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THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT: THE  
ROLE OF THE SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES, 1867 - 1918

BY

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to show that when the religious dimension of the women's suffrage movement is considered, it can be seen that while the Scottish Presbyterian Churches at an official level remained neutral in their attitudes, the ministers and members of the Churches gave significant and varied support to the campaign, and their efforts contributed to the success of the suffrage movement. Although the term 'the religious dimension' includes both positive and negative responses to the movement in the Churches, this thesis concentrates on the positive efforts which were made. Chronologically, it covers the period from the official founding of the national suffrage organisations in 1867 to the enfranchisement of women in 1918. In surveying the history of the movement, account will be taken of both male and female contributions to the cause.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter I surveys previous studies and outlines the scope of this piece of research. Chapter II contextualises the role and status of women within the Church and within society during the period which the thesis covers. In particular, it examines the relationship between women's religious suffrage and the women's political franchise movement, and explores factors contributing to the Churches' concern for women's suffrage. Chapter III reconsiders the involvement of the Churches and their members in the suffrage movement prior to 1900, focusing particularly on Bright's Bill (1870-1873) and Woodall's Amendment (1884). Chapter IV examines the attitudes of the Churches and religious leaders to the tactics of the militant suffragettes. Chapter V investigates both the extent of responses to the movement from presbyteries and their members, and the content of the debates on women's suffrage in the Church courts. Chapter VI examines the significance of the Scottish Churches League for Woman Suffrage within both the Churches and the suffrage movement. Chapter VII concludes the study by considering the significance of the religious dimension of the struggle for votes for women.

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never be completed.

I declare that this thesis has been carried out by myself, and  
is entirely my own work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eun Soo Choi', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

EUN SOO CHOI  
OCTOBER 1996

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFCS	<i>Annals of the Free Church of Scotland</i> , 2 Vols, ed., W. Ewing, (Edinburgh 1914)
AUWSA	Aberdeen University Women's Suffrage Association
CCD	<i>Crockford's Clerical Directory</i> , (London 1900 and 1915)
CLWS	Church League for Women's Suffrage
CS	Church of Scotland
CUWFA	Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association
CWSS	Catholic Women's Suffrage Society
CWU	Christian Women's Union
DSCHT	<i>Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology</i> , ed., D. F. Wright, D. C. Lachman, D. E. Meek, (Edinburgh 1993)
EC	Episcopal Church
ENSWS	Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage
FES	<i>Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae</i> , ed., Hew Scott, (Edinburgh 1866-)
FCLWS	Free Church League for Women's Suffrage
FLWS	Friend's League for Women's Suffrage
FUFCS	<i>The Fasti of the United Free Church of Scotland 1900-1929</i> , ed., J. A. Lamb, (Edinburgh 1956)
FWU	Fellow Worker's Union
GWSAWS	Glasgow and West of Scotland Association for Women's Suffrage (later Glasgow Society for Women's Suffrage)
JLWS	Jewish League for Women's Suffrage
McNaughton	<i>The Scottish Congregational Ministry 1794-1993</i> , W. D. McNaughton, (GLASGOW 1993)
NMFWS	Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage
NUWSS	National Union for Women's Suffrage Societies
RSCHS	<i>Records of the Scottish Church History Society</i>
SCSU	Scottish Christian Social Union
SCLWS	Scottish Churches League for Women's Suffrage
SCWT	Scottish Council for Women's Trades
Small	<i>History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church</i> , 2 Vols, ed. by Robert Small, (Edinburgh 1904)
SLOWS	Scottish League for Opposing Women's Suffrage
SRA	Strathclyde Regional Archives

SRO	Scottish Record Office
UFC	United Free Church of Scotland
UP	United Presbyterian Church
WFL	Women's Freedom League
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The campaign for women's political enfranchisement in Britain officially commenced in 1867, and three suffrage societies were then established in London, Manchester, and Edinburgh. In 1897, these bodies and other provincial organisations for women's franchise were united to form the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS). This organisation adopted constitutional methods in pursuing its aims and, under the leadership of Millicent Garrett Fawcett, played a leading role in the movement. The counterpart of the NUWSS, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), was formed by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters in Manchester in 1903, and adopted militant methods. Because of the Pankhursts' undemocratic leadership, a split arose within the WSPU, and in 1907 this resulted in the formation of the Women's Freedom League (WFL), whose leader was Mrs. Despard. As for the anti-suffrage movement, the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, later the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage, was founded in 1908. By 1914, the Scottish bodies with links to the London-based suffrage organisations were the Scottish Federation of the NUWSS, comprising of 63 local societies; the Scottish WFL, with 11 branches; the Scottish WSPU, with 4 branches; and the Scottish League for Opposing Women's Suffrage, with 13 branches. The struggle for women's franchise came to an end in 1918, when women over the age of 30 years were enfranchised by the Representation of the People Bill. Ten years later, all women over the age of 21 years were given the vote.

From the very beginning of the movement, the Churches and their members in Britain were a source of support for those campaigning for women's votes. In Scotland, during the second half of the nineteenth century, the Churches and Church leaders had become involved in socio-economic and political issues and hence might be expected to take an interest in this question. The Rev. Dr. Robert Wallace, CS minister of Old Greyfriars, illustrates this concern in the following way:

... in regard to female franchise ... a useless and pernicious restriction upon human freedom should be removed ... the framework of society should be so fashioned, as that men and women should be allowed to shake themselves into their right places and relationships to one another, in public, as well as in private life.<sup>1</sup>

Keeping in mind the potential effect of the Churches' and clerical support for votes for women, we need to pause here to review the previous studies in the religious dimension of the movement. This will help us understand the point we have reached in this area.

### **1.1. Historians and the Religious Dimension of the Women's Suffrage Movement**

The historical literature of the British votes-for-women campaigns has been enriched over the past three decades by memoirs,<sup>2</sup> biographies,<sup>3</sup> documentaries,<sup>4</sup> and scholarly studies. Among historians who have studied the movement in relation to the socio-economic history of the franchise campaign, Jill Liddington and Jill Norris wrote a book entitled *One Hand Tied Behind Us*, which is an account of provincial working-class suffragism, and June Purvis published articles, such as 'The Prison Experience of the Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain' and '"Deeds, Not

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<sup>1</sup> *Women's Suffrage: Public Meeting in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1870), Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement* (reprint London 1977); Hannah Mitchell, *The Hard Way Up* (reprint London 1977).

<sup>3</sup> David Mitchell, *The Fighting Pankhursts* (London 1967) and *Queen Christabel* (London 1977); Andro Linklater, *An Unhusbanded Life: Charlotte Despard. Suffragette. Socialist. Sinn Feiner* (London 1980); Barbara Winslow, *Sylvia Pankhurst: Sexual Politics and Political Activism* (London 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Midge Mackenzie, *Shoulder to Shoulder: A Documentary* (London 1975); Ada Nield Chew, *The Life and Writings of a Working Woman* (London 1982); David Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes* (Brighton 1986).

Words": The Daily Lives of Millitant Suffragettes'.<sup>5</sup> Political histories of the suffrage movement have been more numerous than other types of investigation as the question of voting was regarded as a party political issue.<sup>6</sup> There have also been histories of the national suffrage organisations which draw attention to their activities, but few scottish campaigners and events appear in these writings.<sup>7</sup>

The standard works of Scottish history, such as those written by Ferguson, Smout, and Lynch, have begun to pay regard to the whole spectrum of activities by the Scottish suffragists or suffragettes.<sup>8</sup> Others have not.<sup>9</sup> This former trend has been most amply demonstrated in Olive and Sydney Checkland's *Industry and Ethos: Scotland, 1832-1914*, and in Fraser and Morris' *People and*

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<sup>5</sup> Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us* (London 1978); June Purvis, 'The Prison Experience of the Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain', *Women's Historical Review*, Vol 4 No.1 (1995) and '"Deeds, Not Words": The Daily Lives of Millitant Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol 18 No.2 (1995).

<sup>6</sup> Constance Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London 1967); David Morgan, *Suffragists and Liberals* (Oxford 1975); Martin Pugh, *Women's Suffrage in Britain 1867-1928* (The Historical Association 1980) and *The Making of Modern British Politics 1867-1939* (Oxford 1982); Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy* (Cambridge 1986); June Purvis, *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945* (London 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Sandra Newsome, *The Women's Freedom League 1907-1957* (London 1958); Andrew Rosen, *Rise Up, Women: The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union 1903-1914* (London 1974); Brian Harrison, *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (London 1978); Leslie Parker Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies 1897-1914* (London 1982).

<sup>8</sup> William Ferguson, *Scotland: 1689 to the Present* (reprint Edinburgh 1994); T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London 1986); D. F. Wright, D. C. Lachman, and D. Meek (eds.), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, (Edinburgh 1993); Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (2nd rev. ed. London 1995).

<sup>9</sup> J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London 1960); Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland 1874-1900* (Edinburgh 1978); Rosalind Mitchison, *A History of Scotland* (2nd ed. Edinburgh 1995).

*Society in Scotland, 1830-1914*.<sup>10</sup> The Checklands provide accounts of the participation by women in the trade union movement, the struggle by women for access to higher education, and the women's suffrage movement. Fraser and Morris offer space for Eleanor Gordon to deal with women's issues during that period. Gordon describes women's employment, and their private and public life, especially focusing upon their industrial militancy, philanthropy, education, and politics.

In terms of gender history, a few writers have drawn attention to the campaigns for the female political vote and the associated agitation. Two of them, Rosalind K. Marshall and James D. Young, deserve to be highlighted. In the book *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980*, Rosalind Marshall aims to examine 'what it has meant to be a woman in Scotland in past centuries'.<sup>11</sup> The book falls into four parts, through which the author chronologically traces the role and status of women in society. In particular, in part 4: 1830-1980, *The Active Woman*, Marshall focuses on the emancipation of women in every aspect of their lives. After describing the campaign by women for equal education, and their sufferings during childbirth, the author narrates the historical development of the women's suffrage movement from the 1860s down to 1928. James Young, who wrote *Women and Popular Struggles*,<sup>12</sup> has also dealt with women's suffrage activities among Scottish and English working-class women, but these descriptions are restricted to some suffragettes' attitudes to social problems, such as wife-beating.

A general study of the franchise movement was undertaken by Elspeth King and Leah Leneman, and the role of the Church was

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<sup>10</sup> Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland, 1832-1914* (2nd ed. Edinburgh 1989); W. Hamish Fraser and R. J. Morris, *People and Society in Scotland, 1830-1914* (reprint Edinburgh 1995).

<sup>11</sup> Rosalind K. Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980* (London 1983).

<sup>12</sup> James D. Young, *Women and Popular Struggles: A History of Scottish and English Working Class Women, 1500-1984* (Edinburgh 1985).

touched on as part of that study. In 1978, Elspeth King wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement*.<sup>13</sup> In this booklet, King covers three areas: first, she examines the value of the Scotswomen's independent suffrage movement; secondly, she attempts to correct historians' ignorance of the cause of women's suffrage; and thirdly, she considers the prominent and unique position of the movement in Scotland. To achieve this, King investigates the historical background to the question, starting with the Scottish Reformation. In her view, the Knoxian Reformation brought great suffering to women, for King regards his *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* as the starting point of anti-female teaching in Scotland. The author finds the mainspring of the women's suffrage movement within the agitation for male adult suffrage, for according to King, 'both men and women saw the key to industrial and social improvement as being the vote'.<sup>14</sup> Added to this, there were attempts to emancipate women from what was regarded as the bondage of the ignorance and tyranny of men. Such attempts appear in the activities of Anti-Slavery Societies, the Anti-Corn Law League, and the Chartist Movement. King describes women's struggle towards equality largely in three areas: education, medicine, and suffrage. In the author's view, such efforts culminated in the women's franchise movement. Here the work of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) is introduced and the Scottish members of the WSPU are shown to have played a leading role. The author also emphasises that the Women's Freedom League was strongly represented in Scotland, and that the Scottish Federation of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies included 'all of the independent non-militant suffrage organisations',<sup>15</sup> spread geographically from Orkney to Selkirk in the Borders. Nor does the author overlook male

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<sup>13</sup> Elspeth King, *The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement* (Glasgow 1978).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

contributions. In relation to the Church's and its members' role in the suffrage movement, King notes that:

Powerful support came from another unlikely source - the Scottish Churches. Individual ministers had previously lent a helping hand to the suffrage societies ... the Scottish Churches League for Women's Suffrage was founded. The subject and location of their meetings was sometimes surprising ... in the early 20th century, they joined forces to help women obtain the vote.<sup>16</sup>

She adds that after the vandalism carried out by the militant suffragettes, the Great War started in August 1914, and the contribution of women to the war effort led to the enfranchisement of women over the age of 30 years in 1918. Elspeth King was a pioneer in throwing light on both the suffrage campaign in Scotland and the religious dimension of the movement.

Elspeth King has also been a contributor to the book entitled *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945*.<sup>17</sup> King presents a more extended paper concerning the women's suffrage movement than in her 1978 booklet. As well as this, King has also made a recent contribution to the scholarship of women's issues in *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women: The Thenew Factor*.<sup>18</sup> Its concern is the writing of women's history in general and of the wider social history of women in Glasgow in particular. Here the author has attempted to bring together information on women in Glasgow. This volume covers the period from the pre-Reformation era to the present, and the modern period highlights the participation of Glasgow women in the agitation for women's political enfranchisement and their emancipation. In this study, King highlights some of the suffrage activities of Churchmen and women.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> E. Breitenbach and E. Gordon (eds.), *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945* (Edinburgh 1992).

<sup>18</sup> Elspeth King, *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women: The Thenew Factor* (Edinburgh 1993).

In 1991, detailed research was published by Leah Leneman, the author of *A Guid Cause: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Scotland*, and in 1995, a revised edition was published.<sup>19</sup> In this book, Leneman stresses the 'independent characteristic of the cause' in Scotland, by stating that 'within each of the main suffrage societies, some kind of autonomous federation was set up within Scotland, maintaining strong links with the central body but operating with a degree of independence.'<sup>20</sup> The author shows the geographical extent of suffrage societies in Scotland. Although the book covers mainly the key years between 1906 and 1914, the author does not overlook the historical background to the women's suffrage agitation in Owenite socialism, Chartism, the Anti-Slavery Movement, the Anti-Corn Law campaign, and the Temperance Movement. This volume is a new approach to the subject of the women's suffrage movement, as a study of this kind has not yet appeared on a specific locality. The author adds: 'if this account of the movement in Scotland were to encourage historians to examine the situation in Wales or in different English regions, then that alone would justify its existence.'<sup>21</sup> Leneman deals with the development of the movement by means of a narrative method. There are newly available primary materials for pursuing research in this area, for example, the minute books and annual reports of the Scottish suffrage organisations, and tape-recorded interviews with surviving suffragettes or suffragists. As Leneman concludes, this book can add the 'unknown story of women's struggle for the vote' to 'the history of women's suffrage in Britain and to the history of modern Scotland'.<sup>22</sup> Needless to say, this volume represents an advance upon King's earlier work.

In the same year, an article directly relating to the religious

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<sup>19</sup> Leah Leneman, *A Guid Cause: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Scotland* (rev. ed. Edinburgh 1995).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

dimension of the movement was published, summarising and revising material from the above book with the title 'The Scottish Churches and "Votes for Women"'.<sup>23</sup> Here Leneman focuses on the contribution of the Scottish Churches to the movement, and largely concentrates on the involvement of presbyterian Churches and their members in the activities of the constitutional and militant suffrage bodies, such as the NUWSS, the WFL, and the WSPU. The paper has five parts. First, it deals with the formation of the SCLWS, which was regarded by women's suffrage campaigners as having the official support of the Scottish Churches and their leaders. It examines both the scattered activities of Church leaders involved in a variety of occasions organised by the suffragists or suffragettes, and also clerical support for the women's suffragette movement, especially in relation to Emmeline Pankhurst's Glasgow meeting of 1913. Finally, there are two fascinating sections, those concerning the approach of the NMFWS and local suffrage bodies to Scottish presbyterial courts in an attempt to gain their full support, and of the suffragette interruptions of Church services. Although the paper does not cover every aspect of the subject in depth, it is an attempt to reveal the extent of the religious dimension of the movement.

Leneman has also written a new booklet entitled *Martyrs in Our Midst: Dundee, Perth and the Forcible Feeding of Suffragettes*.<sup>24</sup> This local history is aimed at highlighting the importance of the agitation for women's franchise in Tayside. There were two reasons why the campaign in this locality was significant. The first is that Winston Churchill was at this time a Member of Parliament for Dundee, while the constituency of Asquith, the Prime Minister, was that of East Fife. The second is that the force-feeding of suffragettes occurred in Perth prison. The experiences of some prisoners are used to describe the agony of

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<sup>23</sup> Lean Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches and "Votes for Women"', *RSCHS*, Vol XXIV (1991).

<sup>24</sup> Lean Leneman, *Martyrs in Our Midst Dundee, Perth and the Forcible Feeding of Suffragettes* (Dundee 1993).

forcible feeding and two of them, Ethel Moorhead and Arabella Scott, are highlighted in this booklet. It is worthwhile noting that the author is also concerned with the ecclesiastical contribution to the suffragettes' protests against this action by the authorities.

Leah Leneman has also made a significant contribution to the historiography of women's war work, through her study *In the Service of Life*.<sup>25</sup> This book attempts to explore the work of both Dr. Elsie Inglis, an active suffragist in Scotland and a medical doctor, and the Scottish Women's Hospitals. Like *A Guid Cause*, the writing style is in the form of a narrative history. This volume is divided into two sections. In the first half of the book, Dr. Elsie Inglis is seen as a key figure in forming the hospitals and in building up their reputation; and in the second half, the continuing work of the hospitals is studied. Ironically, in spite of the women's humanitarian services during the war, the author concludes that the gaining of the vote was due mainly to the militant suffragette movement.

Unlike King and Leneman, and taking the Church as a starting point, Lesley Macdonald has recently completed her doctoral thesis entitled 'Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland',<sup>26</sup> which examines the changing relationship between women and Scottish presbyterianism. The author claims that women were 'historical agents' and 'active participants' in change.<sup>27</sup> Macdonald explores the development of women's work within the presbyterian denominations, the involvement of women in the foreign missions of the Church, and the official policy of the Churches regarding women. She examines the participation of women in four major agitations: anti-slavery, temperance, higher education, and women's suffrage. In particular, in discussing the Victorian and Edwardian women's franchise movement, she has focused exclusively

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<sup>25</sup> Leah Leneman, *In the Service of Life* (Edinburgh 1994).

<sup>26</sup> Lesley A. O. Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland, c.1830 - c.1930' (Unpublished Edinburgh Ph.D Thesis 1994).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

on the active involvement of presbyterian women. Based on Leneman's research and secondary sources, the author finds that the institutional attitude of the Church to the women's franchise issue was almost entirely negative. Macdonald has thus affirmed patriarchal presbyterianism as a dominant cultural force, although the suffrage movement itself brought hope for emancipation to women. The author concludes that Scottish presbyterianism was 'a source of oppression or liberation in the lives of Scottish women'.<sup>28</sup> Macdonald's work is not a direct study of the religious dimension of the suffrage campaign, but she does show that most Scotswomen involved were committed Christians.

This brief survey of the previous studies has indicated that although historians such as King, Leneman, and Macdonald acknowledged the important position of the Scottish Churches in the movement, they have not examined the whole scope of its religious dimension in Scotland. Several reasons for this can be given. First, as most histories of the women involved in the movement have been written from a feminine perspective, the contribution of the Churches as institutions and of Church leaders or Churchmen in general has been underestimated. Secondly, King and Leneman have not studied the relationship between the recognition amongst the presbyterian Secession Churches of female voting rights in Church elections and the wider women's suffrage movement. Although Macdonald has examined the situation in the Free Church, she has overlooked the development of women's voting rights within the Secession Churches. Thirdly, the wider involvement of the Churches and religious leaders in the pre-1900 campaign for women's enfranchisement has largely been ignored. Fourthly, theological analyses have not been applied to a variety of events, such as the use of force by the militant suffragettes. In the fifth place, recent studies of the extent of the presbyterial courts' action have not given an accurate reflection of the discussions and decisions of the Church courts. In addition, the significance of the SCLWS as a Christian movement has not been taken into

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 416.

account. Little attention has thus been paid to the religious aspect of the success of the women's campaign. Finally, but more fundamentally, use has not been made of ecclesiastical materials directly relating to the subject, for example, the minutes of Church courts and ecclesiastical suffrage periodicals.

It is clear, therefore, that the religious dimension of the women's franchise movement in Scotland still awaits further research.

### 1.2. The Aim and Scope of this Study

Three years after the union of 1900 between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, *The Union Magazine* invited some prominent Churchmen to discuss a topic entitled 'The Church and Public Questions'.<sup>29</sup> Amongst them, the Rev. John M. Wilson held that the Church had the right to deal with public issues. In his words:

The real manifestation of the vitality of the Church is in the daily life of its members ... All these means of grace are vain if they do not produce holy lives; that Church has no real power whose members forget to carry their Christianity into daily life, and to use whatever influence they have on public affairs, so as to advance Christ's kingdom in the world. The Christians are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world ... And it is the Church's business to help its members to carry into practice what has been preached to them. Christians must be taught how to relate their faith to conduct.<sup>30</sup>

In agreement with Wilson, Sir Samuel Chisholm made the duty of the Church and its members in society clear:

Every individual Christian, no matter what his position may be, and every Church Court, how wide or narrow soever its jurisdiction may be, is bound to endeavour to reflect the spirit of the religion which both profess to make their guide. Now, the Church in

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<sup>29</sup> *The Union Magazine*, January to April 1903.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1903.

its every aspect is the instrument by means of which the great controlling principles of Christianity are destined to become supreme in the lives of men, and in the intercourse and relationship of nations ... the Church which sits apart from the great questions of public morality, public freedom, public righteousness, which contents itself with generalities, however, faultless, and refuses to assist in pointing the way as to how these generalities are to be applied and wrought out in the daily life of the nation, has abdicated its high function and written its own condemnation.<sup>31</sup>

Later, touching on the female suffrage issue as one of public questions facing the Church, Professor W. M. Clow of the United Free Church College at Glasgow discussed the women's movement, and affirmed that the demand for the right to exercise the franchise was based on Christian principles.<sup>32</sup> Clow noted that:

The place given by Christ to women may be urged as favouring it (the women's suffrage). Whether we think it wise and expedient or not, we must recognise that its source is the Christian ideal of women.<sup>33</sup>

In the light of such writers' indications of the Church's social duty, this thesis will argue that, considering the religious dimension of the suffrage movement as a whole, a significant number of ministers and members of the Scottish Presbyterian Churches gave considerable support to the campaign in a variety of ways, and their efforts contributed to the success of the movement. Although the terminology 'the religious dimension' includes both positive and negative attitudes to the movement in Church life, this study will endeavour to highlight the positive efforts which were made.

In this study, we will concentrate on the Presbyterian Churches and their members which were predominant in Scotland, such as the Established Church of Scotland, the Free Church, the United

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1903.

<sup>32</sup> W. M. Clow, *Christ in the Social Order* (London 1913), p. 222. See also Chapter IV.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

Presbyterian Church, and then after the union of 1900, the United Free Church. The contribution of individual members of the other denominations such as the Episcopal, the Baptist, and the Congregational Churches, will also be noted. This study covers the period from the official founding of the national women's suffrage organisations in 1867 to the political enfranchisement of women in 1918. Finally, I have tried to take account of both male and female contributions to the movement, and have sought to avoid the problems of gender partiality in the writing of history.

Following this introduction, there will be six further chapters. Chapter two contextualises the role and status of women in the Scottish Churches and society during the period covered by this study. The position of women within the Scottish Churches prior to 1867 is investigated in detail, especially in the light of popular rights and female votes in the election of ministers, and the attempt to connect women's popular rights in the Church with their public rights in society. Finally, we shall explore factors contributing to the Churches' concern for the issue of women's enfranchisement. Chapter three reconsiders the extent of the clerical involvement in the agitation for Bright's Bill (1870 - 1873) and for Woodall's Amendment (1884). Chapter four explores the fact that in spite of violence exercised by the suffragettes, many local Churches and religious leaders lent a helping hand to the militant women in particular and the movement in general. Chapter five attempts to solve the crucial question of the extent to which Scottish presbyterial courts and their members supported the franchise issue. Chapter six examines the significance of SCLWS within both the Churches and the movement. Chapter seven concludes this thesis by highlighting the religious dimension of the struggle for votes for women.

## CHAPTER II THE ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SCOTTISH CHURCHES AND IN SOCIETY

### 2.1. Introduction: why should Women be granted the Franchise?

In an article by Marion Reid, first published in 1843,<sup>1</sup> she claimed that women should be represented in public affairs, especially in Parliament. Reid maintained that without the better representation of women, other problems such as unjust laws and the lack of education would remain unsolved. Political enfranchisement for women was therefore essential: 'it would tend to ennoble and elevate the mind; and it would secure the temporal interest of those who exercise it.' In regard to this, the author said:

The possession of the franchise would tend to raise woman above the bonds of this intolerable restraint; would give free play to her faculties, energy and individuality to all her powers.<sup>2</sup>

Claims such as this had been made by women since the time of the French Revolution.<sup>3</sup> In most cases, they were theoretically based upon Owenite communism, Chartism, or Socialism in general, for since the French Revolution, these ideologies had rapidly

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<sup>1</sup> Marion Reid, *A Plea For Women* (reprint Edinburgh 1988). This booklet first published in 1843 was printed in different places. The 1988 edition referred to the religious tendencies of the book: 'as belief in the Bible was a part of most people's lives, Marion Reid's demonstration that the pursuit of civil equality was compatible with Christianity would have been found valuable and satisfying in its day, freeing women from the fear of accusations of irreligion'. (p. vii)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v. See also Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Rights of Women* (London 1929); Harriet Taylor Mill, *Enfranchisement of Women* (reprint London 1983); and John Langdon-Davies, *A Short History of Women* (London 1928).

spread through many sections of British society.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, at the very earliest stage of the women's movement, the role of the Scottish Churches and the influence of their religious ideologies such as presbyterianism has been ignored.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, in contextualising the period covered by this study, we shall focus on the issue of the women's vote within the Churches, and attempt to investigate the link between the participation of women in the election of ministers and elders and the political enfranchisement of women. Women's rights in society as a whole will then be explored, and political progress towards women's suffrage will also be examined from the point of view of the Church and of Church members. Finally, we shall examine several factors contributing to the Churches' support for women's political suffrage.

## **2.2. The Role and Status of Women within the Church**

### **2.2.1. Churchwomen in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Prelude**

It has commonly been said that the Scottish Reformers did not give an appropriate place to women in the life and work of the Church.<sup>6</sup> This situation has been compared unfavourably with that pertaining to the Medieval Church.<sup>7</sup> For instance, in the monasteries, a position of high status such as that of a Lady Abbess with independent rights, duties, and obligations, was

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<sup>4</sup> Reid, *A Plea for Women*, p. v; Barbara Taylor, *Eve and The New Jerusalem* (London 1983), pp. 1-19; F. A. Montgomery, 'Glasgow Radicalism 1830-1848' (Unpublished Glasgow Ph.D thesis 1974), pp. 176-232.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter I.

<sup>6</sup> James Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland* (Glasgow 1934), pp. 258-259.

<sup>7</sup> Eunice G. Murray, *Scottish Women in Bygone Days* (Glasgow and London 1930), p. 2.

offered to unmarried women.<sup>8</sup> It was also understood that 'the nuns under her charge were the teachers of their day, and so filled an honourable place and followed an honourable calling'.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, the Scottish Reformers, including John Knox, accorded women a lower status. In his *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, John Knox described women as being "weake", "impacient", and "foolishe".<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, such teaching against women was perpetuated after Knox's time by Churchmen like Andrew Melville. Evidence of this trend is found in Kirk Session papers and other documents.<sup>11</sup> 'In many Churches', states Elspeth King, 'men and women sat separately, and Glasgow Kirk Session in the 1580s decided that women should bring their stools with them, leaving the benches free for men'.<sup>12</sup> It was also said that 'in 1604, the same Session turned its attention to the scandal of the groups of women who drew plaids over their heads and went to sleep during the sermon'.<sup>13</sup> In the 16th and 17th century Scottish Church there were "beadles" to prod the sleepers, and "Searchers" to enforce Sabbath observance. Their targets were mainly women.<sup>14</sup>

However, during this period, the Reformers, including Knox, had also attempted to provide women with the opportunity to gain an

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> John Knox, *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* in David Laing (ed.), *The Works of John Knox* (Edinburgh 1855), Vol IV., p. 374.

<sup>11</sup> Elspeth King, *The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement* (Glasgow 1978), pp. 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Leah Leneman, "'Profaning' The Lord's Day: Sabbath Breach in Early Modern Scotland", *History*, Vol. 74, No 241 (June 1989), pp. 217-231.

education.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the Scottish Churchmen had subsequently ameliorated the status of women as they had acknowledged the activities of female Covenanters as 'defenders of presbyterianism'.<sup>16</sup> In these cases, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Scottish reformed tradition could provide room for female emancipation.

### 2.2.2. Women's Votes in the Eighteenth Century: the Secession Churches

The Secession Churches were the result of the first secession in 1733 from the Church of Scotland on account of opposition to patronage, led by Ebenezer Erskine. Due to disputes over the Burgess Oath in 1747, the Secession Church or Associate Presbytery split in two, the Burgher and Anti-Burgher or the Associate Synod and General Associate Synod. Subsequently, both Synods further divided into the Auld and New Lights. The Auld Lights amongst the Burghers left in 1799 to form the Original Burgher Synod which was in favour of a state connection and covenants, and after the Evangelical revival within the Established Kirk, the majority of this Synod re-joined the Church of Scotland in 1839. In 1842, the Remnant Synod of the Original Burgher Synod united with the Original Secession Synod which consisted of the Auld Lights amongst the Anti-Burghers (the Constitutional Presbytery of 1806). The majority of this united Synod joined the Free Church in 1852, leaving the minority as the Continuing Original Secession Church. As for the New Lights, they opposed the connection with the state, and held to the voluntary principle, and were anti-covenanting. After the abolition of the Burgess Oath in 1819, the New Light bodies in the two Synods

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<sup>15</sup> J. D. Young, *Women and Popular Struggles* (Edinburgh 1985), p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Lesley A. O. Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland, c.1830 - c. 1930' (Unpublished Edinburgh Ph.D thesis 1994), p. 23. See also James Anderson, *The Ladies of the Covenant* (Glasgow 1850), pp. xiii-xxxvi; D. P. Thomson, *Women of the Scottish Church* (Perth 1975), pp. 74-82.

formed the United Secession Church in 1820, and in 1847, this Church joined the Relief Church to form the United Presbyterian Church.<sup>17</sup>

An unknown contributor to the 'Open Council' column in *The United Presbyterian Magazine* of March 1899, attempted to identify when the practice of female voting had been introduced into the Churches. The writer held that the only reference to this matter was in the union of 1827 between the Constitutional Presbytery of the Anti-burgher Old Lights and the Synod of Protesters against the 1820 basis of union, for although the Constitutional Presbytery originally disallowed female suffrage, the united body, called the Associate Synod of Original Seceders, granted the privilege to women.<sup>18</sup>

This assertion, however, seems to be mistaken. The granting of votes to women was also found in other branches of Secession tradition. We shall look at four aspects of this issue: the origin of the women's vote, women's enfranchisement amongst the Anti-burghers, women's suffrage amongst the Burghers, and the female franchise in the united body.<sup>19</sup> In the first place, the constitutional origin of women's vote within the Secession Church is found in the Associate Presbytery's Testimony of 1733 and 1736:

That ministers and other office-bearers are to be set over congregations by the call and consent of the majority of the members in full communion with the

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<sup>17</sup> Donald Fraser, *The Life and Diary of the Reverend Ebenezer Erskine* (Edinburgh 1831), pp. 347-407; John Mckerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, (Glasgow 1841), p. 37ff; Francis Davidson, *History and Doctrine of the United Original Secession Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh n.d.), p. 7ff.

<sup>18</sup> 'Women's Vote in Churches', *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, March 1899.

<sup>19</sup> 'Woman's Vote in the Secession Church' by the Rev. Dr. Robert Small, *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, April 1899; Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 263-264; *DSCHT*, pp. 885-886.

Church in her sealing ordinances.<sup>20</sup>

According to Robert Small,<sup>21</sup> the declaration of the Testimony was regarded as 'a charter of women's rights' with respect to equality in the conduct of Church elections.<sup>22</sup> Why did the founders of the Church insist on this? It was because they opposed the implementation of patronage within the Auld Kirk and favoured the election of office-bearers by popular vote.<sup>23</sup> For example, in 1703, Ebenezer Erskine had been ordained at Portmoak on a call from the heritors and elders but 'cheerfully acquiesced in by the whole population'.<sup>24</sup> His subsequent call to Stirling in 1731, he was also welcomed by the Magistrates, Town Council, and elders with the unanimous consent of the whole community, given because they knew Erskine was a champion of the rights of Christian people.<sup>25</sup>

But even some ardent supporters of popular rights in general disapproved of female voting. Objections were raised by certain protesters against the Act of 1732,<sup>26</sup> the reasons being twofold.

