummation of His Kingdom'.[8] It was, using an earlier description, a Godly Commonwealth. In our examination in a previous section of the renewal of the nation in moral terms, brotherhood was a term used there

too. Brotherhood was valuable and indeed necessary as a means of improving industrial relationships, since if there was a brotherhood, men could 'talk things out on a Christian basis' with their masters.[9] There would be the possibility of 'the independent working man' spoken of by Checkland.

When the Report was being presented to the Assembly, the Convener, The Rev. W.M. Falconer, suggested that a Church Labour Department should be set up to help the Church 'to apply to the social and industrial problems of our day, those principles of righteousness and brotherhood which are Embedded in the Gospel'.[10] This was seen as making 'a great step towards establishing the Kingdom of God in our land'.

The following year, when the Church and Labour Department was further discussed, the relationship between Socialism and Christianity was considered. One speaker claimed that 'the socialist spoke always of brotherhood, the Church put the emphasis less on brotherhood than sonship - that all were brothers only when they were sons of the same king.[11] There is in his remarks a feeling that some control should be put on the pursuit of brotherhood, which might be at the expense of the Gospel. Nevertheless Brotherhood was a popular idea, and may be one of the reason why many ministers and divinity students wished to enlist among the 'ordinary' men when war was declared.

Comradeship and Brotherhood were words often used to describe the spirit among the troops during the war. Even by 1915, at a Guild meeting held during the General Assembly week, one of the topics was 'A Brotherhood in Arms'.[12] The speaker praised the readjustment of moral values which was taking place and the regaining of national ideals in addition to the Brotherhood, sacrifice and cheerfulness of men in uniform. The writer hoped and wished that this spirit might be carried over into the rest of the nations life.

When the Churches came to consider what their responses to the war might be, it was noted that the churches needed 'a quickening and enriching of the spirit of fellowship'. The reports on those who were in the forces told 'of the wonderful spirit of comradeship which prevails among them', which helped them through the hardships and dangers of the war. The Church had, therefore, to 'bestir itself', and make its fellowship more real and warm, if it was to gain or retain the attachment of the manhood and womanhood after the war.[13] If such brotherhood and comradeship had kept the men fighting then the Churches could do with a similar spirit to keep them fit and vital.

But how was this to be done? How could the churches knit the returning servicemen more closely together and into Church? One suggestion made was that those whose names appeared on the Roll of Honour could be formed into a 'brotherhood', who could have their own regular Sunday

service and celebration of Holy Communion so that there 'would be a continual concentration of their memories of War'.[14] When the returned servicemen began to form associations such as the Comrades of the Great War, it was agreed at the Church of Scotland General Assembly, that a practical method of realising the spirit of brotherhood would be 'hearty cooperation with the Comrades of the Great War.[15]

How the returning servicemen reacted to this approach, we do not know. Perhaps it depended to a great degree on local circumstances and how the approach was made, but at least there was the appreciation that the deep experiences and friendships shared by the servicemen should not be lost and forgotten and that a kindred spirit would be of value to the post war nation. One Report expressed the view, or perhaps the hope, that 'the returning soldier will look to the Church for the earnest concentration on the **things that matter**'. The report went on that as the soldier had experienced military efficiency, he would now look for similar efficiency in the Church!. But as 'comradeship has almost been a religion to the soldier during his trying experiences, it is certain that only the Church which emphasises and gives room for the freeplay of brotherhood will attract him'.[16]

The Churches realised however that they did not fit easily into this picture and there was a degree of soul searching and self examination. Class distinctions in the Churches were admitted. Using a picture from the cinema or perhaps from the Opera House, it was asked if brotherhood could be

fostered as long as Pew Rents existed. Could the Church have a Dress Circle with five shilling seats and a Gallery where the seats cost six pence? It was however rightly noted that 'the average Scotsman does not want to be hailed as brother when he goes to church'. Nor, it was agreed, was it easy to make every congregation a sort of family reunion. In Churches with a high sense of the teaching role of the ministry, it is perhaps not surprising that one suggestion made was 'the only way to fester the spirit of brotherhood is to preach it at them'.[17]

Another Report spoke of the Church as 'the joyous brotherhood of all believers'...'as the aim of the Church is a world in which Jesus is King, so the aim of the Church fellowship is a world in which all shall be brothers'. But how was this high sounding vision to be made a reality? How was the Church to develop the 'deep desire for world unity and world peace...working today in the hears of humanity?' It could only 'set itself towards carrying this spirit forward in its full embodiment into the world of peace'.[18]