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<sup>20</sup> M'Kerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, pp. 80-110; Robert Small, 'Woman's Vote in the Secession Church', *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, April 1899.

<sup>21</sup> For Small, see Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Glasgow, SRA, CH3/146/44, 3 November 1903; *The Union Magazine*, April 1903.

<sup>22</sup> Small, 'Woman's Vote', p. 164.

<sup>23</sup> M'Kerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, pp. 44-48; J. R. McIntosh, 'The Popular Party in the Church of Scotland 1740-1800' (Unpublished Glasgow Ph.D thesis 1989), pp. 35-54; *DSCHT*, p. 664.

<sup>24</sup> Small, 'Woman's Vote', p. 164. Cf. M'Kerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Small, 'Woman's Vote', p. 165 and *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh 1904), Vol I, p. 712.

<sup>26</sup> *Acts of The General Assembly of The Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1732), pp. 620-621. It was the Act anent the Method of Planting Vacant Churches. Its point was that '... the heritors and elders of the vacant parish ... who is to be elected and called by the heritors and elders in a conjunct meeting ... That in case of vacancies in royal burghs, the election or call  
(continued ...)

In the first place, the protesters held that 'since women are to keep silence in the Church, they are precluded from taking part in the election of ministers.'<sup>27</sup> In the second place, it was maintained that 'since they form the majority in many congregations, if women were permitted to vote, elections might frequently be overruled by them ... thereby they would usurp authority over the men.'<sup>28</sup> In the view of Robert Small, it indicates that Presbyterian Scotland was in those days inconsistent in its attitude to women and still within 'hearing of John Knox's trumpet blast against "the monstrous government of women"'.<sup>29</sup>

We now turn, secondly, to women's religious enfranchisement amongst the Anti-burghers. In a recent study, Macdonald simply states that 'after the Breach of 1747 ... the Burghers generally allowed women to vote, while the Anti-Burghers forbade the practice.'<sup>30</sup> Yet there are four pieces of evidence which would indicate that this was not the case. The first unquestionable example of women voting within the Secession Church is found at Kinclaven, one of the Anti-burgher congregations. Shortly after the Breach of 1747, the congregation called the Rev. Alexander Blyth, whose call was subscribed by 159 members. Comparison with the communicants' roll of 1751, which totalled 241, shows that at that time, the female members had the same voting privileges as men.<sup>31</sup> The second instance is from Cairneyhill, to which James Burt was called in 1754 from Leslie West, with the signatures of

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shall be by the magistrates, town-council, and elders.' See also Anderson W. Boyd, *Presbyterian Sects in Scotland: a paper read at the old Glasgow Club on 15th March 1917* (Glasgow 1917), p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> Small, 'Woman's Vote', p. 164.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism', pp. 210-211. See also *DSCHT*, p. 886; James Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland* (London 1934), p. 264.

<sup>31</sup> Small, Vol II, p. 636.

62 male members and "6 women who were heads of families".<sup>32</sup> This was a stepping-stone towards more general women's voting rights. A more advanced practice than that of Cairneyhill operated at Johnshaven within the presbytery of Arbroath. A call to the Rev. William Cairns in 1808 was signed by 19 male members, an adherence of 43 female members, and 65 males and 63 females not in full communion.<sup>33</sup> An example of fully equal voting procedures can be found at the Regent Place Church. When the Rev. Hugh Heugh was translated from Stirling Viewfield in 1819, his call was signed by 260 members and 203 adherents, male and female.<sup>34</sup> Although there still remained restrictions and limitations on the practice of female voting, many Anti-burgher Churches did allow the vote to women.

Thirdly, according to its Testimony, the Burghers granted equal rights to all communicants, both men and women. A representative example is that of the Stirling Erskine Church. A call to James Erskine in 1751 was signed by 826 male and female members.<sup>35</sup> From time to time, the voting practice within the congregation made its number at moderations greater. There were 959 signatures on a call to Robert Campbell in 1766 and 1,229 on a call to Ebenezer Brown in 1788.<sup>36</sup> The inclusion of women members in the vote had a positive effect because of the enormously large numbers who subscribed. So, the pioneering action of the Burghers' Church proved worthwhile in giving the right to vote in a call to all in full communion.

Finally, we come to the argument with regard to the Union of 1820 between the New Lights of both the Burghers and the Anti-burghers. At the time, two crucial issues were raised: the use of Paraphrases in public worship and female franchise at

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<sup>32</sup> Small, Vol I, p. 361.

<sup>33</sup> Small, Vol I, pp. 76-77.

<sup>34</sup> Minutes of Kirk Session of Regent Place Church, SRA, CH3/354/1, 30 December 1819; Small, Vol II, pp. 55-56.

<sup>35</sup> Small, Vol II, p. 664; Small, 'Women's Vote', p. 166.

<sup>36</sup> Small, Vol II, pp. 665-667.

moderations.<sup>37</sup> As far as the issue of female franchise was concerned, there were two main objections introduced into the Synod at the Union of 1820: one, it was an innovation, and the other, that it removed women from the sphere to which they properly belonged. Regarding the former, Mr. Carment of Rosskeen asserted: 'I deprecate anything like innovation ... new plans unknown to our fathers, we are on the highway to bring on another Disruption.'<sup>38</sup> In reference to the latter, Mr. Gibson of Glasgow stated: 'I wish the females of the Church to be protected from the habits of public debate and collision.'<sup>39</sup> But the Synod did not make any decision in relation to women's religious suffrage, while they officially decided that preachers should not introduce the singing of paraphrases and hymns.<sup>40</sup>

The dispute regarding the female franchise within the united body seemed to have ceased by 1821, for the previous Burgher congregation of Stranraer gave a call signed by all communicants, including women members, and it was sustained by the United Presbytery of Wigtown. On this basis, Macdonald contends that 'within a few years the women's vote was universally accepted, in spite of some Anti-Burgher objections.'<sup>41</sup> However, this would not seem to be the case.

First, although the Wigtown United Presbytery sustained the call of William Smellie to the former Burgher Church of Stranraer, the court objected to allowing the vote to women because of the strong resistance of Mr. Smith. As the minister of the Anti-burgher Church of Whithorn, Smith expressed his

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<sup>37</sup> Minutes of the United Associate Synod, SRO, CH3/298/3, 13 September 1820; Norman. L. Walker, *Chapters from the History of the Free Church of Scotland* (London 1885), pp. 67-68. See also Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 263-264; Small, Vol I, pp. 715-716.

<sup>38</sup> Walker, *Chapters*, p. 68.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Minutes of the United Associate Synod, SRO, CH3/298/3, 13 September 1820.

<sup>41</sup> Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism', p. 211; *DSCHT*, p. 886.

disapproval of females being allowed to vote or to subscribe to a call. In his opinion, it was contrary to 'the appointed rule, as well as to the law of nature manifested in the constitution of human society'.<sup>42</sup> Smith warned that if there were any attempts to make it a law of the United Church he might take the proper steps to resist it.<sup>43</sup> Due to this opposition, the issue lingered on for fifteen years without any further steps being taken.

Secondly, the struggle for women's rights appears again in the Ivy Place congregation, Stranraer, formerly an Anti-burgher Church. It can be followed through two stages. At the first stage, a moderation in 1836 resulted as follows: the Rev. James M'Crie, 38; Mr. Adam Lind, 24; and Mr. Alexander M'Gregor, 12. As a result, the absolute majority for M'Crie was only 2. Many members were dissatisfied with this but the call came before the presbytery. Within the court, on account of the influence of those anti-suffragists still remaining after Smith's death, Mr. Wingate Robertson and Mr. Gilbert Milvain, as commissioners from the congregation, presented a list of voters consisting of male communicants only: a paper signed by 42 male members, a paper by 3 males who were absent at the moderation, and a paper by 20 male ordinary hearers.<sup>44</sup> Yet a strong protest against both the call itself and the exclusion of female members from the vote was made by Mr. Andrew McWilliam and Mr. John Kevand as commissioners representing a number of members belonging to the Church. Two papers of signatures were presented, one with those of 38 male and 63 female members, and the other with those of 30 male and 23 female ordinary hearers. For the time being, the presbytery gave permission to hold a congregational meeting in order to harmonise the opinions of both sides.<sup>45</sup> At the second stage, a copy of the petition from dissenters to the call to M'Crie came

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<sup>42</sup> Minutes of the United Associate Presbytery of Wigtown, SRO, CH3/309/1, 16 October 1821.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 February 1836.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

before the court and was found to be signed by 8 male and 9 female members, and 4 ordinary hearers.<sup>46</sup> Shortly afterwards, the commissioners supporting the call objected to this outcome on account of the petition having been carried from house to house for signatures, contrary to the law and practice of the Church. In their view, this was an illegal action. Nevertheless, the presbytery received the petition because it could be regarded as a proper act on behalf of some members of the congregation. The commissioners strongly protested against this and appealed to the next meeting of the Synod. Meanwhile, a complaint signed by some members of the Kirk Session of Ivy Place Church was raised against the Session for its refusal to sanction a list of male and female members. This was rejected by the court, due partly to its unofficial nature.<sup>47</sup>

Thirdly, on 24 October 1836, Mr. Robertson as commissioner from the Church presented a petition praying the court to appoint a member to moderate in a call to Mr. David Croom.<sup>48</sup> This was granted and the moderation fixed for 15 November 1836. The court then declared:

That it be intimated to the congregation that all members in full communion have a right to vote in the election of Church office-bearers.<sup>49</sup>

According to this, Mr. Croom was inducted to the Church and the call was signed by 96 members, 11 adherents, and 40 ordinary hearers, both men and women.<sup>50</sup> The announcement was in reality the reconfirmation of the authority of the Testimony and Act within the Secession Church. Thus, after 1836, the right of women to vote at moderations became widespread.

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 March 1836.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 October 1836.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Minutes of the United Associate Synod, 9 May 1837 and 26 September 1837.

Aside from this argument amongst the New Lights, female suffrage had been raised in the course of negotiations for a union between the Synod of Protestors against the 1820 basis of union and the Constitutional Presbytery, to form the Original Secession Church in 1827.<sup>51</sup> Some women strongly insisted on their right to vote and Thomas M'Crie, one of the leaders of the Constitutional Presbytery and a prominent Church historian,<sup>52</sup> was required to reply to this demand for the women's franchise within the Church.<sup>53</sup>

Like Carment and Gibson of the New Lights, M'Crie also objected to women having the vote, both in the Churches and in society generally. His objections had both biblical and historical grounds. Biblically, M'Crie believed the exclusion of women from an explicit choice or formal vote accorded with apostolic prohibition, citing for example that: '... women should keep silence in the churches ... let them ask husbands at home' (1 Cor.xiv.34, 35); 'let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness' (1 Tim.ii. 11, 12); and '... the head of a woman is her husband ... ' (1 Cor.xi.3-16).<sup>54</sup> Having dealt with 1 Cor.xi.3-16 and 1 Tim.ii.11, he reminded them that wives had to obey their husbands as heads at home and women should not usurp authority over the man. For him, it would be impossible to reconcile this with 'women's taking an active part in the public management of ecclesiastical affairs, giving their voices, and influencing the determinations of society, equally with the

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<sup>51</sup> Thomas M'Crie, 'On the Right of Females to Vote in the Election of Ministers and Elders,' Thomas M'Crie (ed.), *Miscellaneous Writings, Chiefly Historical of the Late Thomas M'Crie, D.D.* (Edinburgh 1841), p. 670. See also Davidson, *History and Doctrine of the United Original Secession Church of Scotland*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>52</sup> J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London 1960), p. 324; *DSCHT*, pp. 506-507.

<sup>53</sup> M'Crie, 'On the Right of Females to Vote', p. 669.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 672-673. See also chapters III and VI.

men.'<sup>55</sup>

Historically, M'Crie produced several arguments from the practice of the 16th and 17th centuries. In Holland, for example, women were not allowed to vote even in those parishes where elections were most popular and free. In that country, only the Arminians had 'recourse to the unprecedented practice of procuring the subscriptions and votes of women.' Some of the Independents, Brownists, and Anabaptists in the 17th century, according to M'Crie, did not give the vote to women. Even the ancestors of the Secession in Scotland, according to him, refused to allow women to vote.<sup>56</sup>

Notwithstanding this, after the union of 1827, the Original Secession Church also granted the vote to women. This can be illustrated using three congregations in Edinburgh. First, on a call to Mr. Andrew Mackenzie from South Gray's Close Church (formerly Burgher) in 1831, the subscription was by 106 members and 15 adherents, both men and women.<sup>57</sup> Secondly, when the Rev. Thomas M'Crie was himself called to the Davie Street Church (Constitutional) in 1836, the call was signed by 95 male and 165 female members, and 73 ordinary hearers.<sup>58</sup> Finally, in 1842, the congregation of Adam Square, formerly Antiburgher, called the Rev. A. Brown, the call being signed by 126 members and 29 hearers, both men and women.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, it is clear that after the Breach of 1747, the Burghers allowed the vote to females in most cases, whilst the Anti-Burghers did so in some cases, with the determining factors being the traditions of each individual congregation and the attitude of the local clerics. Consequently, it has been shown that from 1836 onwards, voting by women within the Secession Churches had

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<sup>55</sup> M'Crie, 'On the Right of Females to Vote', p. 673.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 675-676.

<sup>57</sup> David Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church* (Edinburgh 1886), p. 321.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

become widespread.

### 2.2.3. Female Suffrage in the Early Nineteenth Century: the Free Church of Scotland

The issue of female votes also arose within the Free Church. The Disruption of 1843, which led to the formation of the Free Church, was the result of the Ten Years' Conflict (1834-1843). The controversy started in 1834 when the General Assembly, under the influence of a majority from the Evangelical party, passed two Acts, the Veto Act and the Chapels Act. The Chapels Act was aimed at elevating the chapels, which had mostly been built in urban areas to accommodate the increasing population, to equality of status in ecclesiastical terms with the old parish Churches. They were made *quoad sacra* parishes and their ministers could become members of presbytery. The Veto Act, which had its roots in the support of the Popular party in the eighteenth century for the election of ministers by popular vote, gave the male heads of families who were in full communion a veto over the patron's nominee.<sup>60</sup> Although the Evangelical Non-Intrusionists' claim for spiritual independence in the ecclesiastical realm was rejected and eventually led to the schism, the Disruption opened up fresh possibilities for women's rights within the Free Church.<sup>61</sup>

In the "Open Council" column of *The United Presbyterian Magazine* published in February 1899,<sup>62</sup> one contributor stated that after the Disruption, female voting had not been practised in the Free Church. Is it true that the Free Church in the 1840s

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<sup>60</sup> *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1834), pp. 1038-1040.

<sup>61</sup> A. C. Cheyne, *The Ten Years Conflict & The Disruption-An Overview* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press 1993), pp. 1-17; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, pp. 334-369; T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London: Collins 1986), pp. 181-208; J. MacKay, *The Church in The Highlands* (London 1914), pp. 221-275.

<sup>62</sup> 'Women's Vote in Churches' in *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, February 1899.

did not recognize the female franchise in the selection of office-bearers?

At first sight, it appears there was no further discussion on the issue of women's franchise, the reason for this being that on 29 May 1843, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had passed an Interim Act concerning the Election of Office-Bearers which refused the voting right to female communicants and said that 'the election of Ministers ... shall be made by the male communicants.'<sup>63</sup> Yet, when the first General Assembly of the Free Church met in Glasgow on 24 October 1843 after the Disruption, the issue of women's suffrage was reconsidered at the prompting of the Committee on the Election of Office-bearers.<sup>64</sup> The arguments covered three areas: biblical, ecclesiastical, and empirical.

First of all, as far as the biblical arguments were concerned, the Rev. James Begg raised the question of women's suffrage within the early Church. Begg held that in the early Church, women joined with the other members in the choice of an apostle to replace Judas.<sup>65</sup> He strongly contended that 'the Scripture recognises the right of women to exercise their judgment in reference to the election of Christian ministers, when called on to give an opinion.' Like Begg, Dr. Willis affirmed: 'in that portion of Scripture so often referred to, as to not suffering females to speak in the Church, there was no reference to anything like depriving them of the liberty of private judgement,

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<sup>63</sup> *Acts Of The General Assembly Of The Free Church Of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1852), 29 May 1843; *Glasgow Herald*, 2 June 1843. Cf. Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism', pp. 211-216.

<sup>64</sup> 'Interim Act anent Election of Office-Bearers' in *Acts of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland*, 24 October 1843; *Glasgow Herald*, 27 October 1843; *The Witness*, 25 October 1843.

<sup>65</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of The Free Church of Scotland* 1843, pp. 131-132. Cf. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *Sermons and Essays on The Apostolical Age* (London 1847), p. 41; L. E. Browne, *Thee Acts of The Apostles* (London 1925), pp. 18-25. See also chapters III and VI.

or of the right of giving their suffrage.'<sup>66</sup>

Unlike Begg and Willis, Mr. Gibson of Kingston Church maintained that the Scriptures did not provide proof that females voted in the early Church. To prove this, Gibson also pointed to the election of the apostle. According to him, the words "in those days" concerning the meeting of the apostles and others to select the successor to Judas indicated a different occasion from that meeting where women were present. Therefore, he could not find any positive proof of women voting. In agreement with Gibson, Mr. M'Allister of Nigg doubted whether there was authority in the Word of God for females to give their votes in the choosing of ministers. From a more neutral position, Dr. Robert Candlish suggested that the purest and best study of the Scripture would throw light upon the subject and dependence on Divine Providence and the Spirit would lead to the goal of harmony between both sides.<sup>67</sup>

Begg reminded the Assembly of the patronage system which had prevented them and their ancestors from enfranchising women members of the Church.<sup>68</sup> He asserted that other ecclesiastical bodies, such as the United Secession Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Relief Church, had dealt with the matter and they had recognised the equal rights of women and men in the election of office-bearers of the Church.<sup>69</sup> In agreement with Begg, Dr. Candlish spoke of the principle of non-intrusion which vindicated the spiritual independence of the Church in the matter of ministerial appointments.<sup>70</sup> On the basis of this, Candlish believed that the participation of female members should

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<sup>66</sup> *Proceedings*, pp. 133.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 134, 136, 137.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>69</sup> *Proceedings*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. S. J. Brown, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland* (Oxford 1982), pp. 300-24, 325-7, 328; S. J. Brown and M. Fry (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of the Disruption* (Edinburgh 1993), pp. 12-21; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, pp. 336-387.

be allowed in the election of a minister.<sup>71</sup> However, Mr. Gibson disagreed by saying that there was nothing in ecclesiastical history to indicate that women had voting rights. Carment argued that the practice of enfranchising women within the Church was an entirely innovative one, against the terms of the Barrier Act, which prevented any sudden alteration or innovation in doctrine, worship, discipline, or government.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, Dr. Burns of Paisley put forward an empirical argument by recognising in full the potential power of women in the Church. He said that 'a large proportion of our congregations are composed of female members,' and that 'the female mind had shown more readiness in grasping the principles of non-intrusion, and has understood them more comprehensively, than the other sex.'<sup>73</sup> In the end, he emphasized that 'we owe much to the powerful agency of our female adherents.'<sup>74</sup> Dr. Cunningham also argued for a general principle of women's suffrage in the Christian Church: 'in the election of a minister, their consent and approbation must in some way or other be ascertained.'<sup>75</sup> Unlike Burns and Cunningham, Mr. Gibson of Kingston questioned the role of women in the election of a minister, based partly on the view that many Christian women did not want to have voting privileges and considered themselves were inferior to men.<sup>76</sup> Even so, women's potential power and their contribution to the life and work of the Church was fully acknowledged by all members, both those for and against women voting.

The Assembly generally approved of the report and sent it down to presbyteries.<sup>77</sup> At the 1845 General Assembly, Dr. Cunningham

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<sup>71</sup> *Proceedings*, p.137.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, p. 266.

<sup>73</sup> *Proceedings*, p. 132.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 138.

as convener of the Committee on Election of Office-Bearers, reported that the Committee had received various positive reports from presbyteries,<sup>78</sup> and the 1846 General Assembly declared that 'the principle has been already recognised, and should be fully and fairly acted on, that "it appertaineth to the people, and to every several congregation," that is, to the members of the congregation in full communion with the Church, "to elect their Minister".' This became a Declaratory Act with regard to the Election of Office-Bearers.<sup>79</sup>

In the light of the above arguments, the contention of the contributor to *The United Presbyterian Magazine* can be seen to have been far from the real circumstances. Women's right to vote in the Free Church of Scotland was thus established from 1846.<sup>80</sup>

#### 2.2.4. Women's Franchise within the other Churches

As well as the Secession Church and the Free Church, four other presbyterian denominations also came at various points to allow the vote to female members in the election for ministers and office-bearers: the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Relief Church, the Presbyterian Churches in England, and the Established Church. We shall examine each of them in turn.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church was made up of the Old Dissenters or the Cameronians and insisted on a national Church in a Covenanted state. The Church was at first grouped into several "Societies" and in 1743 constituted a Presbytery.<sup>81</sup> In its Testimony, the Church protested against patronage since it obstructed the liberty of the gospel and it declared liberty of

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<sup>78</sup> *Proceedings*, May 1845, p. 286.

<sup>79</sup> 'Declaratory Act anent Election of Office-Bearers' in *Acts of The General Assembly of The Free Church of Scotland 1846*.

<sup>80</sup> Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 264-265; *DSCHT*, p. 886.

<sup>81</sup> Matthew Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland* (Paisley 1893), pp. 184-193.

conscience as the Christian's right, duty, and privilege.<sup>82</sup> The Church thus advocated the rights of the people in the election of ministers. The Eskdalemuir & Ettrick Church and the Dundee Church can be chosen as examples of voting practices. When in 1847 James Morrison was called, the congregation of Eskdalemuir & Ettrick Church welcomed the minister, the call being signed by 59 members and 12 adherents, both male and female.<sup>83</sup> In the call to William Stevenson in 1852, the congregation of the Dundee Church was signed by 60 members and 28 adherents, both men and women.<sup>84</sup>

Secondly, we can look at the Relief Church which had its roots in the Second Secession of 1761 under the leadership of Thomas Gillespie, and which protested against patronage.<sup>85</sup> From the start, the Church made its position clear arguing against 'the Anti-Christian and abominable practice of intruding ministers by patronage upon reluctant congregations,' and Christian congregations could have 'a right to choose their own ministers'.<sup>86</sup> According to its principles, the Church allowed the popular vote to all members regardless of gender. Two instances of the voting practice within this Church can be seen in the calls given by the congregations of Rutherglen and Duns South. The call of Willian C. Wardrop to Rutherglen in 1836 was signed by 163 members and 108 adherents.<sup>87</sup> In reference to the Duns South Church, during the vacancy from 1838 to 1840, the membership at moderation was given as 592 yet, owing to an unhappy division, the call to Daniel Kerr in 1840 was signed by

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<sup>82</sup> The Reformed Presbyterian Church, *Testimony* (Paisley 1837), pp. 154-159.

<sup>83</sup> W. J. Couper, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland* (Edinburgh 1925), p. 61.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>85</sup> Gavin Struthers, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church* (Glasgow 1843), pp. 154-165.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>87</sup> Small, Vol II, p. 144.

only 230 male and female members.<sup>88</sup>

Thirdly, female voting can also be seen in the Presbyterian Churches in England. According to W. M. MacPhail, the Churches confirmed that 'every Church ... is bound to throw open the full privileges of its membership to any one who professes personal faith in Jesus Christ.'<sup>89</sup> In addition to this principle, the practice of women's voting in the Churches can be shown from their history. In fact, the Secession Church in England in 1744 had two congregations, one in London and the other in Newcastle. Presbyteries were formed in each of these areas in 1820, and in 1831, the presbytery of Lancashire was added. By that time, the Relief Church had about 100 congregations in England. Needless to say, these Scottish bodies in England adopted the practice of the female vote, as in Scotland.<sup>90</sup>

Finally, we can witness women's religious suffrage within the established Church of Scotland. Even before the abolition of patronage in 1874, there was the case of Portmoak in Kinross-shire. At the Disruption, the Rev. Dr. Hugh Laird came out and joined the Free Church along with a majority of the parishioners.<sup>91</sup> During the vacancy, there was an attempt at imposing Mr. Wilson as the minister of that congregation,<sup>92</sup> but this proved unacceptable to the majority of the remaining members, mostly women. The women of Portmoak presented a remonstrance to the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy on 2 June 1844.<sup>93</sup> The presbytery gathered on 19 June 1844, and dealt at first with a

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<sup>88</sup> Small, Vol I, p. 402.

<sup>89</sup> W. M. MacPhail, *The Presbyterian Church* (London 1908), p. 46.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 267-268; B. G. Worrall, *The Making of the Modern Church* (London 1993), pp. 139-142.

<sup>91</sup> Henry Cockburn, *Journal of Henry Cockburn* (Edinburgh 1874), Vol II, p. 74; D. P. Thomson, *Women of the Scottish Church* (Perth 1975), p. 399; *FES* V, pp. 74-75.

<sup>92</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, CH2/224/11, SRO, 30 May 1844.

<sup>93</sup> Cockburn, *Journal*, p. 74-75; Thompson, *Women of the Scottish Church*, p. 339.

letter from Mr. Wilson, declining the call because of the objection of the congregation. The presbytery decided not to sustain the call,<sup>94</sup> and then discussed another letter from S. H. Templer, Patron of the Church, asking them to give the congregation the right of choosing a minister for the Church. Due to the fear of another secession in this parish, the presbytery resolved that 'the congregation should be allowed the choice of their minister.'<sup>95</sup> Shortly after this, by the request of the congregation, the presbytery unanimously sustained the call to the Rev. John Steele, St. Thomas Chapel at Leith.<sup>96</sup> Mr. Steele was soon translated from Edinburgh presbytery to Kirkcaldy.<sup>97</sup> In 1874, the patronage system within the Established Church was abolished. It declared that the right of electing and appointing ministers to vacant churches and parishes in Scotland was vested "in the congregations".<sup>98</sup> Voting rights were thus given to the members of the Church. Consequently, from 1874 the practice of women voting within the Reformed Churches of Scotland was quite general.

#### 2.2.5. The Relationship between the Vote for Women in the Churches and in Society

It is worthwhile noting that the debates on ecclesiastical female suffrage were reflected in the presbytery debates in connection with women's political suffrage, which occurred between November

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<sup>94</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, 19 June 1844.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 August 1844 and 21 August 1884. See also *FES* V, pp. 74-75; Thomson, *Women of the Scottish Church*, p. 400.

<sup>97</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, 13 September 1844.

<sup>98</sup> 'An act to alter and amend the laws relating to the Appointment of Minister to Parishes in Scotland, 7 August 1874 *Acts Of Parliament* (London 1874), 37 and 38 vict, pp. 1-2. See also J. R. Fleming, *A History of The Church in Scotland 1843-1874* (Edinburgh 1927), pp. 190-202; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, p. 375.

1913 and April 1914.<sup>99</sup> In the UFC presbytery of Aberdeen, which met on the 6th January 1914, Professor Stalker stated that 'in all their elections in the Church they had women's suffrage, and women used that franchise well.'<sup>100</sup> In like manner, the Rev. Wilson Baird, a supporter of women's suffrage, reminded the members of the UFC presbytery of Irvine and Kilmarnock of the enfranchisement of women members in the Secession Church. Baird said that at that time the Seceders had welcomed women as their partners. He thus argued that 'if they allowed women to vote for a minister of religion why not for a Member of Parliament?'<sup>101</sup>

It had also been disputed at the 1843 Free Church General Assembly that women, although they did not actually have the right to vote, nevertheless had as much influence as men.<sup>102</sup> The same argument was also reflected in the debates of the CS presbytery of Dundee in 1913. In this court, the Rev. H. M. Davidson stated that 'the women without a vote had just about as much influence as the man with a vote.'<sup>103</sup>

In the Free Church debates of 1843, as mentioned already, the issue of female voting had been divisive amongst the members. A similar scene was also witnessed in many Church courts during the presbyterial debates over women's suffrage. In the CS presbytery of Kirkwall in 1914, for example, Mr. Craig (Kirkwall) proposed that letters from the suffrage organisations should be on the table. He then commented that 'in the Church of Scotland they had been most careful to take no particular side in matters on which there was great diversity of opinion among their members.' It was added that 'they had thus avoided giving offence and causing

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<sup>99</sup> See chapter V.

<sup>100</sup> *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 6 January 1914.

<sup>101</sup> *The Kilmarnock Standard*, 7 February 1914.

<sup>102</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1843), pp. 133-134.

<sup>103</sup> Minutes of CS presbytery of Dundee, Dundee Archives and Record Centre, CH2/103/27, 3 December 1913; *The Dundee Advertiser*, 4 December 1913.

disruption in congregations which any other course would have.'<sup>104</sup>

As the practice of women's suffrage had been prevalent in the Free Church since 1846,<sup>105</sup> there were several attempts in some presbyteries to pass motions in support of women's parliamentary franchise.<sup>106</sup> It was not surprising, therefore, that the previous voting practice of Churches, including the Secession Church and the Free Church, was used as an argument for supporting women's political suffrage in the Church court debates of the early twentieth century.

### **2.3. The Status and Rights of Women in Society**

#### **2.3.1. In the Pre-Industrial Revolution Period: the Subjection of Women**

As noted above, Scottish Presbyterianism provided a crucial foundation for women's parliamentary franchise. Before going further, we have to gain a wider picture of the position of women in Scotland at this time.

What were the status and rights of women in pre-industrial Scottish society? As Miss Elizabeth Mure said about the place of Scottish women in those days, 'domestic affairs and amusing her husband was the business of a good life.'<sup>107</sup> In fact, a girl's destiny in most cases was to marry and to have children.<sup>108</sup> This resulted from male domination throughout all social structures, something particularly exhibited in the realms of education and

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<sup>104</sup> The meeting was dated on the 24th February 1914. *The Orkney Herald*, 25 February 1914.

<sup>105</sup> Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, p. 265.

<sup>106</sup> See chapter V.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Eunice G. Murray, *Scottish Women*, p. 1. Cf. Elizabeth C. Sanderson, *Women and Work in Eighteenth Century Edinburgh* (London 1996), pp. 168-172.

<sup>108</sup> Rosalind K. Marshall, *Women in Scotland 1660-1780* (Edinburgh 1979), p. 7. See also Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980* (London 1983), pp. 63-86.

marriage. The educational rights of women had often been ignored. Prejudice against female education can be seen in such statements as, 'there was no necessity for a women to be able even to read and write.'<sup>109</sup>

Another serious act of discrimination against women was their status in marriage. In the matrimonial state, women occupied a weak position in terms of rights in general: 'on marriage the husband acquired power over the person of his wife, who was considered to have no legal persona ... as ruler of the house, he had control of her person and conduct, including the assigning of a place of residence.'<sup>110</sup> The position of married women was therefore 'subordinate to that of their husbands with regard both to the acquisition and administration of property.'<sup>111</sup>

This state of affairs had its worst effects on women of the working class.<sup>112</sup> Generally speaking, poor girls were controlled first by their father, then controlled by their husband, and if unmarried, despised.<sup>113</sup> Women in the latter position were often sold as prostitutes.<sup>114</sup> Even for the married women of the working class, there were a number of problems, comprising domestic violence, ill health, and lack of leisure. Domestic violence by husbands was widespread as manners were coarse and rude.<sup>115</sup> Another serious problem was women's health, for many married women died during child birth, or they continually suffered on

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<sup>109</sup> Marshall, *Women in Scotland*, p. 7.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>111</sup> 'Some Aspects of the Law of Marriage in Scotland: 1500-1700' by A. D. M. Forte in Elizabeth M. Craik (ed.), *Marriage and Property* (Aberdeen 1984), pp. 109.

<sup>112</sup> Murray, *Scottish Women*, p. 6.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>114</sup> King, *The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 6; Kenneth M. Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes to Sex, Marriage and the Family 1850-1914* (Edinburgh 1980), p. 5. See also I. A. Muirhead, 'Churchmen and The Problems of Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Scotland', *RSCHS*, Vol XVIII. part 3 (1974), pp. 223-243.

<sup>115</sup> Murray, *Scottish Women*, p. 20.

account of infection after giving birth.<sup>116</sup> Concerning the lack of leisure for females, Murray has put it in the following terms:

Poor women, debarred from learning, travelling and pleasure, ignorant of the higher arts of house-keeping without rights, forced to regard men only as possible husbands, or, having to submit to them as masters ... What was her life? ... what interest had she beyond sewing, knitting, embroidering and spinning?<sup>117</sup>

### 2.3.2. In the Post-Industrial Revolution Period: Reform Movements and Women's Suffrage

The industrial revolution brought about many changes in the circumstances of the working classes and of women. Yet a scholar concerned with prophetic social criticism has simply defined the period as one of "tragic failure" and of "prophetic failure" on the part of the Church.<sup>118</sup> This assertion is true to some extent,<sup>119</sup> but it calls for some modification, for in the political reform movements contributions were made, many of them outstanding, by a number of Churchmen and women from various denominations in Scotland. None of the denominations, however, gave official support to these movements because of their political nature and political implications.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Marshall, *Women in Scotland*, p. 16.

<sup>117</sup> Murray, *Scottish Women*, p. 29.

<sup>118</sup> Donald C. Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest* (Peter Lang 1987), pp. 186-187.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151-160. He argued that in connection with the political reform movements, the Established and the Free Church of Scotland had exhibited "the most sustained hostility".

<sup>120</sup> Even though the author maintained that 'the few dissenting ministers who publicly advocated an extended franchise only gave their support to the middle class dominated Complete suffrage movement, he could not ascertain exactly 'how many dissenting presbyterian ministers subscribed to this movement which advocated universal male suffrage.' (*Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.) For that reason, it was quite possible that more Churchmen and women in the dissenting Churches than those counted by the author, had taken part in the movement.

Several questions can be raised as a result of this. How did women attempt to improve their position in the social, economic, and political spheres? What was the role of the Church in the various reform movements? How were women's earlier activities linked to the women's suffrage movement?

It is hard to exaggerate the scale of the influence of the industrial revolution upon Scottish society.<sup>121</sup> Industrialisation caused the many problems of urbanisation to occur simultaneously: housing, public health, and crime. With respect to housing, the situation in Glasgow in 1811 was very serious, for the total population of Glasgow was 100,749 but there were only 18,240 houses available for occupancy.<sup>122</sup> In relation to public health, there was concern about the extent of diseases among young children, especially those under 10 years old. It was reported that during the year of 1789, 146 children in the Ramshorn Parish in Glasgow died from smallpox.<sup>123</sup> Crime was also a serious problem. A typical instance was seen in the number of prisoners committed to Bridewell during a 6 year period. At Bridewell, there were a total of 8184 prisoners and the main offences were prostitution and disorderly conduct.<sup>124</sup>

The social and economic impact of industrialisation upon the Scottish people was complex. Women's position in the social and economic order was in most cases worse than that of men. For example, in the *First Report of Factories Inquiry Commission*

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<sup>121</sup> A. C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of The Kirk: Victorian Scotland Religious Revolution* (Edinburgh 1983), pp. 1-2; C. P. Hill, *British Economic and Social History 1700-1982* (London 1985), pp. 22-25; Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (London 1992), pp. 7-22; Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest*, pp. 29-34.

<sup>122</sup> R. A. Cage, *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750-1914* (Croom Helm 1987), pp. 40-41.

<sup>123</sup> Ramshorn Church Parish Registers, Burials 1784-1789, Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library.

<sup>124</sup> Cage, *The Working Class in Glasgow*, pp. 98-99

(1833),<sup>125</sup> discrimination against women at Messrs. Richards and Company's Fax Spinning Mill in Aberdeen was detailed by the inspector. James Begg, who had served as an overseer for eight years, reported that:

the female workers, from having no time to go to school, are more loose in their manners and behaviour than females otherwise situated; that at breakfast half an hour is allowed, but the workers cannot go without the gates without special authority, only given by pass tickets to a few ... this confinement is very prejudicial to the females, for as soon as they swallow their breakfast, they get together in knots and considerable numbers, and engage too frequently in conversation of a demoralizing nature.<sup>126</sup>

A similar situation was recorded in the *Reports from Assistant Hand-Loom Weavers' Commissioners (1839)*.<sup>127</sup> It was reported that the physical condition of cotton weavers was 'the reality of their generally depressed condition'.<sup>128</sup> In particular, the Rev. Finlay M'Allister in his evidence stated that 'great destitution exists among the weavers', which he attributes, 'not to bad morals or management, but entirely to poverty.'<sup>129</sup> In agricultural areas, the situation of women was the same as in the large towns. Detailed information about rural women appeared in the *Fourth Report of The Commissioners on The Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture (1867)*. It was explained that 'it is not common for women with families of young children to go out to work ... a farm of less than 100 acres would not afford

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<sup>125</sup> *First Report of Factories Inquiry Commission 1833*, The House of Commons, pp. 52-54.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Reports from Assistant Hand-Room Weavers' commissioners (London 1839)*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

constant employment for a woman.'<sup>130</sup>

As a result of these conditions, the underprivileged classes sought rights in the political arena.<sup>131</sup> Political tension increased. The dissenting Churches in particular responded to the situation by working with the disadvantaged in society.<sup>132</sup>

The passing of the Great Reform Bill in 1832 marked the starting point for the extension of voting rights towards complete enfranchisement. After the passage of the Bill, the electorate in Scotland increased from 4,500 to 65,000, while the number of Parliamentary seats was 53.<sup>133</sup> When the bill had passed into law, the Rev. A. Marshall delivered an address at Kirkintilloch on Friday the 24th August.<sup>134</sup>

The minister of the United Secession Church in Kirkintilloch, Rev. Andrew Marshall played an important part in the Voluntary Movement. He believed that every congregation should support its own minister by voluntary contributions, and a sermon preached in May 1829, marked the beginning of the Voluntary Controversy.<sup>135</sup> In his booklet, *Ecclesiastical Establishments Considered*, Marshall opposed a proposed government bill providing relief for Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland. All religious establishments by the state were for him 'unscriptural, unjust, impolitic,

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<sup>130</sup> *Fourth Report of The Commissioners on The Employment of Children, Young Person, And Women In Agriculture, 1867* (London 1870), p. 34.

<sup>131</sup> Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832* (London 1970), p. 8; James Murdoch, *A History of Constitutional Reform in Great Britain and Ireland* (Glasgow 1885), pp. 164-166.

<sup>132</sup> H. U. Faulkner, *Chartism and the Churches* (London 1970), pp. 107-116; Patrick Brewster, *The Seven Chartist and Military Discourses* (Paisley 1843), pp. 419-420.

<sup>133</sup> William Ferguson, *Scotland: 1689 to the Present* (Edinburgh 1968), p. 290.

<sup>134</sup> A. Marshall, *An Address: The Day Observed As A Jubilee, On Account Of The Passing Of The Reform Bill*, (Glasgow 1832).

<sup>135</sup> McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, pp. 724-773.

secularizing in their tendency, inefficient, and unnecessary'.<sup>136</sup> As a result, the Voluntary Church Association was set up in 1832 to seek the disestablishment of the Church. Its own magazine was published under the editorship of Marshall, pamphlets were written, sermons preached, and public meetings held.<sup>137</sup>

The Kirkintilloch meeting was organised under the auspices of the parishes of Kirkintilloch, Campsie, Kilsyth, and Cumbernauld.<sup>138</sup> Marshall spoke of the historical background and meaning of the First Reform Bill. Believing that this reform was of Divine, Marshall recommended the cautious use of the privilege 'with trembling'.<sup>139</sup> He expected that the lower orders would eventually be given the same voting privileges as the privileged classes.<sup>140</sup>

In Scotland, however, there was a widespread view that the Great Reform Bill of 1832 was not a success.<sup>141</sup> The editor of *The United Presbyterian Magazine* would later say that 'it did not satisfy the expectation of theoretical reformers from the outset; and it was soon discovered that, in its practical working, it was chargeable with many defects and drawbacks.'<sup>142</sup>

During the period between 1838 and 1848, centre stage was occupied by the Chartist Movement. The Chartists demanded manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, annual parliaments, abolition of the property qualification for MPs, equal electoral districts, and

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 725.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 730-732; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, pp. 325-326; *DSCHT*, pp. 548, 846-847.

<sup>138</sup> Marshall, *An Address*, p. 6.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18. Cf. Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church*, pp. 280-340; Hanna, *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers*, pp. 233-242.

<sup>141</sup> F. B. Smith, *The Making of the Second Reform Bill* (Melbourne University Press 1966), pp. 1-7.

<sup>142</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, April 1866.

payment for MPs.<sup>143</sup> Its agitation brought about serious tensions in society. Chartists were generally regarded by the Churches as being atheists or infidels because to many people Chartism was identical with irreligious Owenite Socialism. None of the religious denominations officially supported this movement.<sup>144</sup> Because Chartists could not gain support from orthodox religion, and some ministers who favoured Chartism were expelled from their denomination, Christian Chartist Churches were formed in Trongate, Paisley, Kilbarchan, Johnstone, Newburgh, Greenock, Stirling, St. Ninians, Dundee, Forfar, Perth, Edinburgh, Kirriemuir, Aberdeen, and the Vale of Leven. The purpose of these Churches was 'to refute the charge of infidelity' and 'to attempt to get back to the fundamentals' of Christianity, with the emphasis being laid upon the social aspect of religion.<sup>145</sup> Those who were involved in them were mainly Dissenting ministers, such as A. Browning of Tillicoultry and John Ritchie of Edinburgh.<sup>146</sup> A few members of the Established Church, such as Patrick Brewster of Paisley, were also engaged in the movement.<sup>147</sup> Although the Chartist Churches eventually failed, according to Wright they helped 'the Scottish working class to develop valuable powers of independent thought and organisation'.<sup>148</sup>

Women played a crucial part in supporting the extension of the parliamentary franchise for men.<sup>149</sup> Female chartists thought that giving their help to men was the best way of obtaining the rights

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<sup>143</sup> S. Mechie, *The Church and Scottish Social Development, 1780-1870* (London 1960), pp. 100-119. Cf. Brian Harrison, 'Teetotal Chartism', *History*, Vol 58, No. 193 (June 1973), pp. 193-217.

<sup>144</sup> L. C. Wright, *Scottish Chartism* (Edinburgh 1953), p. 97.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98; Faulkner, *Chartism and the Churches*, p. 109.

<sup>147</sup> Robert L. Bingham, 'The Glasgow Emancipation Society 1833-76' (Unpublished Glasgow M.Litt thesis 1973), pp. 259-261.

<sup>148</sup> Wright, *Scottish Chartism*, p. 104.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Jutta Schwarzkopf, *Women in the Chartist Movement* (London 1991), pp. 283-288.

of women in society. They organised organisations such as the Gorbals Female Universal Suffrage Association in Glasgow and the Forfar Female Political Union. Scottish male chartists were hostile to women's support, but their participation in social and political activities was itself significant as a foundation of the women's suffrage movement.<sup>150</sup>

There were other attempts to improve the conditions of the disadvantaged in society.<sup>151</sup> As an advocate of universal suffrage, Andrew Marshall had attempted to reconcile the privileged and underprivileged classes, and specifically the unenfranchised and the enfranchised classes.<sup>152</sup> His campaign had started by stating the moral and religious principles of enfranchisement. On 16 December 1840, at a meeting in the South College Street Church, Marshall said that 'all men are equal ... all entitled to equal rights.'<sup>153</sup> He thus criticised the view that being qualified to vote was connected with privilege, property, and education. With regard to property, he contended that 'it appears to me a serious error to connect the franchise with the possession of property, whether greater or less.'<sup>154</sup> He then attacked the view that 'men who have no property have no rights', and outlined the conditions of the unenfranchised classes, saying 'you have unveiled power before the eyes of the people, you have brought it down almost within their reach, without allowing them to touch it; and, by

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<sup>150</sup> Wright, *Scottish Chartism*, p. 100; King, *The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 9. Women also acted in the anti-slavery societies, the anti-corn law leagues, the temperance societies, and the philanthropic societies. (King, *ibid.*, pp. 9-10; Clare Taylor, *Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement* (London 1995), pp. 188-193)

<sup>151</sup> Mechie, *The Church and Scottish Social Development*, pp. 100-119.

<sup>152</sup> Andrew Marshall, *The Duty of Attempting to Reconcile The Unenfranchised With The Enfranchised Classes* (Edinburgh 1841).

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

doing so, you have driven them mad.'<sup>155</sup> Marshall argued strongly that the franchise should be extended to all regardless of property.

As far as the intellectual qualification in the voting system in Britain was concerned, Marshall contended that in a sense 'thousands of educated men are worthless ... are bound by no kind of moral restraint ... no such person can exercise the franchise, at least not as he ought.'<sup>156</sup> Marshall affirmed that 'the exercise of the franchise is a moral duty ... the essential qualification is moral principles.'<sup>157</sup> He put it in the following terms:

The moral man, the religious man, the man who fears God and keeps his commandments, the man who loves his neighbour, who loves justice, who does to others what he would have others, in similar circumstances, do to him, that is the man, and the only man, who can exercise the franchise well.<sup>158</sup>

Further, he deplored the fact that 'the religious character of the community is rapidly declining ... vast numbers of the unenfranchised classes are deserting our Churches.'<sup>159</sup> He then remarked that 'the Reform Bill came in, promising good, but bringing mischief.'<sup>160</sup> In reality, the Bill had resulted in division among people. He ended with an appeal to the Dissenters to help the unenfranchised multitudes.<sup>161</sup>

Fortunately, the movement to extend the franchise continued beyond the decline of Chartism into the Second Reform Period

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-26.

(1851-1865).<sup>162</sup> During this period, the Churches and Church members tried to secure political rights for the unenfranchised classes via proposals for electoral reform.

The Rev. Dr. James Begg (1808-1883), who had championed women's ecclesiastical suffrage at the 1843 General Assembly of the Free Church, initiated the freehold movement in Scotland.<sup>163</sup> He shared Thomas Chalmers' vision of a Godly Commonwealth achieved through an effective parochial system. At one level, Begg was an ultra-conservative who opposed union with the UP Synod because of that Church's modification of the Westminster Confession of Faith, its voluntaryism, and its liturgical innovations, such as the singing of hymns and the use of instrumental music. At another level, however, he was an advanced social reformer. The efforts of Begg led the Free Church to the setting up of the Committees on Working-Class Housing in 1858, Social Evils in 1859, and the State of Religion and Morals in 1860. In addition to this, in 1841, Begg had played a part in the formation of the Edinburgh Association for Improving the Lodging Houses of the Working Classes. In 1850, he gave his support to the National Education Association of Scotland, and he also promoted the Scottish Social Reform Association. Begg's contribution to the social concerns of the Scottish Churches was thus very significant.<sup>164</sup>

A fundamental principle for Begg was that 'religious liberty cannot be promoted without civil liberty ... the question at issue has the most direct connexion with the highest social, moral, and religious interests of the entire people.'<sup>165</sup> In like

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<sup>162</sup> Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*, p. 239.

<sup>163</sup> James Begg, *Scotland's Demand For Electoral Justice: The Forty Shilling Freehold Question Explained* (Edinburgh 1857), p. 5. The movement was to adopt the English 40s. freehold system as the property qualification for the franchise. On the Scottish Electoral System, see J. I. Brash (ed.), *Papers On Scottish Electoral Politics 1832-1854* (Edinburgh 1974).

<sup>164</sup> S. Mechie, *The Church and Scottish Social Development*, (London 1960), p. 129; Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk*, pp. 123-125; *DSCHT*, p. 68.

<sup>165</sup> Begg, *Scotland's Demand for Electoral Justice*, pp. 1-4.

manner, he stated that 'the question is totally unconnected with party politics, and must be settled solely on broad grounds of international justice.'<sup>166</sup> In line with these principles, Begg argued for the same rights of the franchise to be granted in Scotland as had long existed in the English electoral system. He pointed out that the Great Reform Bill had implemented the 40s.freehold system, in which every owner of a property held by a permanent tenure, and yielding, or capable of yielding, a rent of 40s. a year and upwards, was entitled to vote.

By contrast, in Scotland, nobody who had property worth less than 10 Pounds could be given the vote. For this reason, Begg condemned the Great Reform Bill as a deliberate fraud practised upon the Scottish people.<sup>167</sup> He concluded that:

the extension of the English system to Scotland is worthy of a determined struggle ... The friends of truth and liberty may well prepare for the coming struggle. Drunkenness and crime stalk through the land. The Sabbath, the working-man's only day of rest, is seriously threatened. Clouds of monks ... are beginning again to darken the horizon of Britain ... our rulers and nobles are blind to danger and deaf to all remonstrance. The evil must be met in Parliament as well as elsewhere. The most likely way to meet it effectually is, to give political power to those thousands of Christian peasants and true-hearted working-men who have really sense and energy enough to fight the battle ... every minister of the Gospel, every Christian man in Scotland ... are as certainly engaged in a holy and sacred work as in directly advocating the extension of the Christian Church.<sup>168</sup>

By 1866, the Churches were keener than ever to support the Second Reform Bill. The dissenting Churches in Scotland saw the extension of the franchise as a way of defending the Church from the effects of a schism between the middle and working classes.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-9.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>169</sup> Faulkner, *Chartism and the Churches*, p. 116.

When Earl Russell proposed the introduction of a new reform bill,<sup>170</sup> the editor of *The United Presbyterian Magazine* commented that the previously disfranchised classes should be added to the roll of voters. Indicating that after the passing of the First Reform Bill, the most serious problem was the voters' failure to appreciate its moral and religious character, the writer then asserted that 'the more widely political power is distributed, the more essential it is that the moral and religious character of the population should be elevated.'<sup>171</sup>

In another edition, after the opponents of the franchise had justified the disqualification of the working classes on the grounds of a lack of knowledge and character, the writer attacked their assumptions, by saying that 'we have no reason to believe that working men are more selfish, or violent, or more revolutionary than others.'<sup>172</sup> Since political power had to be based on moral and religious principles, the editor claimed that voting privileges in Parliamentary elections should be urgently extended to all the male members of the Scottish presbyterian denominations.<sup>173</sup>

It was in this atmosphere that large demonstrations at Birmingham and Glasgow were organised. At the Birmingham reform meeting, the opinion was voiced that the people could exercise a good and righteous influence upon political action, whilst it was stated at the Glasgow meeting that the moral and intellectual character of the working classes was not inferior to that of

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<sup>170</sup> F. B. Smith, *The Making of the Second Reform Bill*, pp. 50-66; Murdoch, *A History of Constitutional Reform*, pp. 201-262.

<sup>171</sup> 'The Expected Reform Bill' in *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, January 1866. Cf. *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, March and May 1852; *The Reformed Presbyterian Magazine*, December 1858.

<sup>172</sup> 'The Reform Bill' in *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, May 1866.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

others.<sup>174</sup>

In the same period, several public meetings to plead for women's parliamentary suffrage were also held and petitions were forwarded from many Scottish towns.<sup>175</sup> In 1866, a petition signed by 1500 women in England and Scotland was presented by Mr. J. S. Mill to the House of Commons.<sup>176</sup> In 1867, a further petition was signed by 13,457 men and women, supporting a Motion in favour of the enfranchisement of women.<sup>177</sup> For the Scottish Reform Bill, fresh petitions were inaugurated. In Edinburgh, 5020 persons including 29 ministers of religion, signed one petition. Separate petitions were made in different towns in Scotland, and then 55 petitions had been sent to the House of Commons.<sup>178</sup> Unfortunately, however, the motion was defeated in the division,<sup>179</sup> and in any event the Second Reform Bill had become law in 1867, leaving unchanged the exclusion of women.<sup>180</sup> The major reason why most women were ruled out from the benefits of the Second Reform Act was based on prejudice against women rather than on the property

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<sup>174</sup> 'The Birmingham Reform Meeting' in *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, October 1866. 'The Reform Demonstration At Glasgow' in *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, November 1866; *Glasgow Herald*, 17 October 1866. At that time there was also the Manchester Reform Demonstration. (*Glasgow Herald*, 25 September 1866)

<sup>175</sup> First Report of The Edinburgh Branch Of The National Society For Women's Suffrage (1868), Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University.

<sup>176</sup> J. S. Mill argued that 'the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes-the legal subordination of one sex to the other - is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrance to human improvement, and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality.' (In his *The Subjection of Women* (London 1869), Department of Special Collection, University of Glasgow)

<sup>177</sup> First Report of the ENSWS, p. 1.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>179</sup> First Report of The ENSWS, p. 4.

<sup>180</sup> 'The Reform Bill' in *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, October 1867. In England and Wales it passed in 1867 but in Scotland the Bill became a law in 1868. (*Acts of Parliament*, 1867 and 1868)

disqualification. At that time, it was felt by many that 'women are "legally disqualified" to vote for Members to serve in Parliament ... "not disqualified intellectually or morally," ... but yet not capacitated to vote.'<sup>181</sup>

Even so, these attempts to promote universal suffrage and women's suffrage in particular had not been worthless. First, although many still remained dissatisfied after the passing of the Second Reform Bill, a number of people who had been excluded from the franchise were now represented in Parliament.<sup>182</sup> Secondly, as a result of the reform movement, women's suffrage organisations were formed in Edinburgh, London and Manchester in 1867.<sup>183</sup>

In the light of the above developments, it is not implausible to suggest that the role played by Churchmen and women in support of reform was a substantial one, and that it was linked to the issue of women's political suffrage. Church leaders who advocated reform had also protested against the exclusion of women from the political process.

#### **2.4. Factors Contributing to the Churches' Support for Women's Suffrage**

We have seen how support for the cause of women's suffrage had increased among the membership of the Scottish Churches, and this support would continue to grow for half a century, from 1867 to 1918. Why did the Churches become involved in women's issues? There were several factors which led to a change of attitude by the Churches, and we will examine each of them in turn.

First of all, one underlying factor contributing to the Church's concern for women was a change in the structures of the

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<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> For the first time, the meaning of the universal suffrage was limited to men only. From time to time, however, it came to include women, too. (King, *The Scottish Women's Suffrage Movement*, pp. 9-11)

<sup>183</sup> First Report of the ENSWS, p. 1.

Church. Since the Disruption of 1843, the rivalry between the Free Church and the Established Church had affected the religious well-being of the country. Antagonism and indifference towards religion grew and the number of non-Church-goers increased.<sup>184</sup> To meet this problem, moves towards reunion took place towards the end of the nineteenth century. These initiatives led to the Union of 1900 between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church. Although it brought about the Free Church Crisis which led to 150 Highland Congregations remaining outside of the Union, it stimulated new moves towards unity within both the United Free Church and the Established Church.<sup>185</sup>

Looking beyond the presbyterian denominations, the Baptist Union of Scotland came into being in 1869.<sup>186</sup> Further, in 1896, the Congregational Union of Scotland joined with the Evangelical Union which advocated an Arminian theology.<sup>187</sup> In addition, the Episcopal Church grew rapidly with a membership of 160,000 by 1900.<sup>188</sup> The most rapid growth, that of the Roman Catholic Church, was caused by Irish immigration, mostly to the central industrial areas. By 1901, Roman Catholics totalled 446,400 or 10 percent of the population.<sup>189</sup>

Meanwhile, due to rivalry between religious denominations, the

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<sup>184</sup> D. J. Withrington, 'Non-Church-Going, Church Organisation and "Crisis in the Church",' *RSCHS*, Vol XXIV part 2 (1991), pp. 213-222.

<sup>185</sup> Augustus Muir, *John White* (London 1958), pp. 83-101; Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 56; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, p. 399.

<sup>186</sup> D. W. Bebbington (ed.), *The Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow 1988), pp.57-59; D. B. Murray, *The First Hundred Years: The Baptist Union of Scotland* (Dundee 1969), pp.35-49.

<sup>187</sup> Harry Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow 1960), p. 181.

<sup>188</sup> F. Goldie, *Episcopal Church in Scotland* (Glasgow 1960), p. 181.

<sup>189</sup> Ferguson, *Scotland*, pp. 333-334; James Darragh, 'The Catholic Population of Scotland Since The Year 1680,' in *The Innes Review*, Vol IV (1953), pp. 49-58.

Scottish Churches competed with each other to seek new members and sought ways to keep existing members loyal to their own denomination.<sup>190</sup> In this context, female members within the Churches began to be carefully considered, especially in relation to their spiritual and civil rights.<sup>191</sup> As outlined earlier, the Secession Churches and the Free Church had given equal rights to men and women in the election of ministers and office-bearers. The Churches also began to form women's organisations. The results were the founding of the CS Woman's Guild in 1887, the Congregational Women's Christian Union in 1898, the Women's Home Mission of the UFC in 1901, and the Women's Auxiliary of the Baptist Union of Scotland in 1909.<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, in the Established Church, the Order of Deaconesses was formed in 1887 and the Parish Sisters were constituted in 1893, while the United Free Church instituted Church Sisters in 1915.<sup>193</sup>

Secondly, the most significant factor affecting the Church's outlook on the women's issue was theological change. This originated largely from John McLeod Campbell who emphasised the incarnation and the sonship of Christ in relation to the atonement, for he rejected the traditional interpretations of the Calvinist doctrines of predestination and election.<sup>194</sup> His stress

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<sup>190</sup> Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*, pp. 195-208.

<sup>191</sup> Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 263-269; Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 142, 195.

<sup>192</sup> Arthur Gordon, *The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris* (London 1912), pp. 351-372; Arthur H. Dunnett, *The Church In Changing Scotland*, (Edinburgh n.d.), pp. 127-130; Mamie Magnusson, *Out of Silence: Church of Scotland Woman's Guild 1887-1987* (Edinburgh 1987), p. 55; Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 141-142; D. B. Murray, *The First 100 Years*, p. 78; *DSCHT*, pp. 884-885.

<sup>193</sup> See chapter VI.

<sup>194</sup> T. B. W. Niven, *The Church of Scotland: The Church from The Revolution to The Present Time* (London n.d.), pp. 768-773; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, pp. 331-333, 360, 381; Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk*, pp. 62-63; John Macleod, *Scottish Theology* (Edinburgh 1974), pp. 257-259; James C. Goodloe IV, 'John McLeod Campbell: Redeeming the Past by Reproducing the  
(continued ...)

upon the humanity of Christ led to a new concern for society as a whole. Moreover, the influence of Morisonian theology had not been insignificant. This underlined universal atonement, contrary to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and led to the formation of the Evangelical Union in 1843.<sup>195</sup> The Union's emphasis on the universal love of God made it easier for Morisonian members to support women's suffrage. Among the members of the Evangelical Union involved in these issues were Rev. A. M. Fairbairn of Aberdeen and Rev. Dr. Robert Craig of Edinburgh.<sup>196</sup>

Furthermore, the challenge of biblical and historical criticism accelerated these developments. The trial of W. Robertson Smith, which culminated in 1881 in Smith's removal from the Chair of Oriental languages and Old Testament exegesis at the Aberdeen Free Church College, failed to halt the growing influence of biblical criticism.<sup>197</sup> The new biblical scholarship had far-reaching consequences, particularly in relation to women's issues. This was due partly to several Old Testament scholars, such as George Adam Smith, who rediscovered the emphasis of the Hebrew prophets on individual and communal justice and righteousness, and to New Testament specialists such as A. B. Bruce, who emphasised Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God as a Kingdom of love, peace, righteousness, and justice.<sup>198</sup> The influence of the new theological thought, according to D. C. Smith, led most Christians to see that 'Christianity was a

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(continued ...)

Atonement', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 45 (1992), pp. 185-208; Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh 1996), pp. 287-317.

<sup>195</sup> Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 119-134.

<sup>196</sup> See chapters III (Fairbairn) and VI (Craig)

<sup>197</sup> G. F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte* (London 1923), pp. 201-227; P. Carnegie Simson, *The Life of Principal Rainy* (London 1909), Vol I, pp. 306-356; Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk*, pp. 37-52.

<sup>198</sup> Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, pp. 136-137; Smith, *Passive obedience and prophetic protest*, pp. 252-255. For G. A. Smith, see chapter IV.

religion of obedience to God in the world and not a religion of escape from it,' and that 'the Gospel was social as well as personal and had definite implications for the corporate life of society.'<sup>199</sup> For instance, according to Sir Herbert Grierson, a member of Queen's Cross Church in Aberdeen, George Adam Smith's exposition of Isaiah was 'for many of us the beginning of an awakening to problems of individual and social responsibility'.<sup>200</sup> In practice, this rediscovery of biblical teaching meant that Scottish Churchmen and women were encouraged to become involved in the female suffrage movement, as it was regarded as one of the most serious problems facing society.

The changes in theology produced diversity in the outlook of Scottish ministers. With the waning of dogmatic Calvinism in the Scottish Presbyterian Churches, Conservative Evangelicals who clung to the old orthodoxy were reduced in numbers, whereas Broad or Liberal Evangelicals, who both accepted modern thought and still adhered to evangelical truth, increased.<sup>201</sup> New theological tendencies also affected the non-presbyterian Churches in Scotland. The Scottish Episcopal Church and the Baptist Church provided some scope for moderate Evangelicals, while the Roman Catholic Church did not.<sup>202</sup> The Congregational Churches responded to theological change by allowing a wide freedom in doctrine.<sup>203</sup>

Liberal Evangelicals represented the prevalent trend in Scottish theology and played a prominent role in the suffrage movement. A typical figure was the Rev. James Barr. Becoming Secretary of the Home Board of the United Free Church in 1920, Barr remained out of the Union of 1929 and led the minority of

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<sup>199</sup> Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest*, p. 256.

<sup>200</sup> L. A. Smith, *George Adam Smith* (London 1943), p. 22. Cf. G. A. Smith, *The Book of Isaiah* (London 1990), Vol II, pp. 214-236.

<sup>201</sup> Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, pp. 226-238; D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London 1989), pp. 184-186.

<sup>202</sup> Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 242.

<sup>203</sup> Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 138-141.

the UF Church. As a Labour MP for Motherwell and Wishaw (1924-31), and Coatbridge and Airdrie (1935-45), he laboured to promote several contentious pieces of legislation, such as those on the Government of Scotland, the abolition of Capital Punishment, Temperance, Pacifism, Betting, Sabbath Rest, Education, and Housing.<sup>204</sup> Added to all this, James Barr also played a crucial part in the women's suffrage movement in Scotland as a member of the GWSAWS and the SCLWS General Council.<sup>205</sup> While he objected to the use of force by the suffragettes,<sup>206</sup> Barr supported their case in the UF presbytery of Glasgow when requested to do so by the constitutional suffrage organisation.<sup>207</sup> Barr's involvement had its roots in his evangelistic concern.

As a result of the prevalent theological tendencies, the United Presbyterian Church issued the Declaratory Act in 1879 which modified its adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Free Church followed suit in 1892.<sup>208</sup> In a different way, the subscription of ministers of the Church of Scotland to the Confession was altered by the Churches (Scotland) Act of Parliament of 1905 followed by an Act of the General Assembly in 1910.<sup>209</sup> According to Donald Smith, the rediscovery of biblical insights on several current issues and the modification of the Confession, paved the way for a renewed emphasis on the christological Calvinism which had been prominent in the

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<sup>204</sup> James Barr, *Lang Syne* (Glasgow 1948), pp. 3-21, 87-113, 124-139; Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 284-292; *FUFCS*, p. 213; *DSCHT*, p. 63.

<sup>205</sup> Annual Report of the Glasgow Society for Women's Suffrage (1915), Fawcett Library; Report of the SCLWS, A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who* (London 1913), p. 104.

<sup>206</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 22 April 1912.

<sup>207</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Glasgow, SRA, CH3/146/471-1, 10 February 1914.

<sup>208</sup> Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, p. 385.

Reformation era.<sup>210</sup>

The changes in both the structures of the Church and its theology gave rise to liturgical innovations, which were initiated by the Established Church in attempting to restore the ground lost through the Disruption. The movement to reform worship was seen in the formation of the Church Service Society in 1865 to study the liturgies of the Christian Church. Later, in 1892, the High Churchmen in the Society formed the Scottish Church Society to promote high Church or 'Scoto-Catholic principles.'<sup>211</sup> Liturgical reforms, such as the introduction of organs and the use of hymn books, also spread to the other presbyterian denominations in Scotland. Societies in these Churches were the UP Devotional Service Association formed in 1882, the FC Public Worship Association formed in 1891, and the UF Church Worship Association formed in 1900.<sup>212</sup>

Similarly, the non-Presbyterian Churches attempted to reform worship. The Episcopal Church published its own hymn book, 'Common Praise, in 1859, while the Roman Catholic Church slowly began to adopt hymns. The Baptists, the Congregationalists, and the Evangelical Union had already welcomed the use of hymns.<sup>213</sup>

Many of the clergy who supported women's suffrage also played an important role in liturgical innovations. Of those who were engaged in this, Dr. Pearson M'Adam Muir and John Hunter should

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<sup>210</sup> Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest*, p. 253.

<sup>211</sup> Niven, *The Church of Scotland*, pp. 847-852; Fleming (1933), *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 235; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, p. 85; D. Forrester and D. M. Murray (eds.), *Studies In The History of Worship In Scotland* (2nd. rev. ed. Edinburgh 1996), pp. 79-85; D. M. Murray, 'The Scottish Church Society, 1892-1914: A Study of the High Church Movement in the Church of Scotland,' (Unpublished Cambridge Ph.D thesis 1975), p. 150; D. M. Murray, 'Doctrine and Worship,' in *Liturgical Review*, Vol III (May 1977), p. 30; W. D. Maxwell, *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland* (Glasgow 1955), pp. 156-185.