Professor Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1919, took 'Recent History and the Call to Brotherhood' as the subject of his closing address to that Assembly. He defined brotherhood as 'an aspect of charity' which would begin at home and in nations but he felt forced to admit that Scotland had failed somewhat in this respect.[19] He spoke of how in Scotland's past, as a result of 'a unifying historical discipline

and a somewhat notable heritage', the 'Scottish stock', (i.e. the Scottish Race) had developed a strongly marked individuality, but also in the Scottishness was the belief 'that Scot ought to be to Scot on the footing of at least a distant blood-relation'.[20]

Paterson's opinion was that the various influences which were at work in modern European society, had 'neutralised and weakened the kindly spirit of nationalism and patriotism'.[21]

Professor Paterson later in his address went on to suggest that the principle of brotherhood ought to be most apparent in the Christian Church. He noted that some churches and church people found it easier to show their love to the strangers in the Foreign Mission Fields than to the outcasts ministered to by the Home Mission in Scotland, or to love the brethren and to do good to those 'within the household of faith'.[22] No doubt he had in mind the continuing divisions in the Scottish Churches, which had been able to cooperate with one another during the war, and whose members in the forces had worshipped together quite happily. Paterson was one of those who hoped for a fairly quick solution to the discussions between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church. After all they both belonged to the same Scottish race and the same household faith.

The brotherhood spoken pre-war was an essential part of the gospel, sprang from 'roots' in the Scottish history, roots which, at times perhaps, were surrounded by a national mythology. The comradeship and brotherhood which was thought to have been experienced by the Forces during the war, in their service and sacrifice, was seen to be a reflection of 'Scottishness', which having been rediscovered must not be lost again. This experience should be transferred back to civilian life. But could the spirit of comradeship, found at the front, be brought home? Or was it an experience which was linked closely to the suffering and hardships which had been undergone there? Was it the same comradeship and brotherhood as that which the Churches sought to follow? And had the Churches, perhaps under the influence of other movements around them in society, picked up too rosy a picture of how easy it would be to establish the Kingdom of God? But the effort had to be made because the integrity and competence of the Scot demanded it.

NOTES

1. McPherson and Raab. **Governing Education. A Society of Policy since 1945.** Edinburgh 1988. p. 407.
2. Ibid.
3. Storrar. **Scottish Identity. A Christian Vision.** Edinburgh 1990. p. 33
4. **Life and Work.** January 1915. p. 7.
5. Checkland. **Industry and Ethos.** London 1984. p. 7.
6. Storrar op cit. p. 39-40.
7. Brown. **Thomas Chalmers.** Oxford 1982. pxv and xvi.
8. RGAUFCS. 1909 **Church Life and Work Report** p. 15.
9. RGAUFCS. 1909 ibid p. 11.
10. PGAUFCS. 1909 ibid. p. 254.
11. PGAUFCS. 1090 ibid. pp. 281-2.
12. Guide Notes. Appendix to **Life and Work** 1916. p. 76.
13. RGAUFCS. **Situation as Affected by the War.** 1917. p. 16. RGACS. **Commission on the War. 1917. p. 727.**
14. **Life and Work.** May 1918. p. 68. and RGACS. **Commission on the War.** 1919. p. 691.
15. RGACS. **Commission on the War.** p 691.
16. RGACS. ibid. 1918. pp 627-8.
17. RGACS. ibid. 1919. pp 658-9 and 668.

18. RGAUFCS. **Situation as Affected by the War.** 1918 pp. 4, 5, 10 and 11.

19. Paterson **Recent History and the Call to Brotherhood.** Closing address of the Church of Scotland General Assembly 1919.

20. Ibid. p. 21.

21. Ibid. p. 21.

22. Ibid. p. 34.

22. CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Scotland and the Scottish Churches in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth, shared in the common British belief in the superiority of the English speaking races. In Scotland this was compounded by the belief in the competence and integrity of the Scot which sprang to some degree from the democratic equality of Presbyterianism, and the Knoxian vision of a Godly Commonwealth. Scottish Churchmen and Churches added to this a great pride in the importance of the ministry of the churches, which they saw as one of the foundations on which Scottish greatness was built.

Germany shared in this protestant heritage, and many Scottish ministers felt a great shock when the war broke out, since they had studied in Germany and felt a great debt to the land and to the work of Martin Luther. Britain was seen to share with Germany a missionary duty to the world. What had gone wrong? An answer had to be given to this problem. It was perhaps easier to blame Germany than to examine the possibility that Britain had gone wrong at some point. The war was, therefore, in a sense, an extra burden and a challenge to the English speaking people. It placed an extra burden on them in establishing the Kingdom of God, especially in the foreign mission realm.