<sup>212</sup> Forrester and Murray, *Studies in the History of Worship*, p. 88.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-110, 113-128; Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 202; Bebbington, *The Baptists in Scotland*, p. 57; Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 152-161.

be mentioned here. The minister of Glasgow Cathedral,<sup>214</sup> Muir worked for the worship reform movement on behalf of the Church Service Society as Acting Secretary and Convener of the Editorial Committee.<sup>215</sup> Muir also joined the Scottish Christian Social Union as a member of the National Executive and as Chairman of the Glasgow Branch, and laboured to improve religious and social well-being in the large industrial towns.<sup>216</sup> He also helped to promote women's suffrage as a religious question. A Vice-President of both the GWSAWS and the SCLWS, he desired that a measure of women's enfranchisement be speedily granted in view of its importance for the welfare of society.<sup>217</sup>

John Hunter wished to link public worship to other human concerns. He thought that by improving worship 'Churches would best meet and adjust themselves to modern conditions and needs,' and also that this spirit would penetrate in the largest and most natural way all the varied relations of life, and rule the entire interest and action of a human being.'<sup>218</sup> He also thought that Christian democracy would be promoted if worship was seen as being carried out by people of the Church and not just the clergy.<sup>219</sup> In this respect, Hunter predicted that 'the twentieth century is going to be the woman's century.'<sup>220</sup>

In addition, particular attention should be paid to one of the objects of the Scottish Church Society, which illustrates the

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<sup>214</sup> John Henderson, *Dr. M'Adam Muir's Ministry* (Glasgow 1925), p. 25.

<sup>215</sup> John Kerr, *The Renaissance of Worship* (Edinburgh 1909), pp. 186, 189.

<sup>216</sup> Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>217</sup> *The Common Cause*, 22 November 1912; Annual Report of the Glasgow Society for Women's Suffrage (1915), Fawcett Library; Report of the SCLWS (1913).

<sup>218</sup> 'Dr. Hunter on Public Worship,' in *The Scottish Congregational Year-Book For 1895-96* (Edinburgh 1896), pp. 2-3.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6; L. S. Hunter, *John Hunter, A Life* (London 1921), pp. 211-213.

<sup>220</sup> Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, p. 195.

relationship between the liturgical movement and contemporary issues. The Scottish Church Society encouraged the examination of social problems as one of its special objects.<sup>221</sup> Its attitude to such issues had a theological basis 'in the extension of the incarnation, and a corresponding wish to link the Church to the humanity of Christ', rather than 'to the Spirit apart from Christ'.<sup>222</sup> On the basis of Christian justice and brotherhood stemming from the incarnation, the Society intended to promote concern over several current issues: education, poverty, sabbath observance, and temperance.<sup>223</sup> Although the Society had not attracted many members, it attempted to understand the reform of worship in a wider context, and one which embraced social concerns.

Finally, the other significant factor promoting ecclesiastical support for women's enfranchisement was the increasing concern of the Churches for social issues.<sup>224</sup> In order to examine social problems from a religious perspective, the major Presbyterian Churches - the UP, FC, CS, and later the UFC - set up special committees. Further, some enlightened clergymen and other Church members joined the Scottish Council for Women's Trades. Some prominent clerics eventually founded the Scottish Christian Social Union. In practice, many Church leaders, such as George Adam Smith, R. J. Drummond, David Watson and John Glasse, who played a crucial role in these developments, began with a deep sense of sympathy towards women's issues, and then came to see the granting of the franchise to women as the principal means of

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<sup>221</sup> D. M. Murray, 'The Scottish Church Society', p. 2.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183-188. Cf. H. J. Wotherspoon, *James Cooper: A Memoir* (London 1926), pp. 239-242, 266.

<sup>224</sup> Hill, *British Economic and Social History*, p. 103; Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest*, p. 189. See also M. B. MacGregor, *Towards Scotland's Social Good* (Glasgow n.d.), pp. 46-93; Eben Turner, *The Story of Pilrig Church* (Edinburgh 1913), pp. 15-29.

tackling the problems of women in a general sense.<sup>225</sup> Due to the importance of such organisations in regard to women's issues, they will each be mentioned here in turn.

Alarmed by the increase in ungodliness and infidelity amongst the Scottish people, the Churches sought to respond by setting up special committees to consider several issues: Working Class Housing, Temperance, Marriage and Morality, Prostitution and Venereal Disease under the Contagious Diseases Acts, the White Slave Trade, and the Affinity Law relating to Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister.<sup>226</sup> For example, the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869 compelled women who were infected to be medically examined with greater frequency. The Acts were repudiated by the Churches, especially by the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church, on the grounds that 'it licensed sin and even encouraged it by removing dangers from the sinner's path.'<sup>227</sup> Although the Church of Scotland formed the Life and Work Committee in 1870, the Established Church hesitated in many instances to show its support for women's issues.<sup>228</sup> In the twentieth century, however, the Auld Kirk speedily moved to become involved in socio-economic issues by establishing the Social Work Committee in 1904, which was led by David Watson and Lord Polwarth. In the UF Church, the Social Problems Committee was formed in 1911 under the leadership of the Rev. R. J. Drummond. It sought to provide a critique of the existing order of society.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> L. A. Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 68.

<sup>226</sup> Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk*, pp. 119-122; Boyd, *Scottish Church attitudes to Sex, Marriage, and the Family*, pp. 28, 41, 61, 148, 159, 161, 212, 233, 276-283.

<sup>227</sup> Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes*, pp. 194-195.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>229</sup> S. J. Brown, 'The Social Vision of Scottish Presbyterianism and the Union of 1929,' *RSCHS*, Vol XXIV part 1 (1990), p. 82; R. J. Drummond, *Lest We Forget* (London 1951), pp. 93-99; Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk*, pp. 150-153; Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 57; Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic* (continued ...)

Apart from the major Presbyterian Churches, other denominations in Scotland also adopted important positions concerning the religious well-being of the nation. Although the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church moved slowly,<sup>230</sup> the Congregationalists and the Baptists were crusaders from the start for social and economic reforms, supporting the temperance and labour movements.<sup>231</sup> A noteworthy figure among them was John Hunter, who supported the Independent Labour Party led by Keir Hardie, and sometimes invited him as a speaker to his Church.<sup>232</sup> Hunter held that the Church must exert 'herself to win the workers of the world, or close her doors.'<sup>233</sup>

In the meantime, some clergymen and lay persons concerned with social and economic issues joined the Scottish Council for Women's Trades, established in 1895, whose aims were 'to improve the industrial conditions of women and children in Scotland, and to furnish statistics and other exact information concerning these conditions, together with the Factory and other laws which regulate them.'<sup>234</sup> From the very beginning, under the leadership

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(continued ...)

*Protest*, pp. 333-340. See also chapters IV (D. Watson) and VI (R. J. Drummond).

<sup>230</sup> Goldie, *Episcopal Church*, p. 132. In an exceptional case, John Wheatley (1869-1930) as a member of the Scottish Catholic Church played a significant role in the labour movement in the West of Scotland. (Ian S. Wood, 'John Wheatley, The Irish, and The Labour Movement In Scotland,' in *Innes Review*, Vol. 31 (1980), pp. 71-83 and *John Wheatley* (Manchester 1990), pp. 190-200) The Catholic Church also contributed to promote the cause of Temperance. (N. D. Denny, 'Temperance and the Scottish Churches, 1870-1914,' *RSCHS*, Vol XXIII part 2 (1988), p. 238)

<sup>231</sup> Bebbington, *The Baptists in Scotland*, pp. 211-214; Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 127, 193-233; *The Scottish Congregational Year Book For 1892-1893* (Edinburgh 1893), pp. 135-137.

<sup>232</sup> William Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie* (London 1921), pp. 376-378; W. R. Inge, *The Post Victorians* (London 1933), pp. 225-240.

<sup>233</sup> Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, p. 141.

<sup>234</sup> Annual Report of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades (1904-1905), SRA.

of Mrs Lindsay, wife of Rev. Professor T. M. Lindsay of Glasgow, the Council contributed considerably to promoting the conditions of women.<sup>235</sup> Later, the contributions of Rev. Professor George Adam Smith, Chairman of its Executive Committee (1901-1939),<sup>236</sup> and of Miss Irwin, daughter of a Broughty Ferry Captain and its secretary (1895-1939),<sup>237</sup> led to the Council being more active than ever before.<sup>238</sup> In the course of its development, the Council cooperated with the other organisations relating directly to women and their concerns: the Union of Women Workers, the Christian Social Union, the Women's Suffrage Associations, and the Women's Co-operative Guild of Scotland.<sup>239</sup>

The activities of the Council had a threefold result. First, many prominent Clergymen, such as Rev. Donald MacLeod of Edinburgh, Rev. John Hunter, Rev. John Glasse of Edinburgh, and Provost Deane of Glasgow, recognised the problems of women and sought ways to improve their conditions. Secondly, the Council's concerns were naturally linked to the women's suffrage issue, although some members such as Professors Cooper and Reid of Glasgow, were strongly opposed to such involvement, not because they were against women's suffrage but because of the militant tactics of the suffragettes.<sup>240</sup> Thirdly, the involvement of Rev. David Watson in its work became one of the most crucial factors

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<sup>235</sup> Smith, George Adam Smith, p. 68. Cf. *"We Twa": Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen* (Glasgow 1925), pp. 271, 275.

<sup>236</sup> Annual Report of the SCWT 1901-1902, SRA.

<sup>237</sup> Annual Report of the SCWT 1895-1896, SRA; 'Women in the Leadership of the Scottish Trades Union Congress 1897-1970,' in *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, No 7 (July 1973), pp. 3-12; S. Lewenhan, *Women of Trade Unions*, (E. Benn 1977), pp. 101-113; S. Livingston, *Bonnie Fechtors: Women in Scotland 1900-1950* (Motherwell 1994), pp. 23-24; Eleanor Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland 1850-1914* (Oxford 1991), pp. 215-218.

<sup>238</sup> Smith, George Adam Smith, p. 68; J. Melling, *Rent Strikes: Peoples Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916* (Edinburgh 1983), p. 2.

<sup>239</sup> Annual Report of the SCWT 1904-1905, SRA.

<sup>240</sup> See chapter IV.

leading to the setting up of the Scottish Christian Social Union.<sup>241</sup> He was a major influence on this organisation, along with Dr. J. B. Paton, Principal of Nottingham Congregational College, and chairman of the Christian Social Union in England.<sup>242</sup>

Founded in 1901 by the efforts of David Watson, the Scottish Christian Social Union provided another example of the Churches' social concern being directed towards women's issues.<sup>243</sup> The purpose of the Union was to ameliorate the social and economic situation in the light of the claims of the Christian gospel. The Union organised several public meetings to deal with controversial issues of the day; it ran Committees, such as the one for Similar Work for Women and Girls which attempted to promote the moral and social welfare of women and girls in industrial areas, and it was associated with various social and political clubs. Membership was open to any member of a Christian Church who approved of the objects of the Union and was elected by their Local Branch Executive.<sup>244</sup>

But the Union was not a radical social movement, nor did it attain the degree of influence which its founders had hoped. Nonetheless, the formation and development of the Union had three significant consequences. First, it awakened the social conscience of the Churches, especially that of the Established Church and the United Free Church. Secondly, its activities paved the way for the work of the CS Social Work Committee and the UFC Social Problems Committee.<sup>245</sup> Thirdly, although there was a serious division of opinion within the Union particularly on women's suffrage, many members' support for change peaked during

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<sup>241</sup> David Watson, *Chords of Memory* (Edinburgh 1936), pp. 85-88.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.88-89; Hunter, *John Hunter*, pp. 10-16; Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest*, pp. 329-333.

<sup>243</sup> Watson, *Chords of Memory*, pp. 89-97; *The Scottish Christian Social Union and How It Came To Be Formed* (Glasgow 1901), p. 15.

<sup>244</sup> Annual Report of the Scottish Christian Social Union 1909-1910, SRA.

<sup>245</sup> Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest*, p. 333.

the period of the formation of the SCLWS and the religious campaign of the NUWSS and the WSPU.<sup>246</sup>

Amongst those members of the Union who were in the forefront of the women's suffrage movement, a distinctive contribution was made by Dr. James Wilson Harper, UFC minister of Alloa Chalmers.<sup>247</sup> A member of the Union's National Executive Committee, Harper attempted to solve some of the social and economic problems of the people, and tried to apply the principles of Christianity to the conditions of political and social life in what he considered to be a de-Christianised community.<sup>248</sup> For him, love, justice, and goodness as principles of the Divine Kingdom were the essential factors in the promotion of a better society.<sup>249</sup> For these reasons, Harper favoured helping the women's suffrage movement. He insisted that it was not only a woman's duty to add to the strength of the State and its usefulness, but also her right to exercise the vote.<sup>250</sup>

As a result of these developments in theology and social concern, many in the Churches sought to be involved in the women's suffrage movement and thus gave it a religious dimension.

## **2.5. Conclusion: the Religious Aspect of Women's Political Suffrage**

We have noted that several Scottish Churches were pioneers in terms of women's rights since they had given the right to vote in the selection of office-bearers to female members. Similarly, some Churchmen and Churchwomen were concerned with the needs of the underprivileged classes, and women were included in that concern.

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<sup>246</sup> See chapter VI.

<sup>247</sup> *FUFCS*, p. 303.

<sup>248</sup> Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>249</sup> J. Wilson Harper, *Education and Social Life* (London 1907), pp. 286-308.

<sup>250</sup> *Alloa Advertiser*, 11 May 1912.

Factors contributing to the Churches' support for women's suffrage have also been investigated. Rivalry between religious denominations meant that the Churches sought ways to attract new members and to keep existing members loyal, and so an attempt was made to promote the conditions of women within the Church and within society. But the most significant factor was that of theological change. The rise of Liberal Evangelicalism, which stressed the humanity of Jesus as well as his divinity, marked a turning point in relation to the Churches' social concern and its attitude towards women. Finally, the involvement of Church members in various organisations, such as the Scottish Council for Women's Trades, in turn made it easier for them to support women's suffrage.

After the failure of a motion raised by J. S. Mill in support of women's political enfranchisement in 1867, the long journey of women towards the franchise had been started. Many difficulties and obstacles existed since women were often perceived as lacking education, property, and character. This perception had to be tackled. It had to be shown that women were as worthy of the vote as men. An edition of *The United Presbyterian Magazine* put it thus:

Of the necessity of promoting education, sobriety, and good conduct among the electors, we trust all parties will be convinced. The character of the voters is of prime importance. With a well-educated and God-fearing constituency, we may safely anticipate a bright career for our country.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> 'The Reform Bill' in *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, September 1867.

### CHAPTER III 'THE SPIRITUAL FRANCHISE': THE FAILURE OF WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT AND THE CHURCHES, 1867-1903

#### 3.1. Introduction: were the Churches and Religious Leaders a hindrance to the Women's Suffrage Movement?

As noted in the previous chapter, the Scottish Churches and their members began to move towards promoting the role of women and their status within both Church and society. Christians had a particular interest in the issue of women's political suffrage, and it might have been thought that the support of the Churches could be assumed.

Yet Lady Frances Balfour, the daughter of the 8th Duke of Argyll and an active leader in the movement, questioned the role of the Churches in regard to the issue of women's parliamentary franchise.<sup>1</sup> Her judgement was based on a booklet published in 1895 entitled *Some Supporters of the Women's Suffrage*, which was issued by the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage. Only three Scottish presbyterian clergymen were named in the booklet: John Marshall Lang, Cameron Lees, (CS) and Thomas Martin Lindsay (FC).<sup>2</sup> On the basis of this, Frances Balfour insisted that the Church and its leaders 'did its best to alienate all thinking women from organised Christianity'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, several recent historians have been sympathetic to

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<sup>1</sup> A scholar called her 'a staunch Churchwoman and an ardent Liberal'. (L. P. Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies 1897-1914* (New York 1982), p. 11) Her work for enfranchising women started in the 1880s. She was involved in several suffrage organizations: the NUWSS executive committee, President of the London Society for Women's Suffrage, and President of the SCLWS. (Lady Frances Balfour, *Ne Obliviscaris Dinna Forget* (London 1930), Vol 2, pp. 112-176; A. J. R (ed.), *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who* (London 1913), pp. 103-105 in National Library of Scotland and Fawcett Library; *Free Church Suffrage Times*, December 1913)

<sup>2</sup> Balfour, *Ne Obliviscaris*, pp. 131-133; *Glasgow Herald*, 27 April 1895.

<sup>3</sup> Balfour, *Ne Obliviscaris*, p. 133.

Frances Balfour's view.<sup>4</sup>

The view that the Churches were a hindrance to the suffrage movement, however, would not seem to be entirely accurate, and this chapter will reconsider the evidence. Initially, we will examine the role of the Churches and their members in the movement to support Jacob Bright's Bill (1870-1873) which sought to remove women's 'political disabilities'. The movements for extending parliamentary franchise to women will also be dealt with in relation to W. Woodall's Amendment to the Reform Bill (1884), and we will explore to what extent Church leaders were involved.

### **3.2. The Removal of Women's Political Disabilities and the Churches**

#### 3.2.1. Introductory Remarks: the Emergence of the Bill

Since the Second Reform Bill of 1867 had become law, the number of parliamentary electors in the United Kingdom had increased from 1,364,000 in 1866 to 2,445,000 in 1869.<sup>5</sup> A number of previously unenfranchised social groups could now be represented in parliament,<sup>6</sup> but women remained excluded. Despite this unfavourable situation, women campaigners had resolved to continue their work. As noted in chapter I, three national suffrage organisations were founded in London, Manchester, and Edinburgh in 1867. These societies united to form the National Society for Women's Suffrage.<sup>7</sup> In 1871, however, it split in two on account of Josephine Butler's campaign against the Contagious

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<sup>4</sup> See chapter I.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics 1867-1939* (Oxford 1982), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> W. A. Hayes, *The Background and Passage of The Third Reform Act* (London 1982), pp. 12-35.

<sup>7</sup> C. Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London 1967), pp. 54-55. Cf. Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage*, p. 3.

Diseases Acts. The London National Society remained aloof from the other societies, and the Central Committee of the National Society, which favoured Josephine Butler's campaign, cooperated with the others.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the female suffragists were invited to take part in supporting a Bill for the enfranchisement of women, whenever it might be introduced in Parliament.<sup>9</sup>

Three Liberal Members of Parliament, Mr. Jacob Bright, Sir Charles Dilke, and Mr. Eastwick, presented a Bill for 'the Removal of the Political Disabilities of Women', on 16 February 1870.<sup>10</sup> The Liberal party was strong in Scotland due partly to the support of the Free Church and the UP Church.<sup>11</sup> The Churches' political tendencies were in many cases reflected in the amount of support given to the women's suffrage campaign.

In the text of the Bill, Mr. Bright argued that females should be registered as voters and should be able to vote in the same elections as men. When the Bill was presented for its Second Reading on 4 May 1870, it was Bright who moved it, presenting an argument on two grounds, those of equality and practical

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<sup>8</sup> Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> First Report of the Edinburgh Branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, pp. 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> Report of Proceedings at Public Meeting (17 January 1870) of the ENSWS, Fawcett Library; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 March 1870. See Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 211.

<sup>11</sup> The result of the voting in the four Scottish Universities in 1868:

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Denomination	Conservative	Liberal
Established Church	1,221	67
Free Church	33	607
United Presbyterian	1	474
Episcopalians	78	4
Not classified	35	360
Total	1,368	1,512

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Source: G. W. T. Omond, *The Lord Advocates of Scotland* (London 1914), p. 245 n. See also James G. Kellas, 'The Liberal Party and the Scottish Church Disestablishment Crisis', *The English Historical Review*, Vol LXXIX (1964), p. 31.

necessity.<sup>12</sup>

With regard to equality, Bright stressed the need for an equal qualification in relation to property.<sup>13</sup> At that time, a number of women had already achieved the necessary level, and it was therefore expected that if the Bill should become law, women would have votes both in the boroughs and in the counties. In this regard, particular attention was paid to public service, for many women workers also laboured in the areas of domestic service, agriculture, and clothing and textile industry. The moral and intellectual equality of women and men was also asserted.<sup>14</sup>

Bright also pointed to the anomalies of the voting system in the country. For example, the passing of the Municipal Franchise Bill had already allowed many women to vote at the municipal level.<sup>15</sup> Subsequently, women had used the vote in local matters, for example, in parish elections. However, there was a major inconsistency. A woman owning property might have over six votes in local matters but absolutely none at the national level. Meanwhile, her male servant had only one vote but this one vote was for parliamentary elections.<sup>16</sup> Bright thus contended that the bill should be passed into law. At the end of his speech, he reminded the members of Parliament that the suffrage movement had spread throughout the Kingdom.<sup>17</sup>

Although there were still opponents of the Bill, it passed its

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<sup>12</sup> *Hansard*, Vol CCI, pp. 194.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198. If the Bill became law, in boroughs female householders and ratepayers would have votes for the MPs. In counties householders whose their houses were rated at 12 pounds and upwards and a woman of property would be enfranchised.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 205-206. See also Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 178.

<sup>16</sup> *Hansard*, Vol CCI, p. 206.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

second reading with a majority of 33.<sup>18</sup> In subsequent years, from 1870 to 1873, the Bill failed to secure a majority, but during that period, women's suffrage organisations held public meetings and full reports of the meetings were circulated in pamphlet form. The organisations delivered a petition demanding the political franchise of women, and petitions from Town Councils and other public bodies were also sent to Parliament, to the Prime Minister, Ministers, and MPs.<sup>19</sup>

Before going further, we have to ask how Church leaders responded to these events, which denominations provided the most support, and why some clergymen took part in the women's suffrage movement in relation to the Bill.

### 3.2.2. 'Civil and Religious Liberty': Professor Calderwood and Dr. Wallace on Women's Rights

Ahead of the Bill's first presentation before Parliament, several meetings were held in England and Scotland to stimulate public support.<sup>20</sup> In Scotland, on the 17th January 1870, the first public gathering in favour of women's suffrage took place in Queen Street Hall in Edinburgh, and was 'a large and enthusiastic one'.<sup>21</sup> On the platform were many prominent figures, including the Rev. Professor Henry Calderwood and the Rev. Dr. Robert Wallace who represented the Churches.

Professor Calderwood was an unusual figure in relation to women's issues. A staunch unionist in politics, Calderwood was a United Presbyterian minister and Professor of Moral Philosophy

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210-213.

<sup>19</sup> Annual Report for the year ending 12th January 1871 of the ENSWS in *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 February 1871.

<sup>20</sup> The Birmingham meeting had been held in advance of the Scottish women's suffrage meeting to be held in Edinburgh. (*The Scotsman*, 14 January 1870)

<sup>21</sup> *Women's Suffrage: Public Meeting in Edinburgh*, (Edinburgh 1870) in Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 March 1870; *The Scotsman*, 18 January 1870.

at Edinburgh University.<sup>22</sup> He was later editor of the *United Presbyterian Magazine* from 1886 to 1890 and then a member of its editorial board from 1891 to 1895.<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of the meeting, Calderwood read the annual report of the ENSWS. He then explained the reasons for enfranchising women, in terms of both the claim of justice and to promote national well-being.<sup>24</sup> In his view, the present voting system in Britain was unjust. For instance, the right to vote was granted on a household qualification, but if the house was occupied by a woman, the right was withdrawn. There was 'a breach in the application of a principle' and it was entirely unfair.<sup>25</sup> Repudiating gender discrimination in political affairs,<sup>26</sup> Calderwood expected that if a female householder had the vote, the national well-being would be improved.

His argument on the basis of justice was in line with his published writings. In an article on 'The Contribution of the United Presbyterian Church to Social and National Progress', Calderwood underlined the fundamental rights of all people. These rights were essential to true civil freedom and a responsible life. There was also a relationship, in his view, between civil liberty and religious freedom.<sup>27</sup> He argued that the true harmonising power in society was 'to be found in the spirit which cares for the few and the feeble, as having rights equal to those of the multitude' and the privileged classes. At all events, he saw 'the claims of Justice' as 'effective security against the most serious dangers' to society.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Small, Vol II, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, 1886 to 1896.

<sup>24</sup> *Women's Suffrage: Public Meeting In Edinburgh*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Memorial of the Jubilee Synod of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh 1897), pp. 398-104.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 313-314.

Another noted clergyman at this meeting was the Rev. Dr. Robert Wallace, at that time CS minister of Old Greyfriars.<sup>29</sup> He was also Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Edinburgh University from 1873 to 1876. After 1876, Wallace became editor of the *Scotsman* until 1880. Finally, he was elected as a radical MP. In seconding Professor Lyon Playfair's resolution in favour of women's political franchise, Wallace defined the women's cause as 'a general social question'.<sup>30</sup> He held that 'a Churchman might say something appropriate on such an occasion.'<sup>31</sup> Unusually, he regarded the belief in the absolute ineligibility of women for public life as having 'the nature of a heresy'.<sup>32</sup> With his characteristic sarcasm, Wallace said that he felt 'an uncommon satisfaction in any opportunity' to protest against any form of heresy or unsoundness.<sup>33</sup> In agreement with Calderwood, he insisted on the equality of the sexes because man was traditionally regarded as 'the stronger creature'.<sup>34</sup> He maintained the usefulness and helpfulness of women, and while women could see an advantage in a 'beneficial social arrangement', their potential power was ignored by the other sex.<sup>35</sup> In a more radical step, Wallace asked: 'If women were allowed to exercise political privileges, where was the matter to stop? Why not permit them to enter Parliament itself?'<sup>36</sup> In conclusion, he claimed that the social structure should be 'so fashioned that men and women should be allowed to shake

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<sup>29</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 March 1870; J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London 1960), p. 391.

<sup>30</sup> *The Scotsman*, 18 January 1870.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*; *Women's Suffrage: Public Meeting in Edinburgh*, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Women's Suffrage*, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *The Scotsman*, 18 January 1870.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

themselves into their right places and relationships'.<sup>37</sup>

This meeting eventually passed two influential resolutions which were moved by Mr. Jacob Bright and Professor Playfair in favour of women's suffrage. A significant feature of the meeting was that two prominent clergymen had declared the cause of women's suffrage to be 'the claim of justice' and 'a general social question', grounded upon civil and religious liberty.

### 3.2.3. 'The Charter of her Liberation throughout Christendom': Glasgow Divines and Miss Taylor's Mission for Women's Suffrage

After Bright's Bill passed at its Second Reading in 1870, the Glasgow gathering in support of the movement for 'the removal of women's disenfranchisement' was typical of several similar events throughout Scotland. On 21 December 1870, this occasion took place in the Corporation Galleries,<sup>38</sup> and it was supported by many prominent Churchmen, including Professor Edward Caird Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, a philosopher and theologian specialising in Hegelian idealism, and an enthusiastic supporter of women's issues,<sup>39</sup> the Revs. D. W. C. Smith (Congregational Church), Dobie (Episcopal Church), and Birkmyre (UP).<sup>40</sup> Smith presided and Miss Taylor of Belmont, Stranraer, Honorary Secretary of the Galloway Society for Women's Suffrage, addressed the audience.

Taylor pointed to the fundamental principles of property and

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 22 December 1870; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 2 January 1871.

<sup>39</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 116; *Glasgow Herald*, 22 December 1870; Annual Report of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades (1904-1905), SRA.

<sup>40</sup> *Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1900* (CCD) (London 1900), p. 381 (Doble); W. D. McNaughton, *The Scottish Congregational Ministry from 1794 to 1993* (McNaughton) (Glasgow 1993), pp. 129 (Pulsford), 149 (Smith); Harry Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow 1960), pp. 139, 286, 306, 375 (Pulsford) and 256 (Smith); Robert Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church 1733-1900* (Edinburgh 1904), Vol II, p. 195 (Birkmyre).

the Constitution. Two objections to women's suffrage were condemned: first, the idea that women did not want to get the vote, and secondly, that politics lay outside of women's proper sphere.<sup>41</sup> Against a third objection, namely, that 'it was contrary to religious teaching,' Taylor argued from a biblical standpoint. She spoke of Pauline theology in relation to the position of women in the Church and in society.<sup>42</sup> In emphasising the different contexts between Paul's time and the present day, Taylor contended that any doctrine or theory founded upon one or two isolated texts was erroneous and unwise, such as that of 'man, the head of the woman' (1 Corinthians 3). By contrast, she strongly affirmed that in the teaching of the Lord there was not one word about the inferiority of women. She defined the Lord's treatment of the woman as 'the charter of her liberation throughout Christendom'.<sup>43</sup> Taylor's speech was warmly received, and according to the Rev. Dr. Pulsford 'it was quite a sufficient vindication of women's suffrage.'<sup>44</sup>

However, the lecture was criticised by an anonymous contributor to *The Glasgow Herald*.<sup>45</sup> The writer attacked her theological views concerning the role of women in Church and in society, insisting that 'St. Paul was addressing a Christian Church and our Churches were based upon his model'.<sup>46</sup> The writer also asked: 'in what sense is "man, the head of the woman?" and answered this question by saying that it was "Christ is head of the Church?"<sup>47</sup> The contributor thus maintained that the domestic role of women was ordained by God, and women were inferior to men, both

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<sup>41</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 22 December 1870.

<sup>42</sup> See chapter VI.

<sup>43</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 22 December 1870.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 24 December 1870.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

mentally and physically.<sup>48</sup>

Even so, the support of the Churchmen at the meeting and the religious basis of the lecture were significant. The same message was delivered at meetings in Ayr, Helensburgh, Irvine, Ardrossan, Wigton, Castle-Douglas, Dumfries, Whithorn, and Kirkcudbright, and in each case local ministers supported them.<sup>49</sup>

#### 3.2.4. 'The Religious Well-Being of the Community': Ministers and the Women's Campaign

At the beginning of the 1871 agitation, two main public demonstrations for women's suffrage took place in Edinburgh and in Aberdeen. On 12 January, the Edinburgh public gathering was organised under the auspices of the ENSWS,<sup>50</sup> and John Stuart Mill, who had raised the women's question in Parliament in 1867, delivered a lecture. This occasion was supported by several Churchmen, including Professor Calderwood and Dr. Wallace.<sup>51</sup> Another meeting took place in the Mechanics' Hall, Aberdeen, on the 3rd April, and two ministers of the Congregational Church, the Revs. F. Ferguson and A. Stewart, represented religious leaders.<sup>52</sup> The Aberdeen gathering showed a very lively interest in the cause and long before the time of the meeting, the hall was full.<sup>53</sup> In spite of these events in Scotland, the Second

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 12 (Ayr), 17 (Irvine), 20 (Helensburgh) December 1870; *Women's suffrage Journal*, 2 January 1871 (Ardrossan, Wigtown, and Castle-Douglas), 1 February 1871 (Dumfries, Whithorn, and Kirkcudbright).

<sup>50</sup> *Women's Suffrage: Great Meeting in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1871), Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 February 1871.

<sup>51</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 2 January 1871.

<sup>52</sup> *The Aberdeen Journal*, 5 April 1871. Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 337 (Ferguson), 338 (Stewart).

<sup>53</sup> *The Aberdeen Journal*, 5 April 1871; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 May 1871.

Reading of the Bill failed to get a majority on 3 May 1871.<sup>54</sup> The main reason it failed was the demand of the anti-suffragists in Parliament for better evidence that most women wished to have the vote.<sup>55</sup>

This set-back led the suffragists to expand their activities. Women campaigners held several public meetings in Britain, and in cooperation with religious denominations, they also organised committees for petitioning Parliament in many towns. The role of the Scottish Churches and their members was particularly crucial in many cases.

As far as the religious contribution to the movement was concerned, the meetings held in Keith and Orkney were significant for three reasons. First, local ministers of various denominations were in the forefront of the campaign for securing women's rights in the political arena. The Keith gathering was held on the 10th November,<sup>56</sup> and three local ministers took an active position. They were the Revs. W. Gillespie (FC) who chaired the meeting, W. Nairn (UP), and John Taylor (Congregational Church).<sup>57</sup> The Rev. W. Gillespie, who was FC minister of Keith, occupied the chair at that meeting. Another meeting with relevance to the religious dimension of women's suffrage was held in the Volunteer Hall at Kirkwall, on the 9th October,<sup>58</sup> which was supported by four clergymen, the Rev. William Spark (CS), Alexander Smith (Congregational Church),

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<sup>54</sup> *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (London 1871), Vol CCVI, p. 121.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>56</sup> *The Huntly Express*, 18 November 1871; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1871.

<sup>57</sup> *The Huntly Express*, 18 November 1871. E. Ewing, *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland 1843-1900* (AFCS) (Edinburgh 1914), Vol I, p. 168 (Gillespie); Small, Vol II, p. 52 (Nairn); McNaughton, p.158 (Taylor).

<sup>58</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 11 October 1871; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1871.

David Webster (UP), and James Stuart (FC).<sup>59</sup>

Secondly, all the speakers were anxious about the anomalies of the electoral system as it affected female welfare in society, and they regarded women's suffrage as a key factor in solving a number of social problems. Mr. Gillespie argued that both Church ministers and women had the same interest in politics,<sup>60</sup> because

there is produced by it some measure bearing on the social, moral, and even the religious well-being of the community; and a minister who would do his duty is bound to take notice of these measures. Women are also affected by all such measures, while there are some that specially press upon them.<sup>61</sup>

Gillespie maintained that women were capable of understanding the unjust nature of politics. With reference to the Contagious Diseases Acts which became law in 1864, 1866, and 1869,<sup>62</sup> he compared the role of an intelligent woman in support of the Acts, with that of 'ignorant, hard-hearted, mayhap, and immoral man'.<sup>63</sup> The crucial influence of women in the making of the laws should be represented in Parliament by giving them the vote. The Rev. W. Nairn, who was the United Presbyterian minister in Keith, also thought that women suffered great sexual discrimination by being excluded from electoral power. Taking a more critical view than Gillespie, Nairn characterised men's fearfulness regarding

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<sup>59</sup> *FES* VII, pp. 225, 258 (Spark); *AFCS*, p. 334 (Stuart); Small, Vol II, p. 485 (Webster); McNaughton, p. 149 (Smith) and Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, p. 363 (Smith).