So the war was a challenge to be taken up and faced to the bitter end, however long the road might be. It was a challenge to the nation and the churches to prove themselves and, at time the lines of division between Church and State in the thinking of churchmen were hard to see, because the churchmen themselves did not seem to think such a division existed.

The war however threw up some problems which made church leaders ponder what was happening. Among these problems were:

1. The fact that ministers and the ministry were not as popular as they were thought to be.

2. And following from this, there was a gap between the churches and the men and women in the street.

What was the response of the churches to be?

1. The English races still had a role to play.

Organisations like the League of Nations, in which the Churches became deeply involved, were seen as part of the means for the establishment of peace and the rule of God in his Kingdom, which the war had hindered and delayed.

2. The Scottish Churches and people needed to sort out the matter of their competence and integrity. Social problems had to be sorted out, and it was most important that the churches and ministers understood what was happening around them so that they would be able to give the guidance which it was the right and role of the church to give. The education of divinity students was looked at and ways considered through which their knowledge of how their fellow citizens thought and lived might be enlarged. It was recognised that the Social Vision of the Churches was not as correct as it might be, and so the Churches pondered how the comradeship and brotherhood of the trenches could be transferred to civilian life.

3. So that Scotland's Presbyterianism might continue to flourish and make its rightful contribution to the life of the nation, an examination was made of the efficiency of the Church. Attempts were made to draw the rural and urban sides of the Church closer together and to allow ministers in rural parishes experience something of life in the large town and cities. The work of the eldership and its role were looked at, as were ways in which improvements might be made in the Church as a worshipping community. The nation needed the Church as a source of inspiration and direction and it was of great importance that the Church should be efficient in order to make its full and proper contribution to the nation.

4. An attempt was made to overhaul the way in which the ministry of the Church was trained. Students had to be trained for the positions of leadership which they would be expected to occupy.

But the changes suggested in their training were basically organisational ones. Get the structures right, improve the quality of the leadership, restate the basic message, and play your part as good citizens. These were the basic responses of the Scottish Churches. Society was not perceived as having changed very much. The challenges and tasks which the war had interrupted were still facing them and the chief task facing the Churches was to sort themselves out and to carry on.

But there were deeper questions which, by and large, the Churches did not ask, probably because at the time few of the Scottish Church Leaders were aware of them

Little attention was given to why Germany had taken the path which it had taken, and whether or not there were similar tendencies in British Society. No further attention was paid to British responsibility for the war. The question as to why Christianity appeared to have been unable to stop the war ever starting was recognised as a valid one. An answer suggested to this query was that Christianity had not been really tried or that it had not been understood enough to be put into action. This was one of the notes struck

in the lectures which were delivered in military camps in France and it was one of the matters noted by Cairns in his book *The Army and Religion.* There had been a failure by the Churches in getting across to men and women what The Christian Faith was about and how it ought to be lived. This explains why the Churches re-emphasised their educational role, and it was right that they should do so. However, while doing this, they seem to have been unaware of the deep changes taking place in the society in which they lived and unaware of the unspoken questions of men and women around them.[1]

Could men and women be fully christianised? If so how? If the Churches had taken the criticism of ministers seriously, they would have got a glimpse of the twists in human nature and the consequent difficulties in establishing the Kingdom of God. But as we noted in the work of men like Henry Drummond, there was in the thought patterns of their day, a belief that human nature was evolving and getting better. With the weakening of the older Calvinistic sense of sin, there had been a loss of belief in, and control of, the ability of human nature to act in somewhat irrational ways.

The Rev. Dr. H.J. Wotherspoon, writing about The National Mission, is an example of one man who reflected the hopes of establishing God's rule in the lives of men and women. 'The Kingdom of God', he said, was 'Christ supreme in all spheres', 'not in state relations only and not in the soul only;

but now in all spheres and all causes... Christ to rule in politics, in business, in the labour market, in the shop and in the factory and in the counting house and the exchange, in the Town Council...in legislation and in diplomacy'.[2] But we are forced to ask, could the nation become like a Church? Was there really such a thing as a 'christian nation' and what were the problems and temptations in such a concept especially in the modern industrial world?