<sup>60</sup> *The Huntly Express*, 18 November 1871.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> In relation to the Acts, in 1871, the United Presbyterian Synod petitioned. Dr. Boyd commented that 'women were not the only sex responsible for spreading venereal disease, that not only "gross cruelty" but considerable injustice was involved in the Acts' operations, and that the Acts had "hardening and debasing" effect on the women subjected to them.' (K. M. Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes to Sex, Marriage and the Family 1850-1914* (Edinburgh 1980), pp. 199-200.) See also chapter II.

<sup>63</sup> *The Huntly Express*, 18 November 1871.

women's franchise as 'leading to innumerable evils'.<sup>64</sup> Nairn thus commented that enlightenment and instruction on the subject of the rights of women was urgently needed and insisted that women should be entitled to the vote 'on the simple ground of fairness and justice'.<sup>65</sup> In agreement with Nairn, the Rev. William Spark of Orkney condemned the political status quo in which women were excluded from voting at the national level. He reminded the audiences of the female ruler over the Kingdom, Queen Victoria. He then asked that,

if a female can thus fill the brightest position in the country, dealing with the most difficult political questions, why should not ordinary females, when requisite, be able and be allowed to vote for a member of Parliament?<sup>66</sup>

Spark thus claimed that females should in certain circumstances vote for a member of the legislature. From a different point of view, the Rev. John Taylor, who was the Congregational Church minister of Keith, regarded the women's suffrage issue as a social problem. His radical position on social problems led him to criticise the anomalies of the British constitution. He hoped that the great social evils in British society 'may be materially lessened by the female influence this bill is designed to introduce into the working of the State machine'.<sup>67</sup> John Taylor affirmed that women's moral and spiritual power, which was given by God, should have full and unrestricted play on all occasions, and believed that other necessary reforms might speedily be brought about.<sup>68</sup> Mr. Webster of Orkney, however, made the limitations of the proposed female suffrage clear in that the present claim for enfranchising women was not for 'the

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 11 October 1871.

<sup>67</sup> *The Huntly Express*, 18 November 1871.

<sup>68</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1871.

enfranchisement of all women, but only of those who are independent householders and ratepayers.'<sup>69</sup>

Finally, the activities of some ministers promoted the women's suffrage movement, although their involvement brought about a division of opinion among Church members. In line with the resolution which was moved by the Rev. John Taylor, the Keith Committee for the preparation of a petition was organised, with the above clergymen as members. But, in Orkney, an anonymous contributor issued critical statements which appeared in *The Orkney Herald*.<sup>70</sup> The writer's argument against women voting was directed at the two clergymen who had spoken in the meeting, Revs. Spark and Webster, and the opponent of women's suffrage criticised an unknown writer who had applauded the ministers, as follows:

as apostolic teaching is at least as explicit in the matter of strong drink as it is in respect to ladies speaking in public, it is only charitable to conclude that the censurer of two of our most popular clergymen is himself a pattern in all things excellent. Is this so? I leave him to answer the question, not doubting but that you will afford him sufficient space so to do, as well as to quote texts in support of his new system of politics.<sup>71</sup>

Even so, their support for 'the removal of the women's electoral disabilities' did not cease, and their continuing involvement in the movement influenced more Orcadians in favour of the women's issue.

Other than these two occasions, many successful gatherings were held in Inverary, Oban, Inverness, Stromness, Thurso, Wick, Elgin, Forres, Banff, Invergordon, Nairn, Dunkeld, Middleton,

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<sup>69</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 11 October 1871.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 October 1871.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

Tain, Dingwall, St. Andrews, and Paisley.<sup>72</sup> Ministers who contributed to the campaign were Revs. Hugh M'Farlane (UP), P. Cameron (FC), and Charles Whyte (Congregational Church) as members of the platform party in the Oban meeting; Revs. N. M'Phersons (CS) as a seconder of the resolution for the Bill and G. Meikle (UP) as a seconder, at Inverary; Revs. D. Burn (UP) and Wedderburn (Episcopal Church) as members of the platform party and of the Committee for petitioning Parliament in Thurso; Rev. Sinclair (FC) as a member of the petition Committee in Invergordon; Rev. David Berry (Reformed Presbyterian Church) as a member of both the platform party and of the petition Committee in Wick; Rev. Messrs. P. J. Mackie (CS) and Pringle (Episcopal Church) as members of the platform party in Elgin; and Rev. Nisbet (UP) as a mover in Stromness.<sup>73</sup>

Of those who by this time supported the movement, the participation of the Rev. David Berry in the Wick meeting was significant in relation to a final decision of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on the use of the franchise.<sup>74</sup> After the passing of the Great Reform Act of 1832, the Reformed Presbyterian Church had declared in 1833 that the exercise of the elective franchise was inconsistent with the Word of God and the Testimony, due to the British Constitution being opposed to the

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<sup>72</sup> *The Invergordon Times*, 1 November (Tain, Dingwall); *The Glasgow Herald*, 23 November (St. Andrews) and 24 November (Paisley); *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1871.

<sup>73</sup> *The Oban Times*, 7 October (Oban) and 30 September 1871 (Inverary); *The Glasgow Herald*, 5 October 1871 (Oban); *John O'Groats Journal*, 26 October (Wick) and 19 October 1871 (Thurso); *The Invergordon Times*, 25 October 1871; *The Orkney Herald*, 18 October 1871 (Stromness); *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1871 (Stromness, Wick, and Elgin). For clergymen, *FES* IV, pp. 10, 12, 363 (M'Phersons) and VII, pp. 392, 395 (MacKie); *AFCS*, p. 113 (Cameron), 317 (Sinclair); *Small*, Vol II, pp. 59 (Nisbet), 201 (Meikle), 410 (M'Farlane), 481 (Burn); *McNaughton*, p. 169 (Whyte) and *H. Escott*, p. 368; *CCD*, pp. 1105 (Pringle), 1440 (Wedderburn); *Matthew Hutchison, The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland* (Glasgow 1893), p. 441 (Berry).

<sup>74</sup> *Hutchison, The Reformed Presbyterian Church*, p. 338. For the Church, see chapter II.

kingship of Christ.<sup>75</sup> Yet there had been tension amongst the members of the Church.<sup>76</sup> In 1863, the Church eventually resolved to place the matter of the franchise in the hands of individuals to act as their conscience dictated.<sup>77</sup> The Church's official permission to use the right of voting freely would pave the way for making its members' support for women's suffrage easier.

On the 1st May 1872, however, the Second Reading of Bright's Bill did not gain a majority in Parliament.<sup>78</sup> The anti-suffragists in the House of Commons continually requested an overwhelming proof that most women wished to have the political suffrage. In this unpleasant atmosphere, the editor of the *Montrose, Arbroath, and Brechin Review* strongly criticised the present political system as being perfectly absurd and utterly unjust in relation to the rights of citizens.<sup>79</sup> The editor held that many important things in respect to politics 'would have been much worse under masculine ascendancy'.<sup>80</sup> The writer thus argued that the equal position of men and women should be recognised.<sup>81</sup>

During 1872, well-attended gatherings in favour of women's suffrage were held in Edinburgh, Dunoon, Lochgilpead, Tobermory, Oban, Largs, Ayr, Inverary, Lawrencekirk, Stonehaven, Brechin, Montrose, Arbroath, Crossbill, Stranraer, Glasgow, Paisley, Greenock, Aberdeen, Forres, Nairn, Inverness, Grangemouth,

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<sup>75</sup> Minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, CH3/391/3, SRO, May 1833; Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church*, pp.279-280.

<sup>76</sup> *The Reformed Presbyterian Magazine*, September 1857, April and December 1858, and April 1862.

<sup>77</sup> Minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, May 1868; Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church*, pp. 338-340.

<sup>78</sup> *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol CCXI, p. 69.

<sup>79</sup> *Montrose, Arbroath, and Brechin Review*, 27 December 1872.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

Girvan, Inskip, Johnston, Turriff, and Forfarshire.<sup>82</sup> Local Church members were supportive in many of these instances. These included Professor Calderwood (UP) as a member of the platform party, Edinburgh; Rev. J. C. Johnston (UP) as a member of both the platform party and of the petition Committee, Dunoon; Rev. J. B. K. M'Intyre (UP) as the chairman, Largs; Revs. Neil M'Pherson (CS) as a mover and G. Meikle (UP) as a seconder, Inverary; Revs. A. MacPherson (CS) as a member of the petition Committee and D. Macfarlane (Baptist Church) as a seconder and a member of the petition Committee, Tobermory; Rev. Drake (Episcopal Church) as a seconder and Rev. Macdonald (Congregational Church) as a mover, Arbroath; Rev. Crabb (Baptist Church) as a member of the platform party, Brechin; Revs. Dr. Black (UP) as a seconder and Mr. Sprott (UP) as a seconder, Crosshill; Rev. Charles (FC) as a seconder, Stranraer; Revs. Professor Lindsay (FC) as a mover and R. Craig (Congregational Church) as a seconder, P. Grenville (Congregational Church) as a mover and Birkmyre (UP) as a seconder, Glasgow; Revs. M'Kay (Original Secession Church) and Fairbairn (Evangelical Union Church) as members of the platform party, Aberdeen; and Rev. Smith (Congregational Church) as a mover, Laurencekirk.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 26 November (Dunoon) and 3 October (Lochgilpead) 1872; *The Oban Times*, 30 September (Inverary) and 5 October (Lochgilpead) and 12 October (Oban and Tobermory); *The Dundee Advertiser*, 26 December (Arbroath); *The Montrose, Arbroath, and Brechin Review*, 27 December (Laurencekirk and Stonehaven); *The Brechin Advertiser*, 31 December (Brechin); *The Stonehaven Journal*, 26 December (Laurencekirk); *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1872 (Argyllshire, Ayrshire, Dunoon, Lochgilpead, Tobermory, Oban, Largs), 1 January (Crossbill, Stranraer, Glasgow, Paisley, Greenock, Aberdeen, Forres, Nairn, Inverness, Grangemouth, Girvan, Inskip, Johnston) and 1 February (Laurencekirk, Arbroath, Montrose, Brechin, Turriff, Stonehaven, Forfarshire) 1873.

<sup>83</sup> For clergymen, *FES* IV, p. 123 (M'Pherson); *AFCS* I, p. 119 (Charles); *Small*, Vol II, pp. 45 (Black), 103 and 140 (Sprott), 166 (M'Intyre), 199 (Johnston), ; *McNaughton*, pp. 29 (Craig) 50-2 (Grenville), 88 (M'Donald), 149 (Smith); *H. Escott*, pp. 131 (Craig), 133 (Fairbairn), 364 (Smith); *Geo. Yuille (ed.), History of the Baptists in Scotland from Pre-Reformation times* (Yuille) (Glasgow 1926), pp. 74-5 (MacPherson), 196 (Crabb); *D. Scott*  
(continued ...)

Of the clergymen listed above, two prominent figures and their work should be mentioned: Duncan MacFarlane and Andrew Martin Fairbairn. The minister of the Baptist Church at Tobermory, the Rev. D. MacFarlane contributed significantly to the revivals of Evangelicalism throughout the western isles during the second half of the 19th century.<sup>84</sup> Following on from the '1859 Revival', the revival in the isles peaked at Tiree in 1874, when MacFarlane came to Tiree to baptize two converts.<sup>85</sup> The stimulus of the revival gradually extended to the other islands of Islay, Colonsay, and Mull. His involvement in the campaign for women's enfranchisement was based upon a recognition of women's rights in general and their role in social purification, such as the temperance movement in particular.<sup>86</sup> These emphases could easily appeal to women as they affected their religious and civil rights.

Another distinguished figure to be involved was the Rev. Andrew Martin Fairbairn, a minister of the Evangelical Union and later Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford. A notable theologian and pastor, Fairbairn consolidated his reputation in Aberdeen, where he served in St. Paul's Street Church from 1872 to 1877.<sup>87</sup> He ran two theological classes in connection with the Church, one for

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(ed.), *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church*, (Edinburgh 1886), p. 577; CCD, pp. 392-3 (Drake).

<sup>84</sup> D. W. Bebbington (ed.), *The Baptists in Scotland; A History* (Glasgow 1988), p. 291; Derek B. Murray, *The First 100 Years; The Baptist Union of Scotland* (Dundee 1969), p. 60.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Clifford J. Marrs, 'The 1859 Religious Revival in Scotland: A Review and Critique of the Movement with particular reference to the City of Glasgow' (Unpublished Glasgow Ph.D thesis 1995), pp. 323-343.

<sup>86</sup> Murray, *The First 100 Years*, pp. 49, 76-78; Bebbington, *The Baptists*, p. 53.

<sup>87</sup> Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, p. 133; DSCHT, p. 313.

young women with 36 members and another for men with 73 members.<sup>88</sup> A most striking feature of his ministry was his special concern for women. Attempting to mediate between the historic Christian faith and newer intellectual positions, Fairbairn attracted the interests of both men and women. According to Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, who was a member of the Church at Aberdeen, Fairbairn was really 'a man of the people, and he loved the people'.<sup>89</sup>

### 3.2.5. 'God's Order and Design': the Campaign of Miss Taylor and Miss Craigen for Women's Rights and the Clergy

After Bright's Bill failed to pass a Second Reading in 1872, women's suffrage campaigners felt that an even more determined approach would be needed. In the fifth annual meeting of the ENSWS, Mrs Rose protested that women were 'more intellectual, holding a wider view of the duties and responsibilities of life than men,' yet did not have the vote.<sup>90</sup> Other gatherings were held in Haddington, Dalkeith, and Dundee.<sup>91</sup> In particular, at the Dundee meeting, arguments for women's suffrage were made on the basis of the principles of justice and human rights.<sup>92</sup> It was supported by several ministers, including the Revs. Knight (FC) and G. Gilfillan (UP), Wilson (FC) and Reed (Episcopal Church) as members of the platform party.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> W. B. Selbie, *The Life of Andrew Martin Fairbairn* (London 1914), p. 80.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>90</sup> *Women's Suffrage: Fifth Annual Meeting in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1873) in Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University; *The Edinburgh Reformer*, 1 February 1873; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 March 1873.

<sup>91</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 March 1873.

<sup>92</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 13 January 1873; *The Weekly News (Dundee)*, 18 January 1873; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 February 1873.

<sup>93</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 13 January 1873. AFCS I, pp. 202 (Knight), 359 (Wilson); Small, Vol II, pp. 58, 584 (Gilfillan); CCD, p. 1131 (Reed).

Once again, on the 30th April 1873, the Second Reading of Bright's Bill failed to get a majority.<sup>94</sup> Those opposed to women's suffrage in Parliament repeatedly insisted that the movement represented 'a very small minority'.<sup>95</sup> The Bill was put off for six months.

Under the pressure of its repeated failure, it appeared that the next vote would be the last one. Therefore, women's suffrage campaigners became ever more active and more radical in their agitation for the Bill. At that time, two zealous labourers for the movement in Scotland were Miss Taylor and Miss Jessie Craigen. As mentioned already, Miss Taylor had worked as Secretary of the Galloway Committee for Women's Suffrage and she had also delivered one hundred and thirty-one lectures, before leaving Scotland to live in England. Miss Jessie Craigen, the daughter of an Italian actress and a Scottish sailor, had delivered a number of lectures.<sup>96</sup> After the failure of the Bill in 1873, their mission for women's rights re-started in Scotland.

When a gathering took place in Kirkwall on the 17th September, Miss Taylor claimed that 'the women's electoral disabilities' should be removed and the rights of voting should be given to them.<sup>97</sup> She concluded her speech with a religious argument for the necessity of women's suffrage:

The readjustment of human affairs upon a basis more in accordance with **God's order and design** is a mighty work, but let none be discouraged from aiding in it: for each honest effort to re-establish what is right and true will be as the drop that increases the

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<sup>94</sup> *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (London 1873), Vol CCXV, p. 1194.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1219-1225

<sup>96</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 January 1873. For Craigen, see also Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Silk Dresses and Lavender Kid Gloves: the wayward career of Jessie Craigen, working suffragist', *Women's History Review*, Vol 5, No 1 (1996), pp. 129-144.

<sup>97</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 24 September 1873; *The Orcadian*, 20 September 1873; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1873.

ocean's swell, or as a ray to add to that flood of light which seems to be coming fast to brighten the sorrowsick earth.<sup>98</sup>

She argued that according to the Divine order and design, the most perfect ordering of human affairs would be achieved when both sexes worked together in all parts of their lives. On the motion of Mr. Stuart, a Committee to seek more signatures for the petition to the House of Commons was formed, and the four clergymen who had attended the previous meeting were appointed as members, along with their wives.<sup>99</sup> Added to this address, the speech of the Rev. Spark, CS minister in Kirkwall, was significant in exhibiting progressive views. Spark, although he was a minister of the CS, nevertheless took the view that disestablishment and disendowment were for the good of the Church.<sup>100</sup> Before analysing his statements at the meeting in relation to female voting, it will be of help to examine the movement for disestablishment and disendowment in which he was involved.

During the period 1874-95, the disestablishment agitation within the Scottish Churches aimed at the complete separation of Church and State.<sup>101</sup> There were three main factors which led to the movement. The first was the Voluntary tradition which had been vocal within the Secession Churches, such as the United Presbyterian Church. The second was the abolition of Patronage in 1874, since it removed one of the grievances of the Established Church. The final factor was the influence of

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<sup>98</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 24 September 1873.

<sup>99</sup> *The Orcadian*, 20 September 1873. See above, p. 75.

<sup>100</sup> *FES* VII, pp. 225, 258; *The Orcadian*, 20 September 1873. For the subject, see J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London 1960), pp. 335-399; Pamphlets: Church Tracts No. 5, Mu 44-e.20, Dep. of Special Collection, University of Glasgow.

<sup>101</sup> Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 26; Rolf Sjolinder, *Presbyterian Reunion in Scotland 1907-1921* (Edinburgh 1962), pp. 84-90.

Victorian Liberalism in promoting democratic equality.<sup>102</sup>

After the passing of the Patronage Act in 1874, Principal Robert Rainy raised a motion on the issue in the Free Church Assembly and it was carried by 397 votes to 84, although the Constitutional party led by Dr. James Begg strongly opposed it and clung to Thomas Chalmers' principle of ecclesiastical establishment.<sup>103</sup> Shortly after this, Rainy cooperated with John Cairns, the leader of the United Presbyterian Church.<sup>104</sup> In 1871, a branch of the Liberation Society was started in Scotland, and the Scottish Disestablishment Association and the Religious Equality Association were formed. In 1872, the FC Church and State Committee with Rainy as its convenor, and the UP Disestablishment Committee led by Dr. George C. Hutton, were founded. In 1886, the above organisations united to form the Disestablishment Council for Scotland. In response, in 1882, the CS General Assembly appointed a Church Interests Committee with Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Dr. James MacGregor as convenors.<sup>105</sup> Ecclesiastically, most ministers within the Established Church and a minority of the Free Church opposed disestablishment, while the majority of the ministers of both the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church favoured the issue.<sup>106</sup> Politically, most Church people outwith the establishment preferred the Liberal party which supported the matter, to the Conservative party which refused to take account of the issue and was backed by most Established and some FC Churchmen. Because of a division

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<sup>102</sup> Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 26; A. L. Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland* (Edinburgh 1978), pp. 103-110.

<sup>103</sup> James G. Kellas, 'The Liberal Party and the Scottish Church', p. 32.

<sup>104</sup> P. Carnegie Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy* (London 1909), Vol. II, p. 25; Alexander R. MacEwan, *Life and Letters of John Cairns* (London 1896), p. 604.

<sup>105</sup> James G. Kellas, 'The Liberal Party and the Scottish Church', p. 34

<sup>106</sup> Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 29.

of opinion on the issue within the Liberal party, the campaign for Scottish disestablishment did not succeed.<sup>107</sup> The agitation, however, contributed to the 1900 union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church. The role of the clerical suffragists such as R. J. Drummond, Professor Calderwood (UP), and George Adam Smith (FC), had not a little effect on the campaign for disestablishment, for their support was based on the fundamental principle of religious equality.<sup>108</sup>

On account of Spark's unusual view on women's issues, the editor of *The Orcadian* gave more space to the Rev. Spark's address than to Miss Taylor's.<sup>109</sup> Facing stronger criticism than that of 1871, the minister argued with an anonymous contributor, in the areas of biblical theology and ecclesiastical history.

With regard to biblical theology,<sup>110</sup> Spark disagreed with the writer about one of his objections, namely, that 'we must show Scriptural authority for women being allowed to vote for political representatives, and we are asked to collect and compare all the statements and injunctions of Scripture on the sphere of women.'<sup>111</sup> According to the minister, Scripture did not concern itself directly with political institutions and with politics itself, and hence women's political involvement was not to be found in the Bible and men's was not to be found there either. For a more detailed argument concerning the biblical evidence, Spark referred to John Knox's biblical interpretation of women's role in political affairs:

John Knox, the Scottish reformer, who had a rooted dislike for female government ... wrote a treatise which he called the "First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regimen, or Government of

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868* (Oxford 1977), pp. 372-379.

<sup>108</sup> Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, pp. 28-31.

<sup>109</sup> *The Orcadian*, 20 September 1873.

<sup>110</sup> See chapter VI.

<sup>111</sup> *The Orcadian*, 20 September 1873.

Women," in which in addition to the opinion of heathen writers and fathers of the Church, he collects all the Scripture texts that could be found bearing on the subject, such as "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee;" "The head of the women is the man;" "I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over a man," and a number of other well-known texts, all teaching that between the sexes there is subordination of order and seemliness on the part of the woman. He takes no notice of another class of texts that run parallel with these, greatly modifying them, and, in fact, asserting the substantial equality of both.<sup>112</sup>

On such grounds, he contended that government was not only for the benefit of males, but for the whole community, inclusive of women. Spark concluded by claiming that 'the interests, the claims, the wants, the grievances, the whole circumstances of woman as well as of man should be represented in political affairs.'<sup>113</sup>

Spark also argued against the second objection that it could be seen from history that 'women's engagement in politics would be harmful to the well-being of a community.'<sup>114</sup> His opponent had suggested that proof of this could be found in the reign of Charles II. The contributor held the view that at that time, immorality had been caused by women who had been involved in political affairs. But Spark disagreed and put it thus:

The reference in the argument to the reign of Charles II was unfortunate. A few women had much power and influence, but, as a class, they had not much influence of any kind, and no political right at all..but their influence did not arise from their political rights, for then they had none. The immorality of that age was due, not to female power, but first to the strong reaction that set in against the rigid sway of the Puritans. The Restoration hastened the reaction, and then the tide of immorality

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 September 1873. See also chapter IV.

<sup>113</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 18 October 1871.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

set in.<sup>115</sup>

He then asked: 'If women were to vote as members of Parliament, why should they not be returned to Parliament, and have seats there?' Although, as the question had been raised at an Edinburgh meeting in 1870 by the Rev. Dr. Wallace,<sup>116</sup> this was not an entirely new idea, Spark's historical arguments concerning women's rights were convincing.

Another gathering was held in the Masonic Hall at Stornoway, on the 2nd September.<sup>117</sup> At this meeting, Miss Jessie Craigen, one of the indefatigable campaigners in the movement, delivered three lectures on women's rights, temperance, and the liberty of citizenship. Two important facts emerged: that the movement for women's suffrage was a comprehensive matter involving moral, social, economic, political, and religious dimensions; and that three well-known ministers in Stornoway occupied the chair on each occasion, the Revs. C. M'Ewing (UP), MacRae (Episcopal Church), and James Greenfield (FC).<sup>118</sup>

Discussing the first subject, 'women's rights', Miss Craigen spoke of the desirability of extending electoral privileges to women. The lecturer held that 'as a wife will share with her husband the political privileges, they may possibly be allowed to share with her the privileges of the kitchen and nursery.'<sup>119</sup> In relation to the "Temperance" subject, she defined drunkenness as 'the enemy of our nation's prosperity'.<sup>120</sup> In like manner, an urgent need for a holy crusade against the evils of drink was

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, pp. 233-257.

<sup>116</sup> See *The Scotsman*, 18 January 1870.

<sup>117</sup> *Northern Ensign*, 25 September 1873; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1873.

<sup>118</sup> *Northern Ensign*, 25 September 1873. For clergymen, Small, Vol. II, pp. 54, 168 (M'Ewing); *AFCs* I, p. 177 (Greenfield); *CCD*, p. 885 (MacRae).

<sup>119</sup> *Northern Ensign*, 25 September 1873.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

declared.<sup>121</sup>

The problem of intemperance was the result of the Industrial Revolution. At that time, heavy drinking came to be found among the industrial workforce.<sup>122</sup> A pioneer of the temperance movement in Britain, John Dunlop of Greenock (1789-1868), initiated attempts to solve the drink question and in 1829 founded the first Temperance Society in Scotland.<sup>123</sup> Following this, in 1844, the Scottish Temperance League of total abstainers was established at Falkirk, whose aim was to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, whilst for the Moderationists, the Scottish Association for the Suppression of Drunkenness (1850) and the Glasgow Abstainers Union (1854) were formed.<sup>124</sup>

The Scottish Churches at first seemed to have been an obstacle in the progress of the temperance movement on account of the customs within the Churches of drinking at funerals and ordination dinners.<sup>125</sup> From time to time, however, the Churches awakened to the seriousness of drunkenness and began to help the movement in their own area. In 1845, a Ministers' Abstinence Society was formed in the United Secession Church. On the union of that Church with the Relief Church, the United Presbyterian Church instituted a Total Abstinence Society in 1847, though the Church did not have a separate Temperance Committee until 1866. In 1847, the Free Church appointed a Temperance Committee and

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<sup>121</sup> Cf. *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, 2 December 1878. As an example of continual activities concerning the issue, see Executive Committee Minutes and General Committee Minutes of Women's Association for Temperance (CS), CH2/850/1-11, SRO.

<sup>122</sup> N. D. Denny, 'Temperance and the Scottish Churches 1870-1914', *RSCHS*, Vol XXIII part 2 (1988), p. 218.

<sup>123</sup> Stewart Mechie, *The Church and Scottish Social Development 1780-1870* (London 1960), pp. 85-87; Elspeth King, *Scotland Sober and Free: The Temperance Movement 1829-1979* (Glasgow 1979), pp. 7-8.

<sup>124</sup> Denny, 'Temperance and the Scottish Churches', pp. 219-220.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220. Cf. B. Harrison, *Drink and The Victorians: the Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (London 1971), pp. 179-195.

established a FC Temperance society in 1849. In 1848 the Church of Scotland formed a Committee following to a petition of the Rev. John Hope of Edinburgh, who contributed to the formation of the British League of Juvenile Abstainers in 1847.<sup>126</sup> Other religious denominations, including the Episcopalians, the Roman Catholics, the Baptists, and the Congregationalists, also played an important role in the promotion of the temperance cause.<sup>127</sup> In relation to the women's movement, the Churches' involvement in the temperance issue brought a great deal of benefit to the agitation both for the removal of women's 'political disabilities' and for the political enfranchisement of women in general, for as the drink problem was regarded by the Churches as a social evil, it could be one of several significant levers used by suffragists who were approaching the Churches to gain their full support.<sup>128</sup> Women claimed that after their enfranchisement they would vote for MPs who were in support of the temperance issue.

At the Stornoway meeting, Miss Craigen thus focused upon constitutional reform in connection with the abuse of intoxicating drinks.<sup>129</sup> Craigen's speech was widely appreciated, and it was reported in the local press that:

the former lecturers we have had on the subject of temperance were so very extreme and intolerant as to have only made matters worse; but such a clear exposition of the subject as she gave will command the

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<sup>126</sup> M. B. MacGregor, *Towards Scotland's Social Good* (Edinburgh n.d.), pp. 30-45; David Jamie, *John Hope: Philanthropist and Reformer* (Edinburgh 1900), pp. 178-204; Mechie, *The Church and Scottish Social Development*, pp. 94-99.

<sup>127</sup> Denny, 'Temperance and the Scottish Churches', pp. 222, 226, 234; Bebbington, *The Baptists in Scotland*, p. 53; Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, p. 150.

<sup>128</sup> Balfour, *Ne Obliviscaris*, p. 117; Josephine E. Butler, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* (London 1896), pp. 1-5, 84-98.

<sup>129</sup> *Northern Ensign*, 25 September 1873.

respect of the most prejudiced.<sup>130</sup>

The reaction to this speech shows that the cause of women's suffrage was promoted when it was linked with other issues relating to women and their welfare.

Other meetings were organised by Taylor and Craigen, including those in Burntisland, Gourock, Port Glasgow, Largs, Lochgilphead, Tobermory, Kirkwall, Shetland, Stromness, Dingwall, Invergordon, Wick, Tain, Lerwick, Thurso, Halkirk, Hawick, and Edinburgh.<sup>131</sup> On these occasions, a number of clergymen took an active part in supporting the issue of women's vote. They included: Rev. D. Macrae (UP) as the chairman, Gourock; Rev. P. N. Mackiehan (CS) as the chairman, Lochgilphead; Revs. A. Macfarlane (UP) and J. E. Dobson (Congregational Church) as members of the Petition Committee and movers, Shetland; Rev. Runny (FC) as a speaker, Wick; Rev. Burn (FC) as a mover, Thurso; Rev. Nisbet (UP) as a seconder, Stromness; Rev. T. Grant (FC) as the chairman, Tain; and Rev. R. Muir (UP) as a mover, Hawick.<sup>132</sup>

### 3.2.6. Conclusion: the Failure of Bright's Bill for the Removal of Women's Political Disabilities

As has been seen, several Scottish Churchmen did not hesitate to give their support to the movement, thus drawing attention to the religious aspect of women's suffrage. Had they not given their support to this campaign, the attempt to remove women's 'political disabilities' would have been even more difficult.

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 24 September (Stromness); *The Invergordon Times*, 8 October (Invergordon and Wick), 8 October (Dingwall); *John O'groats Journal*, 2 October (Wick and Thurso); *Northern Ensign*, 25 September (Thurso), 2 October (Wick); *The Weekly Scotsman*, 15 November (Edinburgh); *The Shetland Times*, 15 September; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 September, 1 November 1873 and 1 January 1874.

<sup>132</sup> For clergymen, *FES* IV, p. 19 (MacKiehan); *AFCS* I, p. 108 (Burn), 175 (Grant), 297 (Runny); *Small*, Vol II, pp. 203 (MacRae), 461 (Muir), 492 (Nisbet); McNaughton, p. 37 (Dobson).

Which religious denomination provided the most support for the campaign? The total number of clergymen who can be identified as having attended public meetings was 55, while a number of other ministers also supported the campaign for women's suffrage. The United Presbyterian Church was clearly the best represented as it accounted for 30 per cent out of the total.<sup>133</sup> The proportion attending from the Congregational Church inclusive of the Evangelical Union was 22 per cent, slightly higher than the proportion from the Free Church at 18 per cent. The Established Church and the Episcopal Church both accounted for 11 per cent. The Baptist Church, the Original Secession Church, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church were less well represented with 4, 2, and 2 per cent respectively. Furthermore, the involvement of some prominent ministers such as Professor Calderwood greatly influenced in the Churches.

Why did Scottish clerics support the political agitation for women's rights? There were two significant factors. One underlying factor was the influence of political liberalism which believed in the removal of special privileges in every portion of society.<sup>134</sup> Political ideas or movements, such as women's suffrage, would be likely to draw support from the non-

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<sup>133</sup> The statistics listed below are supplied by the author according to the calculation of numbers of clergymen who officially attended meetings during the major agitation for Bright's Bill (1870-1873):

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denomination	numbers	resulting order
Church of Scotland	over 6	4
Free Church	over 10	3
United Presbyterian	over 17	1
Congregational Church (Evangelical Union)	over 12	2
Episcopal Church	over 6	4
Baptist Church	over 2	5
Original Secession Church	over 1	6
Reformed Presbyterian	over 1	6
Total	over 55	

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<sup>134</sup> Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 26.

established Churches in Scotland, especially from the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church. Another crucial factor influencing ecclesiastical support for votes for women was that the matter was by then linked to several other contentious social issues, such as the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts and the temperance issue.

But this level of popular support did not save the Bill from the failure of its Second Reading in Parliament, and, as the Liberal party was defeated in the 1874 election, and Jacob Bright lost his seat, hopes of enfranchising women through the Bill faded away.<sup>135</sup> A similar Bill that excluded married women from the franchise was introduced by Mr. W. Forsyth, a Conservative MP,<sup>136</sup> but it was defeated.

Even so, the women's suffrage movement in Scotland had still made some progress,<sup>137</sup> and many campaigners were quietly preparing for the right time to fight. Even after the failure of the Bill, several public demonstrations for women's suffrage were organised in Scotland each year.

### **3.3. The Church and the Movement for Woodall's Amendment to the Reform Bill**

The passing of the Married Women's Property Act (1882) significantly affected the women's suffrage movement in Britain, for as women retained their property instead of surrendering it to their husbands on marriage, they could qualify as voters to exercise the right of the parliamentary franchise.<sup>138</sup> It was thus

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<sup>135</sup> June Purvis (ed.), *Women's History: Britain 1850-1945* (London 1995), p. 283.

<sup>136</sup> Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 211.

<sup>137</sup> The Annual Report of the ENSWS from 1874 onwards, Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1874 to 1881.

<sup>138</sup> *Acts of Parliament* (London 1882), 45 & 46 vict. See Martin Pugh, *Women's Suffrage in Britain 1867-1928* (The Historical Association 1980).

regarded as an impetus for enfranchising women in the wider sense. From that time onwards, the movement for extending the vote to women became more active than before, especially in connection with Woodall's Amendment to the Reform Bill.

### 3.3.1. The Movement for Women's Parliamentary Franchise before the Introduction of Woodall's Amendment to the Reform Bill

Prior to the presentation of Woodall's Amendment in Parliament, a major demonstration in relation to the movement was planned to be held in Glasgow, and several preliminary gatherings took place in various districts of the city.<sup>139</sup> A number of religious leaders gave their support to these events, including Rev. Russell (FC) as a member of the platform party, Crosshill; Professor E. Caird as the chairman, in the city centre of Glasgow; Professor Lindsay as the chairman, Partick; and W. H. Carslaw (FC) as a member of the platform party, Helensburgh.<sup>140</sup> A large well-attended preliminary conference was also held in St. Andrew's Hall in Glasgow, on the 3rd October 1882.<sup>141</sup> Professor Lindsay argued that when women enjoyed the same political privileges as men, the moral, social, and economic problems of the country would be solved, and he expected that present difficulties such as the drink trade and women's working conditions would be remedied through the representation of women in Parliament.<sup>142</sup>

As women campaigners expected, the Glasgow demonstration was a great landmark for the movement in Scotland. When the meeting was opened in St. Andrew's Hall on the 3rd November 1882, Mrs

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<sup>139</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 20 October (Crossbill) 21 October (Queen's hall meeting); *Govan Press*, 28 October 1882; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November and 1 December 1882.

<sup>140</sup> *AFCS I*, pp. 118 (Carslaw), 308 (Russell).

<sup>141</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 4 October 1882; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1882.

<sup>142</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1882.

Duncan MacLaren, President of the ENSWS,<sup>143</sup> presided, and it was supported by many noted ecclesiastics, such as Professors Caird and Lindsay, and the Rev. J. Douglas, minister of the New City Road Congregational Church in Glasgow and Secretary of the Congregational Union of Scotland (1883-1891).<sup>144</sup> According to *The Christian Leader*, nothing like it had been witnessed before on either side of the Atlantic, and it was indeed 'a most impressive spectacle'.<sup>145</sup> In particular, all the speakers referred to the religious dimension of women's suffrage. For example, Mrs Cady Stanton, an experienced American suffragist, spoke of Scottish people around the world who had contributed to the religious as well as the social progress of humanity.<sup>146</sup> Like Stanton, Mrs Charles M'Laren of Edinburgh, who was an active suffrage worker, stated that women were awakening to 'a sense of their duties and responsibilities' which were based on religion.<sup>147</sup> Mrs Shearer of London made it clear that religion and piety were 'two different things'.<sup>148</sup> The speaker explained the distinction in the following way:

With some ladies piety consisted in going in a fashionable dress to a fashionable church to hear a fashionable sermon. But in that kind of piety there was little of the religion which Christ taught. No; His religion consisted in assisting the poor and miserable. If they adopted His example, and took a greater interest in this suffrage and other questions, they would be all the better wives and mothers, and their children would not be worse but better brought

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<sup>143</sup> Annual Report of the ENSWS (1893), Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University.

<sup>144</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 4 November 1882; *The Christian Leader*, 9 November 1882; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1882. For Douglas, Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 306, 375.

<sup>145</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 9 November 1882.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1882.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

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With a resolution to be sent by petition to the Prime Minister, the Glasgow demonstration significantly influenced the next stage of the movement. The provisional committee that had been appointed after the meeting met in the Christian Institute in Glasgow, on the 1st December 1882.<sup>150</sup> Professor Lindsay presided and three practical resolutions were passed, comprising the setting up of a Glasgow association for women's suffrage, the organisation of a subsequent conference, and the formation of a committee or centre in each ward or district of Glasgow.<sup>151</sup> In the same year, other public demonstrations were held in Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, and Aberdeen,<sup>152</sup> with clerical support from Revs. J. Glasse (CS) and Dr. Adamson (FC) and Professor Calderwood (UP, Edinburgh), and Dr. Robson (UP, Aberdeen).<sup>153</sup>

Following upon the Glasgow demonstration, practical steps to support women's suffrage were taken at a local level. On the 1st December 1882, local committees were formed in each ward or division of Glasgow. On 13th March 1883, a meeting of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Wards took place in the Police Hall,<sup>154</sup> and it was supported by several well-known Glasgow clergymen, including Professor Lindsay (FC), Dr. J. L. Aikman (UP), and G. G. Green (UP).<sup>155</sup> During the month of March 1883, under the leadership of Professor Lindsay, other municipal occasions were organised in

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<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 7 December 1882.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 April (Edinburgh); 1 June (Edinburgh); 1 November (Edinburgh, Perth, Aberdeen, and Dundee); 1 December (Dundee), 1 February (Edinburgh) 1882.

<sup>153</sup> *FES* I, p. 44 (Glasse); *AFCS* I, p. 77 (Adamson); Small, Vol II, pp. 45, 178, 265 (Calderwood).

<sup>154</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 14 March 1883; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 2 April 1883.

<sup>155</sup> For clergymen, Small, Vol II, pp. 38, 342 (Aiken), 89 (Green).

St. James' Hall at Stirling Road and in the Fairbairn Free Church at Battle-Street.<sup>156</sup>

Influenced by the Glasgow demonstrations, the local Scottish Liberal Associations also supported the campaign for women's enfranchisement. Its local meetings were held as far apart as Lauder in Berwickshire, Liberton near Edinburgh, Aberdeen, at Govan and in Glasgow.<sup>157</sup> Each occasion saw a resolution in favour of votes for women, except the one in Glasgow. The Glasgow meeting failed to pass the resolution due to the opposition of a Free Church minister. Mr. Patrick of Kirkintilloch simply assumed that 'it was sure not to be accepted by the Government.'<sup>158</sup> Patrick supported the resolution in private but as a practical politician he doubted that the measure would be accepted. Had Patrick supported the resolution, it would in all probability have been adopted by the Association.<sup>159</sup>

While Mr. Gladstone's Franchise Bill<sup>160</sup> (which excluded women householders and ratepayers) was being dealt with in Parliament,<sup>161</sup> the Scottish National Demonstration for Women's

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<sup>156</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 2 April 1883; *The Christian Leader*, 3 May 1883.

<sup>157</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 2 April 1883 (Aberdeen, on 23rd March); 1 February 1884 (Lauder, on 18th January and Glasgow, on 24th January); 1 May 1884 (Govan, on 30th January and Liberton, on 20th March).

<sup>158</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 8 November 1883.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (London 1908), Vol II, pp. 274-275, 284; P. F. Clarke, 'Electoral Sociology of Modern Britain', *History*, Vol 57, No. 189 (February 1972), pp. 47-49; David Bebbington, *William Ewart Gladstone: Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Grand Rapids 1993), p. 181.

<sup>161</sup> Hayes, *The Background and Passage of the Third Reform Act*, pp. 109-129. In dealing with the introduction of the Franchise Bill on 28th February 1884, he put it as follows: 'Gladstone felt that heavily burdened by the duty of introducing the Franchise Bill, but his speech was a great success, probably among the most effective of his long Parliamentary career. It was his night; the Opposition scarcely attempted to rebut him.' (p. 124)

Franchise took place in Edinburgh, on 19 March 1884.<sup>162</sup> At this gathering, the Bill was recognised by many as 'the largest and best measure of reform', for Gladstone had calculated that it would add 2,000,000 names to the electoral roll.<sup>163</sup> However, it was also seriously criticised in parliament because women were totally excluded. *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, however, thought that the demonstration had been successful:

the most notable features of all were the high tone of the speeches, the sympathy with the common people and the suffering classes which all the lady orators manifested, and the strongly religious sentiment which pervaded most of the addresses. The meeting cannot fail to exert an enormous influence throughout the country.<sup>164</sup>

Nevertheless, in March 1884, the Franchise Bill passed the Second Reading by 340 votes to 210.<sup>165</sup> It was reported that the Premier was greatly satisfied,<sup>166</sup> while the exclusion of women was considered by many members of Parliament as 'a serious omission' because it was of opinion that 'the more the Franchise Bill is studied and discussed, the greater becomes the favour with which it is regarded.'<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> *The Scotsman*, 21 March 1884; *Glasgow Herald*, 21 March 1884; *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, April 1884; *The Christian Leader*, 27 March 1884. The date of 24 March 1884 given by Leneman is inaccurate. (L. Leneman, *A Guid Cause: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Scotland* (rev. ed. Aberdeen 1995), p. 27; see *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 April and *Englishwomen's Review*, 15 April 1884).

<sup>163</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, April 1884.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 219.

<sup>166</sup> Hayes, *The Background and Passage of the Third Reform Act*, p. 129.

<sup>167</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, May 1884.

### 3.3.2. The Movement for Woodall's Female Suffrage Clause

At this point, Mr. W. Woodall, who was the Liberal MP for Stoke-on-Trent, introduced an Amendment to the Reform Bill in Parliament, on 10 June 1884. The effect of the Amendment was 'larger and more far-reaching as a complicating factor'.<sup>168</sup> Its most crucial influence upon the Liberal Party was that three Cabinet members, Dilke, Fawcett, and Courtney, dissented from the opposing of the Amendment by the Premier and other Ministers.<sup>169</sup> Many women workers of the movement were disappointed and many more were said to be angry with the government, and especially with the Prime Minister.<sup>170</sup> Female suffragists began to exert pressure on the Prime Minister and the government to support the Amendment to the Reform Bill. *The United Presbyterian Magazine* reported in the same tone that the government's refusal to include women householders and ratepayers had caused 'the irritation and activity of a very formidable organisation', although the leaders of the movement were 'women of conspicuous talent and high moral tone' and their request for political power was simply based on the educational and municipal franchise which had already been given to women.<sup>171</sup>

Yet this disappointment did not stop the progress of the movement towards the parliamentary franchise for women. In the midst of these attempts, some members of the Scottish Churches took a positive part and did not hesitate to show their sympathy. The campaign can be examined geographically, in the four areas of the east, west, south, and north of Scotland.

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<sup>168</sup> Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 219; Hayes, *The Background and Passage of the Third Reform Act*, p. 146.

<sup>169</sup> Hayes, *The Background and Passage of the Third Reform Act*, p. 148.

<sup>170</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 26 June 1884.

<sup>171</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, July 1884.

A. 'Let Justice be done though the Heavens should fall':  
*Parliamentary Franchise for Women in the East of Scotland*

An open conversazione took place at the meeting of the congregations of Gilfillan Memorial Church, held in the Kinnaird Hall at Dundee on the 23rd October 1884. A gathering like this was a novelty for the women's suffrage movement in Scotland. Mrs Scatcherd of Leeds and Mrs M'Cormick of Manchester, who represented local societies for women's franchise, spoke in favour of the campaign.<sup>172</sup> On the 18th October, a Liberal Demonstration was held in the United Presbyterian Church at West Calder, and the religious aspect of the movement was emphasised.<sup>173</sup> A Broughty Ferry meeting was given the support of three ministers, namely the Revs. W. W. Peyton (FC) as the Chairman, and J. Lyon (FC) and Dr. Mackness (Episcopal Church) as members of the platform party.<sup>174</sup>

Aside from these, the major demonstration for women's franchise in the east of Scotland was held in Dundee, on the 24th October 1884.<sup>175</sup> Four noted Churchmen were present, Professor Lindsay (FC), C. M. Grant (CS), J. Ewing (FC), and D. Macrae (FC) who were all members of the platform party.<sup>176</sup> In moving the first resolution for the women's parliamentary suffrage, Professor Lindsay asserted that the use of voting power by women would be the good for the whole community.<sup>177</sup> In seconding the motion, the Rev. C. M. Grant, CS minister of St. Mark's and father of Miss

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<sup>172</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1884.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* For clergymen, AFCS I, pp. 212 (Lyon), 291 (Peyton); CCD, p. 880 (MacKness).

<sup>175</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 25 October 1884; *The Christian Leader*, 13 November 1884; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1884.

<sup>176</sup> For clerics, FES V, p. 339 (Grant); AFCS I, pp. 148 (Ewing), 257 (Macrae).

<sup>177</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 25 October 1884. Cf. *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1885), No XXXI, pp. 55-56.

May Grant, a CS missionary and ardent suffragette,<sup>178</sup> argued against the two main objections to votes for women. Grant pointed out that the objection to women having seats in parliament was a fallacy since it applied equally to a woman occupying the throne. He thought that women's enfranchisement would have a 'beneficent influence' rather than a 'revolutionary character'.<sup>179</sup> Mrs Scatterd of Leeds contended that women had too much sense to serve in the armed forces, and she criticised as illogical the fact that 'clergymen are exempted from military service, and yet they are not on that account deprived of their votes.'<sup>180</sup> The demonstration ended with both a strong appeal to the public and the raising of a petition.

Other public meetings in the east of Scotland were organised in Edinburgh, Dundee, Strathpeffer, Kirkaldy, Galashiels, Dumferline, Dunse, and Hawick. *The United Presbyterian Magazine* reported that these were 'most successful demonstrations'.<sup>181</sup>

B. *'The Christian Women's Responsibilities in relation to Parliamentary and Local Franchise': the Christian Women's Union in the West of Scotland*

Until the 1880s, little had been made of the potential of support for women's suffrage from Christian women's organisations. Thus, the fifth conference of the Christian Women's Union was significant as far as the religious aspect of women's franchise was concerned.

Founded in 1880, the Union aimed at encouraging those women who were engaged in various departments of Christian work. The Union met annually, and a variety of contentious issues of that time,

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<sup>178</sup> See chapter VI.

<sup>179</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 25 October 1884.

<sup>180</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 13 November 1884.

<sup>181</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, September 1884; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November (Strathpeffer); 1 December (Kirkaldy) 1884.

including Mission, Temperance, Education, Women's labour, and Public life, were discussed.<sup>182</sup> The formation and development of the CWU thus had two significant aspects. First, its public activities were largely in line with the promotion of the women's suffrage movement that had originated in 1867 and made an impact on the Church during the 1870s.<sup>183</sup> Secondly, it contributed to the formation of various national organisations for improving women's status and welfare in the Church and in society, such as the CS Women's Guild in 1887 and the Scottish Council for Women's Trades in 1895.<sup>184</sup>

A three day conference was held in the Queen's rooms at Glasgow, from November 11 to November 13.<sup>185</sup> At the beginning, Mrs Meredith, the President, stated that women had been taught by men but that this teaching had been entirely wrong:

The sooner men recognised that women had separate and distinct methods of dealing ... from them the better, as woman's power can only be used under responsibility to the Head.<sup>186</sup>

In agreement with Meredith, Miss Tod spoke on women and the franchise. An active suffrage worker in Scotland,<sup>187</sup> Tod defined the anti-suffragists in Parliament as 'bad men' and as 'the natural enemies of women'.<sup>188</sup> Having in mind an old objection against votes for women, Miss Tod argued that even though women

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<sup>182</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 20 November 1884.

<sup>183</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 885.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. L. A. Smith, *George Adam Smith* (London 1943), p. 68; "*We Twa*": *Reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen* (London 1925), pp. 275-276; *Life and Work*, January 1887; Annual Report of the SCWT (1895-1896), SRA.

<sup>185</sup> *The Glasgow Herald*, 14 November 1884; *The Christian Leader*, 20 November 1884; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1884.

<sup>186</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 20 November 1884.

<sup>187</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1882.

<sup>188</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 20 November 1884.

did not join the imperial army abroad, at home women took care of soldiers' parents and children. Tod went on to say that 'they were fighting, not for their own country alone, but for all women.'<sup>189</sup> According to her, their success would mean light, strength, and hope for women everywhere.<sup>190</sup>

Another leading woman in the movement, Mrs Lindsay, spoke of Christian women as citizens. She was an active campaigner for women's franchise as a member of the Glasgow Suffrage Society in the 1870s, along with her husband, Professor Lindsay.<sup>191</sup> Later, in 1894, she laboured to form the Scottish Council for Women's Trades to improve the industrial conditions of women and children in Scotland.<sup>192</sup> Lindsay welcomed the conference since it emphasised the religious facet of women's suffrage:

the duties of women as citizens should be discussed at a conference of christian women, for we owe to Christianity the right of women to be regarded as citizens at all.<sup>193</sup>

It was important for her that Christian women be concerned with current affairs and that they seek to influence public opinion. Lindsay suggested that in practice, the members of women's temperance associations should also be active in the women's suffrage movement as they made a significant impact upon municipal elections through their support of temperance candidates. Drawing attention to serious social evils, Lindsay observed that:

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 2 April 1883.

<sup>192</sup> First Annual Report of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades (1894-1895), SRA; L. A. Smith, *George Adam Smith* (London 1943), p. 63; Elspeth King, *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women* (Edinburgh 1993), pp. 90-91.

<sup>193</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 20 November 1884.

It is quite true that we cannot make men virtuous by act of parliament, but we can help to make them less vicious. I trust the time will soon come when women will have the parliamentary as well as the municipal franchise.<sup>194</sup>

An interesting discussion followed. Mrs Fitzgerald, one of the active members of the CWU, refused to support the women's suffrage issue, for she worried about serious divisions among Christian women because of its political nature. Unlike Fitzgerald, Miss Tod argued that the women's issue was not one of party politics. Like Tod, Mrs Haycraft confessed that after she knew the Lord Jesus, she could speak about politics without any hesitation. She thought that: 'when women got the franchise they would insist on having something ... to say on the great social questions.'<sup>195</sup>

Although no resolution in favour of women's suffrage was made, the occasion was significant for two reasons. The first was that the women's suffrage issue had been officially dealt with in a Christian organisation, such as the Union. The second was the Churchwomen's awareness of women's suffrage as a means for solving other contentious social issues that related directly to women.

Other well-attended demonstrations organised by women campaigners were also held in Glasgow, Greenock, Dumbarton, Ayr, and Hamilton.<sup>196</sup>

*C. 'The Faithful of the Faithful Ones': the Franchise for Women in the South and North of Scotland*

As indicated previously, the north of Scotland had been in the front line of the women's suffrage movement in the 1870s. Many

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<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, September (Dumbarton, Ayr, Hamilton, Glasgow); *The Christian Leader*, 13 November (Greenock) 1884.

events in support of female voting had been held, and some indefatigable campaigners such as Miss Taylor, formerly Secretary of the Galloway Society, Miss Craigen of London, Miss M'Laren, president of the ENSWS, and Miss Beedy, an American suffragist, had played a crucial part on these occasions, with support from the clerical suffragists.

Once again, the north of Scotland showed its support for the movement. At a gathering held in Inverness, Mr. D. Reid, a solicitor, argued that women should have votes for Parliament since they already had the vote for school boards and in municipal elections, while Mrs Scatcherd praised the northern Scottish people's faithfulness in the movement.<sup>197</sup> *The Christian Leader* reported that 'crowded and enthusiastic meetings have been held in the north of Scotland.'<sup>198</sup> Meetings were held in Tain, Dingwall, Aberdeen, Ross, and Cromarty.<sup>199</sup> At these events, Mrs Scatcherd, Miss Florence Balgarnie of Scarborough, and Mrs M'Cormick of Manchester represented their own local societies for women's suffrage and spoke in favour of the issue.<sup>200</sup>

In the south, the campaign culminated in the Kelso meeting that was held in the United Presbyterian Manse on 27 March 1884,<sup>201</sup> and which was supported by two local ministers, the Rev. J. Burleigh, CS minister of Ednam, and the Rev. Thomas C. Kirkwood, UP minister of Kelso.<sup>202</sup> Their support led to the passing of a resolution for extending the political suffrage to women householders. In particular, the support of Kirkwood was significant since he was a descendent of the Burgher branch of

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<sup>197</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 13 November 1884; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1884.

<sup>198</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 13 November 1884.

<sup>199</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, September (Aberdeen, Ross, Cromarty); *The Christian Leader*, 13 November (Inverness); *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December (Tain, Dingwall, Inverness) 1884.

<sup>200</sup> *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 December 1882.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 May 1884.

<sup>202</sup> *FES* II, p. 70; Small, Vol II, pp. 265-266.

the Secession tradition which had given women the right of voting within the Church.<sup>203</sup> Indeed, at moderations in 1880, Kirkwood himself had been called to the Church, the call being signed by 462 members and 89 adherents, both men and women. Finally, the involvement of Burleigh showed that, following the abolition of patronage, the concern of the CS clergymen for women's rights in the Church and in society was more evident.

### 3.3.3. Concluding Remarks

Unfortunately, Woodall's Bill for extending the parliamentary franchise to women was withdrawn on 17 November 1884.<sup>204</sup> Women campaigners were disappointed, and it was the opinion of some that more extreme methods should be now employed to achieve women's fundamental rights.

Which denomination gave the most support for the movement? During the period 1882-4, the number of clergymen who officially attended meetings was about eighteen.<sup>205</sup> The involvement of the Free Churchmen was greatest, with the proportion of 43 per cent. The ratio attending from the Established Church accounted for 28 per cent, while the proportion from the United Presbyterian Church was 17 per cent. The Episcopal Church and the Congregational Church both accounted for 6 per cent.

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<sup>203</sup> See chapter II.

<sup>204</sup> Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 219.

<sup>205</sup> The statistics below are provided by the author according to the official number of clergymen attending several meetings of women's suffrage during that time 1882-1884:

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denomination	number	resulting order
Established Church	over 5	2
Free Church	over 8	1
United Presbyterian	over 3	3
Episcopal Church	over 1	4
Congregational Church	over 1	4
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Total	over 18	

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What changes were significant compared with the 1870s campaign for women's suffrage that had culminated in Bright's Bill? First, in the 1870s movement, the support of the United Presbyterian clerics had been the best, but in the 1880s, under the leadership of Professor T. M. Lindsay, Free Churchmen played the leading role. It was due in part to the Church's liberal outlook in politics, and due partly to its newly found social and economic concern.<sup>206</sup> Secondly, the Established Church leaders slowly moved towards support for women's franchise. They were largely led by some prominent clergymen, such as John Glasse of Edinburgh, C. M. Grant of Dundee, J. Cameron Lees of Paisley and later Edinburgh, and J. Marshall Lang of Glasgow and later Aberdeen. Thirdly, the major concern of the United Presbyterian Churchmen had become the disestablishment campaign, although the Church's support on the women's vote still remained consistent.<sup>207</sup> Fourthly, the most significant change came from the Congregationalists, representing 6 per cent, substantially lower than the ratio, being 22 per cent in the 1870s movement. The reason was largely because of the preoccupation with the coming together of the Congregational Union and the Evangelical Union.<sup>208</sup>

### **3.4. The Churches' Theological and Historical Response to the Failure of Women's Enfranchisement**

#### **3.4.1. 'The Spiritual Franchise': the United presbyterian Synod**

The Rev. J. G. Train, minister of Hutchesontown in Glasgow, in an article for *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, wrote sympathetically about the disappointment felt by many men and

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<sup>206</sup> Cf. James G. Kellas, 'The Liberal Party', pp. 34-39; A. C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk* (Edinburgh 1983), pp. 146-147.

<sup>207</sup> Sjolinder, *Presbyterian Reunion*, pp. 83-104; Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, pp. 35-47.

<sup>208</sup> Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 165-167.

women at the failure of the campaign thus far.<sup>209</sup> Train pointed out that citizenship of heaven was by faith alone and that the limitations placed upon the franchise, such as the property qualification, were in opposition to this principle:

this citizenship, this glorious franchise, God offers to all in offering Him in whom 'strangers' become citizens. The preaching of the gospel is in one point of view the announcement of universal suffrage ... in receiving Christ we receive ... a right to the citizenship of heaven ... a change of character as enables us to discharge our duties as citizens.<sup>210</sup>

Train used the same principle in relation to the objection that since women did not serve in the armed forces, they should not exercise the vote. The franchise should be extended to women as a basic right of citizenship.<sup>211</sup> Train concluded by encouraging men and women who had been excluded from the political enfranchisement to persevere in seeking the right to vote:

'We wrestle not,' in the matter, 'with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' Let no power of evil prevent you entering into possession of the privileges of a citizen of heaven, offered you in Jesus Christ ... if we trust in Christ, who is our peace, then this we may boldly say, 'We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.'<sup>212</sup>

#### 3.4.2. 'The Promotion of Social Purity': the Free Church

The debate in the 1885 General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, and particularly the contribution of Professor Lindsay, was crucial to the question of women's voting rights. The Report

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<sup>209</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, December 1884.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

of the Committee on Legislation regarding Social Purity responded to the failure of the movement for women's enfranchisement. It noted that during the last session of Parliament, 2,224 petitions had been collected, with 135,826 signatures.<sup>213</sup> The Report added that as a 'gospel purity crusade', the campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts had been satisfactory.<sup>214</sup>

A most valuable speech was made by the Rev. Mr. Paton, who seconded the adoption of the report and criticised recent legislation. According to him, the constitutional possibility of reform in relation to women's welfare in society was further diluted by the failure to enfranchise women. He pointed to the Contagious Diseases Acts, the attitude of the Churches towards the Acts, and the Criminal Law Amendment Bill.<sup>215</sup> Paton thought that the Contagious Diseases Acts were 'an insult, an outrage to the moral sense of the country, and a direct breach of gospel morality', and that social legislation should be 'in the matter of the protection of females from base licentious men'.<sup>216</sup> As far as the Churches' position on the Acts was concerned, he attacked the Established Church's failure to protest against them, unlike other Churches, who had taken action. Dealing with the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, Paton claimed that the age of consent of girls which was protected by the Bill should be increased. For these reasons, he declared:

I do not know exactly the opinion of the members of

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<sup>213</sup> *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of The Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1885), pp. 55-56; *Glasgow Herald*, 26 May 1885.

<sup>214</sup> *Proceedings*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>215</sup> See Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes to Sex, Marriage, and the Family*, pp. 199-211. For other social and economical problems, see also E. Breitenbach and E. Gordon (ed.), *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945* (Edinburgh 1992), pp. 10-65; D. Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s* (Sussex 1986), pp. 67-110; D. J. Withrington, 'The Churches in Scotland c.1870-c.1900: Towards a New Social Conscience', *RSCHS*, Vol XIX part 3 (1977), pp. 158-159.

<sup>216</sup> *Proceedings*, pp. 55-56.

Parliament regarding female franchise, but I most earnestly desire it; and one of my chief reasons for it and for the sweeping away of such obnoxious laws as the 'Contagious Diseases Acts' from the statute book.<sup>217</sup>

Although the assembly did not pass a deliverance in favour of women's suffrage,<sup>218</sup> the Committee on Legislation regarding Social Purity was reappointed with the addition of Professor Lindsay, who was an active supporter of the women's franchise and of female welfare in general.<sup>219</sup>

Despite the failure of the movement, Lindsay continued to believe that the suffrage should be given to women since 'women workers are not at present in a position to influence the framing of laws which vitally concern them.'<sup>220</sup> Professor Lindsay, who occupied the Chair of Church History at the FC College in Glasgow,<sup>221</sup> later helped in the formation of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades (SCWT) which was led by his wife.<sup>222</sup> He also joined the Scottish Christian Social Union (SCSU) of which he became a Vice-President.<sup>223</sup> A further study of his theological and historical outlook on female suffragism would therefore be relevant.

In the early Church, Lindsay identified the existence of

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitudes to Sex, Marriage, and the Family*, p. 210.

<sup>219</sup> *Proceedings*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>220</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 27 April 1895.

<sup>221</sup> W. I. Addison, *A Roll of the Graduates of the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow 1898), p. 332 in Glasgow University Archives; S. Mechie, *Trinity College Glasgow 1856-1956* (Glasgow 1956), p. 38; *DSCHT*, pp. 486-487.

<sup>222</sup> Annual Report of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades (1894-95), SRA.

<sup>223</sup> Annual Report of the Scottish Christian Social Union (1909-1910), SRA.

prophetesses, widows, and virgins.<sup>224</sup> Prophecy by prophets and prophetesses continued from the beginning to the close of the second century without interruption. According to Lindsay, 'widows' and 'virgins' worked together in every Church, and their work was regarded as being a ministry, in the same way as that of men. Their three major duties were 'to act as a combination of nurse and Bible-women, to persevere in prayer for all who are in temptation, and to pray for the reception of revelation where these were necessary.'<sup>225</sup> Women's ministry thus contributed to the formation of the spiritual well-being of the community to which they belonged.<sup>226</sup> Lindsay also expounded the doctrinal principles of the Reformation, which included the priesthood of all believers, namely, 'the right of every believing man and woman, whether lay or cleric, to go to God directly with confession seeking pardon.'<sup>227</sup>

These historical arguments reinforced Lindsay's concern for the rights of women in the society of his day. He was also involved in a Mission to the working class in Edinburgh, which sought to help working women in particular.<sup>228</sup> In Lindsay's view, there was an anomaly in the British legislature that 'it pressed lightly on men and heavily on women.'<sup>229</sup> Because of this, Lindsay continued to feel the great need for women's franchise as the means of solving many contentious social and economic problems.

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<sup>224</sup> T. M. Lindsay, *The Church and The Ministry in the early Centuries* (London 1902), p. 91; Lindsay, 'Christianity and The Position of Women', *Christianity and Social Life: A Course of Lectures* (Edinburgh 1885), pp. 100-101. Cf. Ian Hazlett (ed.), *Early Christianity* (London 1991), pp. 101-111.

<sup>225</sup> Lindsay, *The Church and The Ministry*, p. 91.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 249-250.

<sup>227</sup> T. M. Lindsay, *The Reformation* (Edinburgh 1900), p. 185.

<sup>228</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 25 October 1884.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.4.3. 'A Beneficial Influence on Public Questions': the Established Church

After the failure of the movement to enfranchise women, leaders in the Established Church became aware of social and economic problems, including women's issues, and began to support the suffrage campaign to a greater extent. Two representative figures among them were Dr. James Cameron Lees and Dr. John Marshall Lang.

Cameron Lees was minister of Paisley Abbey and then of St. Giles' in Edinburgh. Lees was also a founder of the Church Service Society and a member of its Editorial Committee. In addition to this, he was instrumental in the repair and restoration of both Paisley Abbey and St. Giles' Cathedral.<sup>230</sup> Lees later became involved in the activities of the SCSU as a Vice-President.<sup>231</sup> Lees' female suffragism had developed from his childhood. Lees described his motivation to become the supporter of the cause to Lady Frances Balfour:

It was my old mother who put it into me ... I asked her once the question that you have asked me, and she replied. 'Oh James, there are so many poor girls.' I asked her how the vote would help their poverty, and she explained that it would be worth five pounds to them, and I found that she thought, as in days of old, it would be a saleable property.<sup>232</sup>

Lees said on one occasion that 'the exercise of the suffrage by women would have a very beneficial influence on public questions.'<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Norman Maclean, *The Life of James Cameron Lees* (Glasgow 1922), pp. 1-13, 184-206; Balfour, *Ne Obliviscaris*, pp. 133-136; *DSCHT*, p. 477. See also D. B. Forrester and D. M. Murray (eds.), *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland* (2nd rev. ed. Edinburgh 1996), p. 94; John Kerr, *The Renaissance of Worship* (Edinburgh 1909), pp. 189-190.

<sup>231</sup> Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>232</sup> Balfour, *Ne Obliviscaris*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>233</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 27 April 1895.

Another advocate of the cause was Marshall Lang, who was minister of several congregations before becoming Principal of Aberdeen University.<sup>234</sup> Lang played a part in liturgical innovation as an active member of the Church Service Society.<sup>235</sup> He was sympathetic towards women's issues, and gave his support to the formation of the SCSU in 1901.<sup>236</sup>

From a more radical standpoint than that of Lees, Lang insisted that women's enfranchisement should be seen in relation to social reform and the Church. He stated that:

women are more vitally interested even than men in all that concerns religious life and the home.<sup>237</sup>

Lang's ideas on female suffrage can be seen in his Baird Lectures of 1901, *The Church and Its Social Mission*. The Kingdom of God was integral to Christ's teaching on social and personal righteousness:

The kingdom of God is the kingdom of the Father, and the righteousness of God, being the righteousness of the Father, can be possessed only in a life filial towards Him and brotherly towards all - the life whose distinguishing features are humility, reverence, sincerity, devotion to human wellbeing, self renouncing, self-sacrificing love.<sup>238</sup>

The principles of the kingdom of God were embodied in the Church that had sprung from the Lord's Incarnation and sacrifice. Life based on the Incarnation, 'should be, prompt, easy, natural-the evidence of a love which glows with the sense of the great love

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<sup>234</sup> J. M. Lang, *Glasgow and The Barony Thereof* (Glasgow 1895), pp. 104-110; Minutes of the Aberdeen University Senatus, 3 May 1909, Dep. of Special Collections, University of Aberdeen; *DSCHT*, p. 471; Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, pp. 379, 387.

<sup>235</sup> Kerr, *The Renaissance of Worship*, p. 189.