How did God act in the world? Perhaps it is unfair to blame the churchmen of the post war years for their failures to see the problems which challenged them. Maybe we only see the problems with hindsight and perhaps the depths of the problems challenging the Scottish Churches and all Western Churches, did not become clear until later years. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that until the Churches had to come to terms with events like the Synod of Barmen or the evil of Holocaust, did they realise what had and was happening to the Christendom which they thought was so stable and secure. They were then forced so face the problem of evil and the question as to how good could become so demonic. Not until then was the strong feeling that the Church had a message to convey and a right to teach men and women and nations challenged by the apparent absence and hiddenness of God in Western Society. Why was it that the best laid plans of mice and men went astray? Why was it that Trade Unions which held the hopes of uplifting the status of workers could become the means of sustaining sectional interests?

Society in Scotland was changing. McPherson and Raab suggest that the locus of the Scottish myth, which we examined in the last chapter, was placed in the village and small town and not in the city, least of all the Glasgow conurbation.[3] Brown tells in his book on Thomas Chalmers that, when Chalmers met Thomas Carlyle, one of the topics around which the conversation circled was the communal values of rural Scotland, in which both of them had been raised, and which both had struggled to convey to a rapidly changing nation. Brown hints that this was one of the reasons why Chalmers never succeeded with the working classes as he did with the middle classes.[4]

Aspinwall in his book *Portable Utopia* adds another angle to the social changes which were taking place. He argues that the generation before the First World War were finding their identity 'not in the Church, established or free, but in the Town Hall, in an ethical Christian community rather than churchianity'.[5]

The role of the Churches was changing and the standing of ministers in society was changing. The Churches and ministers did not seem to realise that this was happening to them, or if they did spot the changes, then they appeared to have little idea as to how they might respond. The only cure which they had to suggest was in the increased efficiency of the Church, and

in the updating of the skills of the ministry. Professor Cheyne notes that in this period, the status of teachers had been rising compared with that of ministers and 'by the outbreak of the First World War there were signs that they - together perhaps with journalists - had ousted the clergy from the position of being the nations intellectual leaders'.[6]

Reading the signs of the times has never been easy, even for wise men, and it is often only in the after years that we begin to realise what we have been through and how we might have responded to that situation. One church leader, John White, who played a prominent part in the Church of Scotland in the years before and after the war, noted that he himself has seen in his life time a move from the acceptance of the 'message of the Church to secular rationalism, hedonism and New Psychology which appeared to succeed in their attacks on religion'.[7]

White was one of those who believed that the union of the two main Scottish Churches in 1929, inevitably led to an increase in the church's prestige and influence. He assumed that a united Church would be seen by the nation as a Church which had something worthwhile to say and which was in a stronger position to lead the nation. The question which Professor Cairns reported had been put to him by President Masaryk of Czechoslovakia, was perhaps worthy of deeper attention. Masaryk had asked in 1919 if the movement for union in Scottish Presbyterianism arose from a deepening or shallowing of

the religious life of the country.[8] We are forced however to conclude that church leaders, of whom John White may be taken as an example, saw only with hindsight, the great changes which were happening in the nation and society of which they claimed to be leaders. They either did not see the changes as they were taking place or they were unable to respond to them in a more positive way. White appeared to think that union made it easier for theological writers to give a more reasonable statement in the Christian Faith so that 'Christianity became intellectually respectable once more'.[7]

Perhaps we are forced to ask if Churches really lead or do they simply like many others, try to respond to the events happening around them? We cannot possibly claim that the Scottish Churches gave a major lead in the post-war years. They tended to see the war as an interruption of the flow of history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and their post war aim was reorganise themselves, check over their organisation, ensure that they were efficient, and then to buckle down and continue their striving to establish the Kingdom of God, a task in which they had been interrupted in 1914.

NOTES

1. Cairns. **The Army and Religion.** London. 1919. Sclater and Maclean. **God and the Soldier.** London 1917. McAuley and Paul. **Up Against it.** London 1919.
2. Wotherspoon. 'The Mission of Rededication', Expository Times, 1919. p 392.
3. McPherson and Raab. **Governing Education. A Sociology of Policy since 1945.** Edinburgh 1988. p 410.
4. Brown. **Thomas Chalmers.** Oxford 1982. pp 370-1.
5. Aspinwall. Quoted in Storrar. **Scottish Identity - A Christian Vision.** Edinburgh 1990. p 67.
6. Cheyne. **The Transforming of the Kirk.** Edinburgh 1983. p. 184.
7. Muir. **John White.** London 1958. pp. 440-1.
8. PGAUFCS. **Youth Committee Debate.** 1920. p. 160.

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ABBREVIATIONS

RGACS. Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

RGAUFCS. Reports to the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland.

PGACS. Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

PRAUFCS. Proceedings of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland.

G.H. Glasgow Herald