<sup>236</sup> Annual Report of the SCSU (1901-1902), SRA.

<sup>237</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 27 April 1895.

<sup>238</sup> John Marshall Lang, *The Church and Its Social Mission* (Edinburgh 1902), p. 24.

of God.'<sup>239</sup> In his opinion, the religion of the Incarnation was 'the religion of humanity.'<sup>240</sup> Referring to Christ's sacrifice, Lang emphasised that 'this is the Christian ideal of the motive and end of the service of humanity.'<sup>241</sup>

Lang also showed that these principles had been embodied in the history of the Church from the beginning. The Church had sought to evangelise all nations according to Christ's commandment, and the Christian religion had spread like wildfire in all directions. It had invaded the Roman Empire and the Empire had conveyed the gospel to other nations and peoples. In the Medieval period, the Church controlled the moral and social life of the nations, and when the Church became corrupt, spiritual leadership was provided by the monasteries. In time, this leadership was taken over by the Churches of the Reformation. Since then, the national Churches in Britain had influenced the heart of the nation. He thus concluded that throughout the history of the Church the principles of the Kingdom of God had been proclaimed in the world.<sup>242</sup>

Lang thought that Christian Socialism was the most suitable ideological embodiment of these principles and the best weapon to fight the problems which prevailed in modern society.<sup>243</sup> In the light of Christian Socialism, he examined such problems as over population, poverty, labour, intemperance, housing, and poor sanitary conditions.<sup>244</sup> Lang asserted that these problems should be approached on the basis of Christian Socialism which represented the principles of the Kingdom of God, and which could

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-133.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260ff. See D. Watson, *The Scottish Christian Social Union and How it Came to be Formed* (Glasgow 1901); J. Glasse, *The Relation of the Church to Socialism* (Edinburgh 1900); D. C. Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest* (New York 1987).

<sup>244</sup> Lang, *The Church and Its Social Mission*, pp. 260-283.

not be associated with such views as racism, misogynism, and anti-suffragism.

### **3.5. Conclusion: the New Aspect of the Women's Suffrage Movement in relation to its Religious Character**

In this chapter we have examined the Churches' support for women's franchise. In dealing with the agitation for Bright's Bill, we have seen that Churchmen and women were involved in meetings as enthusiastic audiences, as members of the platform parties and of petition committees, as movers and seconders of resolutions in favour of women's suffrage, and as Chairpersons on several occasions. They had also supported Woodall's Amendment to the Reform Bill. Two of these gatherings, an open conversazione at a meeting of the congregations of Gilfillan Memorial Church in Dundee and the Christian Women's Union Conference in Glasgow, were particularly significant on account of their direct connection with ecclesiastical organisations. It can thus be seen that Churchmen and women were often active and enthusiastic supporters rather than hinderers who were opponents of the cause.

Despite the failure of the campaign, the movement to enfranchise women continued. Up until 1890, the movement was largely led by Miss Lydia Becker acting as the leader of a federation of suffrage societies. From 1897 onwards, it was under the leadership of Mrs Millicent Fawcett of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies which adopted constitutional tactics.<sup>245</sup> In general, the members of the Union were called 'the suffragists'.<sup>246</sup> They also acted in harmony with other associations that promoted moral, social, and economic issues.<sup>247</sup> For example, the committee of the ENSWS appealed both to the Home

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<sup>245</sup> Lillian L. Shiman, *Women and Leadership in Nineteenth Century England* (London 1995), pp. 188-193.

<sup>246</sup> Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 16.

<sup>247</sup> Lady Frances Balfour, *Lady Victoria Campbell: A Memoir* (London), p. 174.

Secretary and to the Scottish Secretary on account of assaults against women.<sup>248</sup> In the meantime, stronger assertions than ever before regarding the religious dimension of women's suffrage had been made by the Rev. Graham at the Edinburgh meeting, who insisted that the cause was 'a just and righteous cause, and also a truly Christian cause'.<sup>249</sup>

On the eve of the failure of Woodall's amendment, *The Christian Leader* commented on the tactics of the movement:

it will be interesting to observe how far the resistance to pay taxes will spread and what success will attend this new method of bringing home to the conscience of the nation the injustice of depriving women from affairs of the country.<sup>250</sup>

Moreover, *The United Presbyterian Magazine* reported that 'several disquieting symptoms of our social life call for the earnest consideration of the Church', and that Communistic and revolutionary ideas have lately been industriously circulated.'<sup>251</sup> In this atmosphere, the Women's Social and Political Union was formed by Mrs Pankhurst and her daughters in Manchester in 1903,<sup>252</sup> and the militant suffrage movement thus embarked on its public activities. The members were called 'the suffragettes'.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> *Saint Andrew*, 3 February 1899.

<sup>249</sup> *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the ENSWS* (Edinburgh 1892), Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University.

<sup>250</sup> *The Christian Leader*, 26 June 1884.

<sup>251</sup> *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, November 1884.

<sup>252</sup> Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (London 1914), p. 14; David Mitchell, *Queen Christabel* (London 1977), p. 48; Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst* (London 1935), pp. 46-68; Iris Noble, *Emmeline and Her Daughters* (Bailey Brothers and Swinfen 1971), pp. 24-41; W. R. Inge, *The Post Victorians* (London 1933), pp. 477-500; David Mitchell, *The Fighting Pankhursts* (New York 1967), pp. 19-39; June Purvis, 'A "Pair of ... Infernal Queens"? A Reassessment of the Dominant Representations of Emmeline and Christabel, First Wave Feminists in Edwardian Britain', *Women's History Review*, Vol 5 No.2 (1996), pp. 259-272.

<sup>253</sup> Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 16.

The WSPU opened a new era for the women's suffrage movement in Britain, particularly in relation to its religious basis.

## CHAPTER IV 'THE USE OF FORCE IN LIFE': THE MILITANT SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN VIEWS OF VIOLENCE, 1904-1914

### 4.1. Introduction: were the Militant Suffragettes Anti-Christian?

The emergence of the WSPU created a new dimension in relation to the women's suffrage movement because of the militant tactics used by the suffragettes. They adopted methods which included the interruption of public meetings, the heckling of Cabinet Ministers, attacks on pillar-boxes, window-breaking, stone-throwing, hunger-strikes, and arson. The women used similar tactics against the Churches and their members. Many Church members thought that such 'militancy was opposed to the principles of Christianity',<sup>1</sup> and they were concerned that 'for every single adherent gained by militant tactics ten sympathetic supporters will be lost.'<sup>2</sup> The adoption of these tactics led some Scottish clergymen who had supported the women's issues to withdraw and refuse to promote votes for women.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the militant suffragettes were often regarded as an anti-Church group.<sup>4</sup>

This view, however, represents only one side of picture. It has to be remembered that many suffragettes were committed Christians. We need to examine, too, why several Church leaders continued to support the cause in spite of the militancy of this

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Charles R. Stewart (a member of the NMFWS) to Mrs. Maud Arncliffe-Sennett (founder and organiser of the NMFWS), 15 September 1913, Maud Arncliffe-Sennett Collection, Vol 25, British Library.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* See also Brian Harrison, *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (London 1978), pp. 147-171; Miss Elsie M. Inglis, 'Militancy, Non-Militancy and Women Suffrage' in *The Scotsman*, 14 February 1914 and *Perthshire Courier*, 17 February 1914.

<sup>3</sup> L. S. Hunter, *John Hunter: A Life* (London 1921), pp. 218-219. See also chapter V.

<sup>4</sup> *The Anti-Suffrage Review*, 1 August 1913; *The Missionary Record of the UFC*, May 1907; *The Scotsman*, 27 February 1914; *The Christian Commonwealth*, 1 April 1914.

section of the movement. The attitudes of the Churches and their members to militancy also need to be explored, with the purpose of defining the Church's official and unofficial stance on violence. The response of the Churches to the campaign, and the counter-actions of the authorities against militancy will be investigated. Having taken account of the opinions of Church leaders to violent action, we shall examine different interpretations of John Knox's views on violence and consider whether he was, as some claimed, the first militant reformer in Scottish history.

## **4.2. The Suffragettes' Militant Action and the Church**

### **4.2.1. Introductory Remarks: the Church as a Target of Militant Activity**

Why did the suffragettes become militant? There were two main reasons. In the first place, suffragettes needed a new and effective method to promote their cause. Most politicians had become reluctant to pursue the matter of votes for women, and other organised bodies which stood for the franchise for women continued to use passive tactics as the earlier campaigners had done. After the formation of the WSPU, the first but unofficial militant action which occurred was by Miss Christabel Pankhurst on the 19th February 1904.<sup>5</sup> At that time, she had become disappointed at the lack of interest of 'influential politicians' in the issue.<sup>6</sup>

In the second place, it was necessary for them to stimulate public opinion. This can be illustrated by the first official militant action of the WSPU, which took place in Manchester on

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<sup>5</sup> D. Christabel Pankhurst, *Unshackled* (London 1959), pp. 46-47; Antonia Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes* (Newton Abbot 1974), p. 7; Andrew Rosen, *Rise Up, Women!* (London 1974), pp. 32-33.

<sup>6</sup> Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, pp. 32-33.

the 13th October 1905.<sup>7</sup> Misses Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney created a disturbance at a meeting held by Sir Edward Grey and Winston Churchill at the Free Trade Hall. From this point on, militant action by the suffragettes took a variety of forms. Christabel Pankhurst believed that 'violence answered our demand for justice ... better violence than jeers, sneers, or silent contempt.'<sup>8</sup> She added that militant means were required to awaken the interest of the newspapers in the issue as Christabel Pankhurst said that 'where peaceful means had failed, one act of militancy succeeded and never again was the cause ignored by that or any other newspaper.'<sup>9</sup> Her firm commitment to militancy led her to being more aggressive, and this took the form of the mass lobbying of parliament from 1908, window smashing and hunger strikes from 1909, letter burning, arson and other attacks on property from 1912.<sup>10</sup>

Militant women also began targeting the Church and its members, although from the beginning of the women's suffrage movement, the Churches had given sympathetic support in a variety of ways.<sup>11</sup> Why did they attack the Church? The first reason was theological and was rooted in the millenarian vision of Christabel Pankhurst.<sup>12</sup> She viewed that the Church as part of the

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<sup>7</sup> Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragettes Movement* (London 1988), p. 189; E. P. Lawrence, *My Part In a Changing World* (London 1938), p. 146; Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, p. 49; Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 48; Raeburn, *The Militant Suffragettes*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>8</sup> Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, p. 51.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>10</sup> Harrison, *Separate Spheres*, p. 18; C. Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London 1967), pp. 78-83; Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, pp. 118, 156, 189; Christabel Pankhurst, *Broken Windows* (WSPU n.d.), pp. 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> See chapter VI; Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, p. 149.

<sup>12</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, *Pressing Problems of the Closing Age* (London 1924), pp. 38-48; C. Pankhurst, *"The Lord Cometh": The World Crisis Explained* (London 1923), pp. v-x; Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, pp. 196-197; Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford 1982), pp. 44-45; D. W. (continued ...)

established structures of society which had to be abolished before the rights of women could be realised. She asserted that:

The militancy of women is doing a work of purification. Nowhere was purification more needed than in the relationships between men and women. These relationships ought to be, and will be, fine and ennobling. Yet all kinds of evils have come into existence where they are concerned -tyranny, impurity, inequality, prejudice. A great upheaval, a great revolution, a great blasting away of ugly things - that is militancy. It was sorely needed. The bad and the old have to be destroyed to make way for the good and the new. When militancy has done its work, then will come sweetness and cleanness, respect and trust, perfect equality and justice into the partnership between men and women.<sup>13</sup>

The second reason was political and arose from the force-feeding of hunger-strikers, the torture of suffragettes in prison, and the hardships of the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act, later known as the "Cat and Mouse" Act.<sup>14</sup> The Act was passed in April 1913 in response to hunger strikes by the suffragettes, and by the decision of the Secretary of State, it allowed for the temporary release of strikers whose health was endangered.<sup>15</sup> In the view of the militant suffragettes, the Churches had not been sufficiently strong in their opposition to these measures by the authorities.

In approaching the Church, the suffragettes used a variety of militant tactics in Scotland, as in England. Faced with militancy, how did the Church and its members respond? To answer this question, five areas of Church life need to be examined: the individual, the parochial, the presbyterial, the synodical, and

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(continued ...)

Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London 1989), p. 193. See also *DSCHT*, pp. 562-564.

<sup>13</sup> Christabel Pankhurst, 'What Militancy Means', *The Suffragette*, 2 May 1913.

<sup>14</sup> Rosen, *Rise Up, Women*, pp. 123-130, 193.

<sup>15</sup> 'Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act', *Acts of Parliament* (London 1913).

that of the General Assembly.

We shall first identify individuals in the Church who experienced the violence of the suffragettes.

#### **4.2.2. 'If you don't stop, I shall stop': the Aberdonian Suffragettes and Professor George Adam Smith**

The Prime Minister, leader of the Liberal party and Rector of Aberdeen University, Mr. Asquith was attacked by the Aberdonian suffragettes on 25 October 1910.<sup>16</sup> By that time, no Cabinet Minister could 'open his mouth anywhere without interruptions and possibly assault',<sup>17</sup> and this occasion proved to be no exception. The incident was significant, too, because the Principal of the University, Professor George Adam Smith, was a supporter of women's suffrage.<sup>18</sup>

In 1910, the Student Representative Council of the University made an arrangement by which the Prime Minister as Rector would come to Aberdeen to deliver an address.<sup>19</sup> At a meeting of the Senatus Academicus of the University held on 5 October 1910, Principal Smith reported that Mr. Asquith intended to deliver his Rectorial address,<sup>20</sup> and the Senatus resolved to cooperate with the University Court. Smith realised that militant suffragettes were now adopting the tactic of attacking Cabinet Ministers because of the Liberal government's reluctance to grant

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<sup>16</sup> *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 26 October 1910; *Aberdeen Free Press*, 26 October 1910; *Alma Mater*, 27 October 1910; *Glasgow Herald*, 26 October 1910; *The Scotsman*, 26 October 1910; *The Times*, 26 October 1910.

<sup>17</sup> L. A. Smith, *George Adam Smith: A Personal Memoir and Family Chronicle* (London 1943), p. 139.

<sup>18</sup> See also chapter II.

<sup>19</sup> *The Times*, 8 October 1910.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the Senatus Academicus of the University of Aberdeen, 5 October 1910, Dep. of Special Collections, Aberdeen University.

parliamentary votes to women,<sup>21</sup> and the Prime Minister Asquith had been a target for such attacks.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Smith would be aware of the activities of the Aberdeen University Woman Suffrage Association which had been active since 1908.<sup>23</sup> Although the AUWSA in principle did not accept the policy of the WSPU, they had adopted militant methods in the 1908 Rectorial election. Just as the WSPU opposed Liberal candidates, the AUWSA fought against Mr. Asquith who had been asked by the Liberal students to stand for election, and supported instead Edward Carson, the Unionist Party candidate.<sup>24</sup> Lindy Moore saw the Rectorial election as 'a parallel to the previous year's by-election in the city'.<sup>25</sup> At length, Asquith had been elected to the Rector of the University by a very narrow vote, but until the 1910 Rectorial address, serious tensions between the students remained unresolved. Furthermore, the Aberdeen regional office of the WSPU, which appointed Miss Ada Flatnam as their organiser, was established in February 1910.<sup>26</sup> Thus, by 1910, the activities of the WSPU in Aberdeen were well established. Because of this situation, Mrs L. A. Smith, wife of the Principal, was worried about the possibility of an incident taking place since the Prime Minister's visit 'entailed great responsibility and some risk for himself and his hosts.'<sup>27</sup>

Before going further, we should pause here to be reminded that the Principal's fearfulness of the militant women did not stem from anti-suffragism. He ministered in Brechin as an assistant,

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<sup>21</sup> George Adam Smith Papers, Acc 9446/404, National Library of Scotland; Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 139.

<sup>22</sup> Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 139.

<sup>23</sup> Lindy Moore, *Bajanellas and Semilinal: Aberdeen University and the Education of Women 1860-1920* (Aberdeen 1991), p. 94.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94-96.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>26</sup> Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, p. 115.

<sup>27</sup> George Adam Smith Papers, Acc 9446/404.

and at Queen's Cross Church in Aberdeen, and he then taught Hebrew and Old Testament in the FC College in Aberdeen in place of Professor William Robertson Smith who had been deposed by the FC General Assembly.<sup>28</sup> When he later served as Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature in the FC and then UFC College at Glasgow from 1892 to 1909, his involvement in a variety of women's issues was outstanding. For example, as Convenor of the Committee on Unemployment of the UFC Presbytery of Glasgow, Smith had presented 'a detailed and discriminating report' concerning the working classes including woman workers.<sup>29</sup> In this report, he had maintained that 'the Churches have to remind all their members, producers and consumers alike ... It is a fallacy to suppose that one man's labour and possessions necessarily mean the exclusion of others.'<sup>30</sup> Professor Smith had worked on behalf of the Council of Women's Trades and Employment, and in 1907, he had presided at a special conference of the Council held in London.<sup>31</sup> From the beginning, Smith was also an active member of the Scottish Christian Social Union which attempted to promote the role and status of women in relation to social and economic issues.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Dr. Smith and his wife were enthusiastic supporters of women's political franchise and he served as a Vice-President of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Association

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<sup>28</sup> For Smith's biography, R. A. Riesen, *Criticism and Faith in Late Victorian Scotland* (University Press of America 1985), pp. 8-12. See also chapter II.

<sup>29</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Glasgow, CH3/146/44-45, SRA; *Alma Mater*, 27 October 1909.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*; Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 93.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 93. See also Annual Reports of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades (1894-1939), SRA; 'Women in the Leadership of the Scottish Trades Union Congress 1897-1970', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, No. 7, July 1973.

<sup>32</sup> George Adam Smith Papers, Acc. 9446/403-404, National Library of Scotland; Annual Report of the Scottish Christian Social Union (1901-1902), SRA; *Saint Andrew*, 11 April, 9 May, 13 June 1901; *Alma Mater*, 27 October 1909.

for Women's Suffrage which had been established in 1902.<sup>33</sup> Even after moving to Aberdeen as Principal of the University,<sup>34</sup> his solid support for women's issues remained unchanged.

Regardless of his private attitude to the issue of women's suffrage and female rights in general, Principal Smith was prepared to welcome the visit of the Premier and he made arrangements for the Rectorial event.<sup>35</sup> On arrival of the Prime Minister, the planned programme went ahead with a dinner party and a torchlight procession.<sup>36</sup>

On 25 October 1909, prior to the Rectorial proceedings, Mr. Asquith took the Chair in the University Court. Up until then, Mr. Asquith had felt that the warmth of the welcome was 'a real inspiration to the man who was to address them'.<sup>37</sup> In the Mitchell Hall, after being introduced by Dr. E. Smith, President of the Council, Mr. Asquith began to deliver the Rectorial address entitled 'Culture and Character'.<sup>38</sup> However, in the process of delivering the lecture, the Rector was frequently interrupted by the singing and shouting of the students. Principal Smith later wrote to his father regarding the incident: 'I appealed for order and quietness followed. The Rector continued his speech steadily, but it was a horrid disturbance.'<sup>39</sup> While the lecturer was discussing 'the dogmatic

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<sup>33</sup> Minutes of Executive Committee of the GWSAWS, 1902, Dep. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Mitchell Library. Cf. *Glasgow Herald*, 15 December 1902.

<sup>34</sup> George Adam Smith Papers, Acc 9446/37, 54, 106, 216, 218, National Library of Scotland; Annual Report of the Scottish Social Union (1909-1910), SRA; Annual Report of the Scottish Council of Women's Trades (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 140.

<sup>36</sup> *The Aberdeen Daily Journal*; *Aberdeen Free Press*, 25 October; *Alma Mater*, 27 October 1910.

<sup>37</sup> Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 141.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; H. H. Asquith, *Occasional Addresses* (London 1918), pp. 85-97.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 142.

temper', more interruptions occurred, despite the appeal of the Principal for quietness. The Rector was annoyed and shouted: 'If you don't stop, I shall stop.'<sup>40</sup> But his speech was again interrupted. Principal Smith described it as follows: 'the students had at one time broken out into senseless singing of hymns and the hundredth Psalm, which cut me to the quick.'<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, outside the Mitchell Hall, the students were preparing to drag the Premier and the Principal in a carriage from the University to Chanonry Lodge. But, before they could do so, the carriage was smashed, and finally it was thrown into the Harbour.<sup>42</sup> *The Aberdeen Daily Journal* reported that there were 'wild street scenes'. Principal Smith noted that 'after the ceremony we were to have been dragged in a carriage to Chanonry Lodge, but before it was ready a number of students mounted on it and a wheel came off.'<sup>43</sup> He added that 'Sir John Fleming offered his car, and we were much relieved to be driven home in it.'<sup>44</sup> In all events, Principal Smith put it in a letter to his father: 'My dear father, our Rector had come and gone and we breathe freely! The visit had been a great success.'<sup>45</sup>

To sum up, Principal Smith, who was an enthusiastic supporter of women's suffrage in Scotland, personally experienced the activities of the suffragettes belonging to the AUWSA and the WSPU. His attitude to these tactics can be seen in two ways. He first of all made preparations and arrangements to prevent a series of attacks by the suffragettes. And then he admonished the students who used militant tactics inside and outside the Mitchell Hall. This incident shows that the suffragette movement could present difficulties for the supporter of votes for women.

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<sup>40</sup> *The Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 26 October 1914.

<sup>41</sup> Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 142.

<sup>42</sup> *The Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 26 October 1910.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *George Adam Smith*, p. 142.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

The event which had the greater repercussions on the Church, however, was the burning of Whitekirk Church.

4.2.3. 'Our holy and our beautiful House is burned up with Fire': the Suffragettes' Arson Campaign and the Whitekirk Incident

A. 'Who burned Whitekirk?': the Burning of Whitekirk Church and Public Opinion

As the Liberal Government's 'Franchise and Registration' Bill was withdrawn by the ruling of the Speaker, J. W. Lowther, in the House of Commons on 27 January 1913, the suffragettes condemned the decision allegedly made by 'a joint action of the Speaker and the Government',<sup>46</sup> and began an arson campaign which destroyed public and private property. These can be seen as revenge attacks carried out in response to the failure to secure women's suffrage at a national level.<sup>47</sup> Many buildings in Scotland were burned down by fire and bombed at random.<sup>48</sup> It was fortunate that until

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<sup>46</sup> Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, p. 187.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>48</sup> The arson attacks attributed to the suffragettes in Scotland during the period 1913-1914:

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Date (Y/M)	Numbers	Locations
1913 (from April)	18	Aberdeen, Ayr, Dundee (3) Dalkeith, Glasgow (2), Edinburgh (3), Kelso, Killearn, Perth Tranent, St. Andrews (2) Firth of Clyde
1914 (to August)	18	Ayr, Alloway, Dundee (2) Glasgow (4), Lanark (3) Perth (4), Rosslyn Chapel Tombuie, Whitekirk

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the end of February 1914, Church buildings were not the target of these arson attacks.<sup>49</sup>

The incident at Whitekirk Church in East Lothian occurred in the early hours of the 26th February 1914.<sup>50</sup> At about four a.m., the Church officer and his wife discovered a fire, but efforts to put it out were fruitless. There were some priceless treasures in the building, the most valuable being the Whitekirk Bible. The Church officer attempted to rescue the Bible but failed. In the police inquiry into the fire, two suffragette pieces of note paper were discovered. Some tools which had been used by the suffragettes were also found: a heavy hammer and a two-bladed pocket knife.<sup>51</sup> It was supposed that the hammer had been used to break the window at the north of the Church and the knife had been employed in opening some acid liquid.<sup>52</sup> It was thus believed that suffragettes had sprayed the interior with inflammable material and also had used explosives, as some enormous slab stones had been shattered.<sup>53</sup> However, the authorities did not make any arrests in connection with this arson attack. The *Haddingtonshire Advertiser* described the ruined scene of Whitekirk Church as follows:

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(continued ...)

(rev. ed. Aberdeen 1995), pp. 275-278; *The Suffragette*, 10 July 1914; *The Times*, 4 July 1914.

<sup>49</sup> Other than the Whitekirk outrage, there were in Scotland other attempts to blow up the then Belmont Church, whose minister was the Rev. Dr. John Fraser Grahame, Glasgow; the Carmichael Church, whose minister was the Rev. James D. W. Gibson, Lanark. (*Glasgow Herald*, 4 April and 3 July 1914; *The Suffragette*, 10 July 1914; *The Times*, 4 July 1914. For clergymen, *FES* III, pp. 289, 397) Fortunately, these attempts proved unsuccessful.

<sup>50</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 26 February 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 27 February 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 27 February 1914; *The Scotsman*, 27 February 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 27 February 1914; *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 27 February 1914; *The Times*, 27 February 1914.

<sup>51</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 27 February 1914.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *The Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 27 February 1914.

In the course of the day the fire burned itself and it was possible to more closely inspect the scene of disaster. Really this was complete. But for that portion at the east end, the roof has completely collapsed ... Nothing remains of the Church furniture except the charred wood. The fine pipe organ is no more, the heating apparatus presents a spectacle of twisted pipes, and the quaint old "loft" occupied by the Haddington family is now empty space.<sup>54</sup>

Why was Whitekirk Church targeted? Four possible reasons can be identified. Ecclesiastically, it was no doubt in reaction to the decision of Haddington CS presbytery, which had declined to support women's suffrage on 25 November 1913.<sup>55</sup> Politically, it can be seen as a response to actions of the Government, such as the force-feeding of suffragette prisoners who were on hunger strike.<sup>56</sup> Economically and in general, the militant women could well have assumed that the destruction of a valuable building like Whitekirk would have a great public impact. And geographically, its isolated location would make an attack relatively easy.<sup>57</sup>

The destruction of the Church created widespread indignation. *Life and Work* reported that 'the loss of so noble a Church as Whitekirk must be regarded as a national calamity,'<sup>58</sup> while the editorial of *The Scotsman* defined the suffragettes' outrage as a 'sacrilege'.<sup>59</sup> Serious criticism of the arson then followed. As President of the Edinburgh branch of the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association, Lady Betty Balfour

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<sup>54</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 27 February 1914.

<sup>55</sup> L. Leneman, 'Suffragettes and The Burning of Whitekirk Church', *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society*, Vol 21 (1991), pp. 76-77, and 'The Scottish Churches and 'Votes for Women'', *RSCHS*, Vol XXIV part 2, p. 244.

<sup>56</sup> Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches', p. 244. Cf. Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, pp. 214-245.

<sup>57</sup> Leneman, 'Suffragettes', p. 76; Elspeth King, *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women* (Edinburgh 1993), p. 127.

<sup>58</sup> *Life and Work*, April 1914.

<sup>59</sup> *The Scotsman*, 27 February 1914.

condemned 'this wanton act of vandalism'.<sup>60</sup> Lady Frances Balfour, who was a Vice-President of the NUWSS and President of the SCLWS, deplored the fact that the constitutional suffragists were 'helpless victims before the rapine and lawless deeds of the militants.'<sup>61</sup> In addition, the Haddington Suffrage Society of the NUWSS protested that 'the cause of women's suffrage must suffer at least a temporary set back.'<sup>62</sup> A much stronger protest was made by the Dunbar Suffrage Society of the NUWSS, in criticising the 'un-Christian-like acts of violence of the militant society'.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, in a service at Prestonkirk Parish Church, the Rev. T. S. Majoribanks indirectly criticised the arson attack and expressed the sympathy of the congregation.<sup>64</sup>

From the militant suffragette's side, Mrs Catherine Blair of Hoprig Mains, who was a member of the WSPU and sent innumerable letters to the press, wrote a letter about the incident.<sup>65</sup> She explained the reasons why the militant outrage had occurred. First, the lawful suffrage movement had proved very limited in its effectiveness. Previous female campaigners for women's votes had fought for over forty years, and yet nothing had been achieved at a national level.<sup>66</sup> Secondly, Mrs Pankhurst had published 'White Slavery and the Government' in April 1913, but the authorities had retaliated by raiding the office of the WSPU

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<sup>60</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 6 March 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 6 March 1914; *The Scotsman*, 4 March 1914.

<sup>61</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 6 March 1914; *The Scotsman*, 2 March 1914.

<sup>62</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 6 March 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 6 March 1914.

<sup>63</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 6 March 1914.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 13 March 1914; *The Scotsman*, 6 and 9 March 1914. For Blair, see Catherine Blair, *Rural Journey* (London 1940), pp. 14-17; Monica Sharon, 'Catherine Blair: Living her 'Splendid Best'', *Scottish Home and Country*, December 1987, pp. 742-757.

<sup>66</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 13 March 1914.

and by arresting the staff. Severe penalties followed and then two women were charged with conspiracy and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Finally, Blair deplored the fact that 'the Government made no attempt to redress the grievance, and pledges were broken.'<sup>67</sup>

At first, Blair had not wished to blame anybody for Whitekirk, but because of the hysterical outcry against the militant movement and herself, she held a number of individuals responsible as well as various public bodies.<sup>68</sup> These were the Press, Mr. J. D. Hope (MP), Lord Haldane (MP and the Lord Advocate), the Master of Polwarth as chairman of the Prison Commissioners, the East Lothian ministers, the voters, Mr. J. A. Lawrie as Judge, the East Lothian anti-militants, and Mr. A. J. Balfour, MP, the husband of Lady Frances Balfour.<sup>69</sup> In agreement with Blair, and in contrast to other newspapers, the Scottish correspondent of *The Christian Commonwealth* protested that:

We do not defend the militant policy, but if the Churches concerned themselves more with the destruction of human life they would not need to trouble themselves much over the destruction of their property. It is not the "sacrilege" committed by the women that must be stopped so much as the "sacrilege" committed by many "unco guid" among the men who expect their girls to live well and maintain their self-respect on such a pittance.<sup>70</sup>

In another letter about the fire, one writer suggested that 'it is difficult to believe that serious-minded women suffragists are responsible for it.'<sup>71</sup> He added that 'the finding of suffrage literature on the scene of an outrage is, of course, not proof

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 20 March 1914.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *The Christian Commonwealth*, 1 April 1914.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 March 1914.

positive as to the identity of the perpetrators.'<sup>72</sup> Had the outrages been carried out by militant women, it would have been 'foolish and wicked'.<sup>73</sup> The editor held that although a minority of suffragettes were responsible for these acts, 'their actions in no way weaken the claims of the great and growing army of law-abiding women.'<sup>74</sup>

After the Whitekirk incident, serious tension between militant suffragettes and non-militant suffragists in East Lothian increased, and it exploded at the Haddington meeting of the WSPU.<sup>75</sup> By then, it was common opinion that 'public feeling was aroused by the recent Whitekirk outrage', and 'the proposed meeting was clearly intended to be of the nature of a militant reply to denunciations in the Press and elsewhere of that act.'<sup>76</sup> On the 23 March 1914, the Assembly Rooms at Haddington were packed and the two main doors were completely jammed with people. Copying the tactics of the militant suffragettes, members of the audience frequently interrupted the speeches, with crying, singing, and whistling. Members of the audience cried out loudly: "Whitekirk"?, "Who burned Whitekirk"?, and "Tell me about Whitekirk".<sup>77</sup> At last, the female speakers escaped from the angry audience with police protection and boarded a vehicle. Oranges and eggs were thrown at the suffragette women.<sup>78</sup>

The suffragettes expressed their satisfaction at the widespread and sensitive responses to the arson attack in public. This can be seen from a letter of David Congleton to Janie Allan who was a member of the WSPU and a columnist of *Forward* (Glasgow), stating that 'I am satisfied that incidents like Whitekirk do

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 27 March 1914.

<sup>76</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 27 March 1914.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Rosen, *Rise Up, Women*, p. 191.

more harm than good.'<sup>79</sup>

*B. The Rev. Edward. B. Rankin's Message on the Whitekirk Outrage*

On the first Sunday,<sup>80</sup> the Kirk Session of the Church arranged a service in Whitekirk school for the morning and in Tynninghame for the afternoon.<sup>81</sup> The minister, the Rev. E. B. Rankin, preached from the text, 'our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste.' (Isaiah 64:11)<sup>82</sup> Rankin recalled the history of the Church of St. Mary at Whitekirk, which had been built by a patriotic woman, the Countess of March.<sup>83</sup> Rankin also outlined the history of its past desecrations. For example, the English had robbed its valuable treasures and in 1650, Cromwell's Ironsides had made use of it as a stable. Also, the Presbytery of Dunbar had tried to make part of it into a granary in 1746.<sup>84</sup> Rankin stated that although 'countless crimes have

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<sup>79</sup> David Congleton to Janie Allan, 22 April 1914, Janie Allan Collections, Acc 449/1/27, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>80</sup> E. B. Rankin, *Saint Mary's Whitekirk* (Edinburgh 1914), pp. 29-39; W. D. Maxwell, *The Story of St. Mary's Whitekirk and Tynninghame* (n.p. n.d.), pp. 32-33; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 6 March 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 6 March 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 2 March 1914; *Life and Work*, April 1914; *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 2 March 1914.

<sup>81</sup> Minutes of Kirk Session of St. Mary's Whitekirk and Tynninghame, 27 February 1914. The Minutes are in custody of St. Mary's Whitekirk and Tynninghame.

<sup>82</sup> Rankin, *Saint Mary's Whitekirk*, p. 30.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*; J. T. Soutter, *St. Mary's Whitekirk: The Lourdes of the Middle Ages* (The East Lothian Archaeological and Naturalist Society 1926), pp. 21-22; 'St. Mary's Whitekirk', pamphlet in the St. Mary's parish Church at Whitekirk and Tynninghame; A. E. Ritchie, *The Churches of Saint Balbred: Auldham, Whitekirk, Tynninghame, Prestonkirk* (Edinburgh 1880), pp. 26-122; P. H. Waddell, *An Old Kirk Chronicle: Being a History of Auldham*,  
(continued ...)

been wrought since our holy house was built in this fair land of Scotland,' 'no hand of Scottish man has ever been raised in the sacrilegious effort to overthrow it.'<sup>85</sup> The minister thus deplored the fact that this outrage was committed by Scotswomen:

Let me not charge my fellow-countrywomen with this unspeakable crime. Surely in broad Scotland there is no woman of Scottish blood so impious ... no woman so godless as to plan or attempt an outrage so diabolical! Loath am I to believe that any Scotswoman was guilty of an act so senseless, of a crime so monstrous. But it seems all too true that some women did a fiend's work here.<sup>86</sup>

He condemned the militant act of the suffragettes, while praying for their repentance and forgiveness:

For the deluded beings who have been guilty of this affront to God, this outrage done to the most tender and sacred feelings that move the human heart, let us pray that their eyes may be opened, that they may see their sin and seek and find forgiveness.<sup>87</sup>

The preacher concluded by appealing for the speedy restoration of the building. This sermon was reported to the national newspapers, and it resulted in a large number of responses throughout the country.

*C. 'Sacrilege and Vandalism': the Whitekirk Case and the Scottish Ecclesiological Society*

Soon after the service at Whitekirk, one of the strongest protests against the outrage was made by the Scottish Ecclesiological Society. The protest was initiated by the Rev.

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(continued ...)

*Tynninghame and Whitekirk in East Lothian 1615-1850* (Edinburgh 1893), pp. 133-166.

<sup>85</sup> Rankin, *Saint Mary's Whitekirk*, p. 30.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 35.

Professor James Cooper. Cooper ministered at St. Stephen's Broughty Ferry and at the East Church of St. Nicholas in Aberdeen, before becoming Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Glasgow in 1898.<sup>88</sup> A prominent liturgical reformer, he joined the Church Service Society in 1873 and later became a Vice-President. He was also the best known representative of the Scottish Church Society, the expression of the Scoto-Catholic movement.<sup>89</sup> Cooper was also a socially and economically concerned individual who was involved in the activities of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades and the Scottish Christian Social Union.<sup>90</sup> Cooper supported the women's suffrage movement in Scotland, although he refused to become a member of the Executive Committee of the GWSAWS and his wife was nominated instead.<sup>91</sup> However, Cooper himself was a staunch Tory in politics and had little sympathy with such militant action.<sup>92</sup>

After the fire, he sent a letter to the Edinburgh and Glasgow branches of the Society. In this letter, he condemned the suffragettes' arson attack:<sup>93</sup>

One thing I want to do is to voice the grief and

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<sup>88</sup> H. J. Wotherspoon, *James Cooper: A Memoir* (London 1926), pp. 36, 51, 91, 119; D. M. Murray, 'James Cooper (1846-1922) at Glasgow Presbytery and Episcopacy', W. Ian P. Hazlett, *Traditions of Theology in Glasgow 1450-1990* (Edinburgh 1993), p. 66 and 'Anglican Recognition of Presbyterian Orders: James Cooper and the Precedent of 1610', R. N. Swanson (ed.), *Unity and Diversity in the Church* (Oxford 1996), p. 455.

<sup>89</sup> John Kerr, *The Renaissance of Worship* (Edinburgh 1909), pp. 186, 196; J. R. Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland 1875-1929* (Edinburgh 1933), p. 235.

<sup>90</sup> Annual Report of the SCWT (1904-1905), SRA; Annual Report of the SCSU (1901-1902), SRA.

<sup>91</sup> Minutes of Executive Committee of the GWSAWS, 19 May and 7 July 1902.

<sup>92</sup> Murray, 'James Cooper', p. 71.

<sup>93</sup> *Transactions of the Scottish Ecclesiological Society*, Vol IV, 1914, pp. 19, 21; *DSCHT*, p. 210; *The Scotsman*, 8 March 1914; *The British Weekly*, 12 March 1914.

indignation of the Society at the insane and sacrilegious destruction of the ancient Church of Whitekirk, so typical an example of Scottish Medieval architecture and so peculiarly rich in historical associations. It is evident that nothing is exempt from what looks more like a maniacal epidemic than anything else, and I suppose we should call upon the authorities to recognise this fact and take measures for the protection of historical buildings hitherto sufficiently guarded by their inherent sacredness.<sup>94</sup>

His motive for the protest was quite understandable in view of the background to the formation of the Society. The Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society had first been formed by Cooper in 1886 when he was minister of the East Church of St Nicholas.<sup>95</sup> The Glasgow Society was then established in 1893 and the two organised Societies finally united in 1903 to form the Scottish Ecclesiological Society.<sup>96</sup> When the inaugural gathering of the National Society took place in Edinburgh, Professor Cooper, acting as its President, declared the two main objects of the Society: one, 'the study of the principles of Christian Worship, and of Church Architecture, and of the allied Arts', and the other, 'the diffusion throughout Scotland of sound views and a truer taste in such matters'.<sup>97</sup> To promote these aims, monthly meetings were held, occasional excursions were made, and the transactions of the Society were published.

The Council of the Society assembled in Edinburgh on 28 March 1914 and a resolution was drawn up to be sent to the Scottish Secretary. However, the Rev. Dr. David Watson, a member of the Council, minister of St. Clement's Church in Glasgow, and founder

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<sup>94</sup> The Rev. Professor J. Cooper to the Edinburgh Ecclesiological Society in *The British Weekly*, 12 March 1914.

<sup>95</sup> *Transactions*, Vol I, 1903, p. 3; *DSCHT*, pp. 210, 273; D. M. Murray, 'The Scottish Church Society, 1892-1914: A Study of the High Church Movement in the Church of Scotland, (Unpublished Cambridge Ph.D thesis 1975), pp. 313-337.

<sup>96</sup> *Transactions*, Vol I, 1903, pp. 1, 4.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

of the Scottish Christian Social Union,<sup>98</sup> dissented from the decision in writing.<sup>99</sup> This was partly because Dr. Watson, as an enthusiastic supporter for women's suffrage, wished to defend the militant women, and partly because in his view it was not strictly the business of the Society.<sup>100</sup> In spite of this dissent, the following resolution was carried and remitted to the Scottish Secretary:

The Council of the Scottish Ecclesiastical Society resolve to put on record the grief and indignation of the Society at the insane and sacrilegious destruction of the ancient Church of Whitekirk - so typical an example of Scottish medieval architecture, and so peculiarly rich in historical associations. It being evident, unhappily, that nothing is exempt from outrages of the kind, the Council call upon the authorities to recognise this fact, and take measures for the protection of historic buildings hitherto guarded by their inherent sacredness.<sup>101</sup>

Although the Secretary of State for Scotland simply acknowledged the receipt of the Resolution,<sup>102</sup> the members hoped that a strenuous effort would be made for the worthy restoration of that beautiful and historic church, and wished 'all success to the pious work'.<sup>103</sup> The Scottish Ecclesiastical Society's response to the Whitekirk outrage was understandable since such militant action was entirely incompatible with the fundamental principles of the Society.

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<sup>98</sup> David Watson, *Chords of Memory*, (Edinburgh 1936), pp. 63, 90; *DSCHT*, p. 856.

<sup>99</sup> *Transactions*, Vol IV, 1914, p. 21.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *The Scotsman*, 19 May 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 19 May 1914; *The British Weekly*, 21 May 1914.

<sup>103</sup> *Transactions*, Vol IV, 1914, pp. 186-187; Rankin, *Saint Mary's Whitekirk*, pp. 39-42.

*D. 'Detestation and Abhorrence of the Sacrilegious Act':  
Responses to the Whitekirk Outrage by the Ecclesiastical Courts*

Shortly after the fire, on 27 February 1914, the Kirk Session of St. Mary's Whitekirk and Tynninghame assembled in the Manse.<sup>104</sup> The Kirk Session deplored 'the wanton destruction of their beautiful and venerable Church', and decided to try and acquire a temporary iron Church.<sup>105</sup>

Severe condemnations were issued by four presbyteries, those of Dunbar, Glasgow, Haddington, and Irvine. First of all, Haddington CS Presbytery met in Haddington Church Hall on the 31st March 1914 and discussed the outrage.<sup>106</sup> The Rev. J. Coullie of Pencaitland proposed a motion critical of the militant act of the suffragettes. Significantly, on the 25th November 1913, Coullie had been in the forefront of opposition to receiving a deputation from the Haddington Women's Suffrage Society.<sup>107</sup> At that meeting, the Rev. A. M. Hewat of Tranent had moved to refuse to accept a deputation. In seconding this motion, Mr. Goodfellow of Haddington had condemned a variety of militant actions by the suffragettes, noting that 'I personally had been put to a deal of trouble in connection with the safeguarding of the Parish Church.'<sup>108</sup> Against the motion, the Rev. T. E. S. Clarke of Saltoun (the Clerk) said: 'I did not know that the Church could summarily

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<sup>104</sup> Minutes of Kirk Session of St. Mary's Whitekirk and Tynninghame, 27 February 1914.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* For the process of the restoration, *The British Weekly*, 12 March, 19 March, 2 April, 11 June 1914.

<sup>106</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Haddington, SRO, CH2/185/17, 31 March 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 3 April 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 3 April 1914.

<sup>107</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Haddington, 25 November 1913; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 28 November 1913; *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 28 November 1913; *The Scotsman*, 26 November 1913; *Glasgow Herald*, 26 November 1913; *The Vote*, 9 January 1914.

<sup>108</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Haddington, 25 November 1913.

dismiss the great women's movement that had arisen.'<sup>109</sup> However, in supporting the motion, Coullie had maintained that 'as a Church court they must keep themselves as far as possible clear from this great question of politics which was agitating the country.'<sup>110</sup> Accordingly, the motion was narrowly carried by 8 votes to 6. Had not Mr. Coullie supported the motion, a deputation would have been received by the presbytery. The resolution had stimulated a response from the women involving both the militant and non-militant wings of the movement, and in an open letter to the presbytery, Catherine Blair condemned Mr. Coullie for opposing the agenda of women's suffrage because of its political nature.<sup>111</sup>

In the light of the previous discussions, Coullie proposed the following motion:

As this is the first meeting since the wanton destruction by fire of the ancient Church of Whitekirk on the night of the 25th February last, the Presbytery of Haddington desire to put on record their detestation of that ruthless act of sacrilege and their sincere sympathy with the parishioners and the heritors of Whitekirk and their earnest prayer that those guilty of such a base and cowardly deed be led, if not to confession and repentance, at least to see that such conduct can never accomplish in a Christian land any worthy end aimed at.<sup>112</sup>

Coullie added that 'it was certainly their duty as a presbytery to take notice specially of this very extraordinary act.'<sup>113</sup> It was then observed that other presbyteries of the Church would take action against the efforts of the suffragettes. In consequence, the motion was unanimously agreed.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* See also chapter V.

<sup>111</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 5 December 1913.

<sup>112</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Haddington, 31 March 1914.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

As Coulie expected, other presbyteries expressed their views about the Whitekirk incident. It was discussed in Glasgow CS presbytery which met on 24 March 1914. The Rev. Professor H. M. B. Reid of Glasgow University proposed that 'the presbytery records their solemn and emphatic condemnation of the destruction by fire of the parish Church of Whitekirk and Tynninghame.'<sup>115</sup> Because of standing orders, the motion was deferred to the next ordinary meeting,<sup>116</sup> but a month later, the motion was unanimously adopted.<sup>117</sup>

The reaction of Irvine presbytery to the incident is significant since it was the only presbytery to have decided to send an overture in favour of women's suffrage to the General Assembly.<sup>118</sup> The situation was now very different. The Rev. Dunnet of Kilmarnock used strong language to criticise the outrage. He stated that 'although it was only a small section of the promoters of the movement ... it provided an opportunity ... to show their dissatisfaction with this section ... their disapproval of this action.'<sup>119</sup> Consequently, the presbytery now resolved not to transmit the overture in favour of the women's cause to the General Assembly.<sup>120</sup>

Finally, Dunbar CS presbytery considered the Whitekirk outrage, and condemned it in the following terms:

The Presbytery unanimously resolved to record in their minutes their feelings of horror and detestation of

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<sup>115</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, SRA, CH2/171/29, 24 March 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 27 March 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 26 March 1914. See also chapter V.

<sup>116</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, 24 March 1914.

<sup>117</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 30 April 1914; *Forward*, 9 May 1914; *The British Weekly*, 7 May 1914.

<sup>118</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Irvine, SRO, CH2/197/15, 7 April 1914; *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 10 April 1914.

<sup>119</sup> *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 10 April 1914.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*; Minutes of CS Presbytery of Irvine, 7 April 1914

this outrageous act of sacrilege.<sup>121</sup>

In addition, the court expressed their sympathy to the Whitekirk congregation and hoped that the restoration of the building would receive nationwide support. Unlike the other presbyteries, this court decided to send the minutes which recorded their condemnation and sympathetic expressions to the Rev. E. B. Rankin, the minister, and to the Clerk of the Kirk Session.<sup>122</sup>

Aside from these presbyterial reactions, a much stronger condemnation was made at the synodical level. The CS Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale assembled in Edinburgh on 5 May 1914 and discussed the incident at Whitekirk.<sup>123</sup> Dr. Paul, the Principal Clerk of Assembly, moved:

That the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale place on record its detestation and abhorrence of the sacrilegious act of incendiarism whereby the parish Church of Whitekirk was almost completely destroyed, strongly condemn the action of the perpetrators of the outrage, and cordially commend the effort being made for its restoration to all friends of the Church.<sup>124</sup>

The Rev. Dr. Majoribanks of Stenton seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

The importance of the incident was in the way in which it affected the Church's attitude to the campaign for women's votes since it turned presbyteries such as Glasgow and Irvine away from supporting the movement. We now turn to the use of the militant tactics at the General Assembly.

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<sup>121</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Dunbar, SRO, CH2/99/9, 5 April 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 10 April 1914.

<sup>122</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Dunbar, 5 April 1914.

<sup>123</sup> Minutes of CS Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, SRO, CH2/252/19, 5 May 1914; *The Scotsman*, 6 May 1914; *The British Weekly*, 7 May 1914.

<sup>124</sup> Minutes of CS Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, 5 May 1914.

#### 4.2.4. 'It is antichristian': the Suffragettes and the General Assemblies

Just before the General Assemblies of the CS and UFC were held in May 1913, Prime Minister Asquith repeatedly opposed the motion for a second reading of the Representation of the People (Women) Bill.<sup>125</sup> In the House of Commons on 6 May, the Premier characterised the arguments about female voting as 'a great deal of exaggeration both upon the one side and upon the other'.<sup>126</sup> This refusal of the Premier to support the bill made the suffragettes even more aggressive than ever before.<sup>127</sup>

Although it did not deal directly with the issue of women's suffrage as did the General Assembly of the CS, the highest court of the UFC witnessed the militant protests by some suffragettes when it met in 1913. On the 28 May 1913, the Rev. J. D. Robertson of Leith, the Convener of the Church's Life and Work and Public Morals Committee, presented its Report.<sup>128</sup> Speaking about Public Morals, he indicated that social evils were a great danger to the nation, and many young people were 'being drawn to immoral

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<sup>125</sup> *Speeches by the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, K.G.*, (London 1927), pp. 175, 183. Regarding shame pledges of the Cabinet Ministers, Janie Allan put it, noting that 'still Mr. Asquith and his Cabinet are pursuing a similar course of shame pledges, broken as soon as their purpose has been served, and there are still women who can be taken in by these methods.' (Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/4/138, National Library of Scotland)

<sup>126</sup> *Speeches*, p. 185. For arguments of women's suffrage, see Mrs. E. Pankhurst, *The Importance of the Vote* (WSPU 1908), pp. 1-12; E. Pethick Lawrence, *The Meaning of the Woman's Movement* (WSPU, 1909), pp. 1-12; E. P. Lawrence, *The Faith That is in Us* (n.p. n.d.), pp. 1-15; E. G. Murray, *Prejudices Old and New* (Scottish Council of WFL n.d.), p. 13; *Fourteen Objections to Women's Suffrage Considered* (London Society for Women's Suffrage 1909). All pamphlets are in Dep. of Special Collections, Glasgow University.

<sup>127</sup> Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, pp. 189-202.

<sup>128</sup> *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly (UFC)* (Edinburgh 1913), pp. 308-311; *Glasgow Herald*, 29 May 1913; *The British Weekly*, 29 May 1913.

courses'.<sup>129</sup> He continued to maintain that the causes of immorality were a result of 'the housing conditions, economic conditions, and the small wages paid to so many of our young women'.<sup>130</sup> At this point, an interruption occurred from the gallery as a woman cried out "Votes for Women!". Mr. Robertson answered that 'we stand for the defence of women in this matter.'<sup>131</sup> Once again, another suffragette interrupted his speech, asserting 'That is also women's work.'<sup>132</sup> Soon after, the Rev. R. R. Simpson, Depute-Clerk, warned 'the woman who had interrupted,' and said that 'there must be no further disturbance or she would be put out.'<sup>133</sup> Against this threat, the interrupter protested, '**That would be a most Christian bit of work.**'<sup>134</sup> Other interruptions followed. The editor of the *Proceedings* recorded that 'a scene of confusion ensued, which brought the business of the House to a standstill.'<sup>135</sup> The *Glasgow Herald* reported that

there came another interjection from the gallery that "women must have the vote." The fathers and brethren repeated the cry of "Put them out, put them out." One of the women was bundled out of the door, but the other woman refused to move and struggled violently when the stewards laid hands upon her. She informed the officers that she would leave quietly ... After proceeding for a few yards she turned and attempted to address the house ... she was unceremoniously ejected.<sup>136</sup>

At the 1914 General Assemblies, women campaigners hoped that the Churches would take a sympathetic attitude to the cause of

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<sup>129</sup> *Proceedings*, p. 310.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 29 May 1913.

enfranchising women. The editorial of *The Missionary Record* (UFC) had expressed the hope that 'the Assembly would probably earn greater respect by taking up a definite stand on the matter.'<sup>137</sup> In addition, because the progress of enfranchising women was being delayed in the political arena,<sup>138</sup> suffragettes had become more extreme in their protests.<sup>139</sup>

On 25 May 1914, the UFC General Assembly was again interrupted by militant women. The Assembly resumed discussion of the Report of the Home Mission and Church Extension Committee.<sup>140</sup> The Rev. J. Tainsh, Glasgow, submitted the Report but in the middle of its deliverance, his presentation was disturbed by two suffragettes. From the gallery, one of them shouted loudly, 'I protest against this Assembly going on to consider the work of women, whilst a great injustice is being done to the women of the country.'<sup>141</sup> The other woman cried out, '**It is antichristian**,'<sup>142</sup> thus turning the tables of the Churchmen, many of whom regarded the militant suffragettes as anti-Christian. But the members of the House responded with cries of 'Go on, go on'.<sup>143</sup> Unusually, the women left quietly. Later, the Rev. Dr. Reith, the editor of the *Proceedings and Debates*, saw these scenes as acts of revenge for the Churches' neutral attitude to the cause:

A nervous friend of mine confessed to a fear that some

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<sup>137</sup> *The Missionary Record of the UF Church of Scotland*, April 1914. See also chapter V.

<sup>138</sup> Miss Christabel Pankhurst to Janie Allan, 15 March 1914, Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/3, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>139</sup> F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, *Fate Has Been Kind* (London 1942), p. 103.

<sup>140</sup> *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly*(UFC) (Edinburgh 1914), pp. 252-253; G. M. Reith, *Reminiscences of The United Free Church General Assembly (1900-1929)* (Edinburgh 1933), p. 153; *Glasgow Herald*, 26 May 1914; *The Scotsman*, 26 May 1914.

<sup>141</sup> *Proceedings*, p. 253.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

of these furies might in revenge add the Assembly Hall to their bonfires. Perhaps we owe it to the Kaiser that they did not.<sup>144</sup>

A similar incident took place in the CS General Assembly held in May 1914.<sup>145</sup> Interruptions were made by a suffragette during the closing session of the Assembly. The Right Rev. Professor Nicol, the Moderator, began his address but immediately was surprised by the interruption of a woman protestor who complained against 'the treatment of the suffragettes in prison'.<sup>146</sup> She refused to leave the building, and struggled to prevent being removed, her loud voice echoing throughout the hall. This suffragette was ultimately ejected, and the Moderator continued to deliver his address.<sup>147</sup> The main aim of this protest was thus to draw attention to the treatment of the women in prison.

#### 4.2.5. Concluding Remarks: The Results of the Militant Action

It has been shown that the use of violent tactics by militant women brought mainly hostile responses at different levels of Church life, while some individuals such as David Watson tried to minimise the negative effect of their violence. But the suffragettes ignored these reactions to their militant activity and instead declared, "No surrender".<sup>148</sup> Mrs E. Pethick Lawrence, who was the editor of *Votes For Women*, strongly advocated militant tactics, and said that 'the people who criticise our

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<sup>144</sup> Reith, *Reminiscences*, p. 153.

<sup>145</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 30 May 1914; *The Scotsman*, 30 May 1914; *Dundee Advertiser*, 30 May 1914; *The Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 30 May 1914; *Life and Work*, July 1914; Record of CS General Assembly, SRO, CH1/1/157.

<sup>146</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 30 May 1914.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> Raeburn, *The Suffragette Movement*, pp. 229-239; Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, pp. 214-245; E. Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part in a Changing World*, pp. 292-305; Pankhurst, *Unshackled*, pp. 263-286.

militant action are absolutely ignorant of all history.'<sup>149</sup> Female suffragettes thus did not give up their militant campaign and continued to use the same tactics as a means of awakening the public to the campaign.

From time to time, tensions between the suffragettes and the government peaked, and this led to counter-actions by the authorities. One was the force-feeding of suffragette prisoners who were on hunger strike. Another was the violence of the police against women propagandists involved in the movement.

How did the Churches and their leaders respond to the counter-actions of the authorities?

### **4.3. The Church and the Counter-Action of the Government**

#### **4.3.1. 'Brutal Militancy': Police Violence and the Clergy**

The brutality of the authorities was a considerable challenge to the women. A fatal incident in Britain was the tragedy of Black Friday which took place in London on 18 November 1910.<sup>150</sup> Police brutality towards suffragettes attending a demonstration resulted in some cases of life-long disabilities, and injured women characterised 'their treatment by the police as particularly grievous ... because of the sexual nature of many of the assaults.'<sup>151</sup> In Scotland, police violence was seen at Mrs Pankhurst's meeting<sup>152</sup> held in St. Andrews Hall at Glasgow on the

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<sup>149</sup> E. Pethick Lawrence, *The Faith That is in Us*, pp. 12-14, 15.

<sup>150</sup> Rosen, *Rise Up, Women*, pp. 138-142.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Mrs. Pankhurst's Glasgow meeting of 1913, *Glasgow Herald*, 14 March 1913. In a recent study, Dr. Leneman maintains that 14 clergymen officially supported the meeting, but this was inaccurate as members of the platform party. ('The Scottish Churches', pp. 240-241; *DSCHT*, p. 891) This is because the Revs. T. F. Johanson, who was UFC minister of Caledonia Road Church and member of the General Council of the SCLWS, and J. A. Dickie of Bearsden (CS) who was husband of Mrs Mary Dickie, daughter of Rev. Dr. Alexander Kennedy of Edinburgh and Scottish Provincial  
(continued ...)

9 March 1914.<sup>153</sup>

Before the gathering, the Chief Constable of Glasgow had been contacted by the assistant commissioner of police at New Scotland Yard. In a letter, the commissioner had asked that if Mrs. Pankhurst appeared in Glasgow, an arrest should be made.<sup>154</sup> To facilitate this, two officers of the Metropolitan Police had been sent to Glasgow for the purpose of identifying Mrs Pankhurst. There was a force of 161, 109 in uniform and 52 in plain clothes, around the Hall. Yet Mrs Pankhurst passed through these in disguise and took her seat on the platform at 8.05 P.M.<sup>155</sup>

Lady Isabel Margesson, the Chairwoman, introduced Mrs

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(continued ...)

Local Secretary of the WSPU, had not attended the meeting, either as members of the party or of the audience. (*Glasgow Herald*, 18 March and 20 March 1913. For Dickie, see James McCardel, *The Parish of New Kilpatrick* (Glasgow 1949), pp. 45-46) In fact, **twelve clergymen** were on the platform party: J. Mitchell of Mauchline (CS); William John, CS minister of Catrine, Ayr; R. M. Sharpe, CS minister of Carstairs, Lanark; John Picken, CS minister of Libberton, Biggar; C. W. Kennedy of Cowlairst (CS), Glasgow; John Chalmers of Law (CS), Lanark; R. Menzies of Camphill (UFC), Langside; W. R. Thomson of Bellshill West (UFC), Hamilton; J. Forrest of Galston Erskine (UFC); R. Primrose of Stirling Erskine; John Lyle Rodgers who was Galston Congregational Church minister (1910-1915), admitted to the UFC Church in 1919, UFC minister of Brigeton West (1919-1931) and Carmyle (1931-1950); F. Carlisle Burton, EC Church clergy of Girvan, Ayrshire. (*FES* I, p. 256 (Picken); Vol. III, pp.19 (John), 171 and 311 (Chalmers), 294 (Sharpe), 407 (Kennedy); Vol. VIII, p. 55 (Picken); *FUFCS*, pp. 211-212 (Rodger), 178 and 213 (Thomson), 183 and 214 (Menzies), 213 (Johanson), 204 (Primrose), 385 (Forrest); McNaughton, p. 255 (Rodger); *CCD* (1915), p. 224 (Burton).

<sup>153</sup> Memorial for Counsel submitted by Miss J.Allan of Greyston, Prestwick, on behalf of women injured by the police on the occasion of Mrs.Pankhurst's arrest on the platform of St. Andrews Hall, Glasgow, on 9 March 1914, Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/1, National Library of Scotland; *Glasgow Herald*, 10 March 1914; *The Times*, 10 March 1914; *Forward*, 28 March 1914; *The Common Cause*, 20 March 1914; *The Vote*, 20 March 1914; *The Suffragette*, 6 March 1914; *Votes For Women*, 20 March 1914; *The Woman's Dreadnought*, 21 March 1914.

<sup>154</sup> Memorial for Counsel, No. 4.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

Pankhurst, and she then delivered an address lasting only three minutes. Shortly afterwards, a male steward gave warning of the entrance of a number of policemen.<sup>156</sup> When Mrs Pankhurst had appeared, the Superintendent issued orders to cut off the platform so as to carry out Mrs Pankhurst's arrest. The policemen rushed on to the platform, with batons already drawn.<sup>157</sup> The *Glasgow Herald* reported that

A succession of wild scenes followed. Several of the police scrambled on to the platform ... The fighting and struggling on the platform proceeded fiercely, and batons were used by the police. One woman got in the way of a flower pot thrown by another woman, and she was sent crashing against a piano. A man was next seen escaping from the fight with blood streaming down his face from a cut on the forehead, and a woman suffering from injury was assisted from the platform ... Several of the male suffragists in the area now took a hand in the riotous scene, throwing missiles at the police on the platform.<sup>158</sup>

In spite of attempts to protect Mrs Pankhurst, she was arrested and taken to the Central Police Station in Glasgow. On her way to the Station, Mrs Pankhurst was injured. It was reported that 'she was going to be killed, she was so roughly handled and so much hurt in the process.'<sup>159</sup> Later, this was confirmed by Dr. H. Schalze who had examined her physical condition.<sup>160</sup>

Soon after the arrest of Mrs Pankhurst, a crowd of over 4,000 people marched on the Police Station. This procession was quite an orderly one and no attempt to stop them was made by the police. On their approaching the Station's main gate, the policemen tried to move them backwards. The crowds were scattered, but several small groups of men and women continued

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<sup>156</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 10 March 1914.

<sup>157</sup> Memorial for Counsel, No. 12-14.

<sup>158</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 10 March 1914.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*; *The Suffragette*, 13 March 1913.

<sup>160</sup> *Forward*, 28 March 1914.

to protest here and there in the City centre.<sup>161</sup>

Afterwards, various attempts to protest against police violence were made through the efforts of Janie Allan. Miss Allan was an ardent campaigner in the women's franchise movement in Scotland, and by then was an organiser of the Glasgow Branch of the WSPU.<sup>162</sup> She also worked alongside prominent clergymen for the Scottish Council for Women's Trades and the Scottish Christian Social Union.<sup>163</sup> The most effective method that she employed was the demand for a public enquiry concerning the conduct of the police.<sup>164</sup> For this purpose, she appealed to various public bodies.<sup>165</sup> Her fight to force a public investigation lasted for several months.<sup>166</sup>

Serious criticism of the police was made by some Church leaders. Five notable clerics who attended the meeting individually contributed to a graphic and eye-witness account.<sup>167</sup> They were the Revs. David Watson, a member of both the General Council and the Executive Committee of the SCLWS; Robert Primrose, UFC minister of Stirling Erskine; Joseph Johnston, UFC minister of St. James', Paisley; James Wells, UFC minister of Pollokshields West; and Charles W. Kennedy, CS minister of

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<sup>161</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 10 March 1914.

<sup>162</sup> Unpublished MS of Helen Crawford's Autobiography, William Gallagher Memorial Library, Scottish Trades Union Congress, Glasgow, p. 109; Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, p. 249.

<sup>163</sup> Annual Report of the SCWT (1904-1905), SRA; Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>164</sup> *Forward*, 28 March 1914; *The Suffragette*, 20 March 1914.

<sup>165</sup> For example, she asked the Corporation of Glasgow to receive a deputation but it was withdrawn. (Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, 19 March 1914, SRA)

<sup>166</sup> *Forward*, 4 April and 18 April 1914.

<sup>167</sup> Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/4/137, National Library of Scotland.

Cowlairds, Glasgow.<sup>168</sup>

Apart from the protest of these clergymen, two Church leaders took an active part in the WSPU meetings and made speeches attacking the incident. Under the auspices of the WSPU, a gathering took place in the Unionist Hall at Prestwick,<sup>169</sup> and the Rev. J. Mitchell of Mauchline, presided.<sup>170</sup> In his opening remarks, Mitchell maintained that having the vote was as important to women as to men, for women considered 'it essential to the needs and requirements of the people'.<sup>171</sup> He then criticised the refusal of the Government to enfranchise women. The minister asserted that for this reason, 'the most law-abiding section of the community should have been driven into open defiance and rebellion against constituted authority.'<sup>172</sup> In relation to the militant tactics of the women's suffragette movement, he made it clear that he saw

militancy as a symptom of something deeper which lay behind it. Militancy was a symptom that there was something wrong with the body politic.<sup>173</sup>

Mitchell also quoted the words of Mr. Bonar Law: 'if you satisfy the reasonable demands of women for some representation, for some constitutional means by which their point of view may be expressed, automatically suffragist militancy will disappear.'<sup>174</sup> He believed that giving the vote to women was a way of improving

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<sup>168</sup> For Watson, see *D. Watson, Chords of Memory*, pp. 63-81; *The Scottish Christian Social Union and How it came to be Formed* (Glasgow 1901); *Saint Andrew*, 14 February and 11 April 1901; *DSCHT*, p. 856. *FUFCS*, pp. 23 (Johnston), 204 (Primrose), 241 (Wells). *FES* III, p. 407 (Kennedy).

<sup>169</sup> *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 20 March 1914.

<sup>170</sup> *FES* III, pp. 50-51.

<sup>171</sup> *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 20 March 1914.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

social conditions.<sup>175</sup>

Another strong condemnation of the violent acts of the police was heard at the Stirling meeting, where the Rev. Robert Primrose presided.<sup>176</sup> As indicated already, this minister had given an eye-witness account of the incident. Primrose had also dissented from the decision of Stirling and Dunblane UFC presbytery, when the court resolved to take no action in terms of an appeal for women's suffrage.<sup>177</sup> Primrose criticised the violence of the authorities. He wished to

utter his protest against the brutal militancy of whoever was responsible for that outrage committed in the name of law and order ... the militants showed contempt for the rights of public and private property, but that was a weak contention coming from those who showed contempt for the rights of persons. Was property to be regarded as more sacred than human individuals?<sup>178</sup>

In describing the scenes on the platform, Primrose criticised the arrest and treatment of Mrs Pankhurst, noting that 'no punishment could be severe enough for the instigators of that outrage.'<sup>179</sup> At all events, the violence of the authorities towards suffragettes could not be justified, for these acts were in opposition to the fundamental characteristics of the Kingdom of God, such as justice and righteousness.

This example of police brutality thus gave rise to renewed expressions of support for the women's campaign from several leading clergymen

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, 19 March 1914; *Forward*, 28 March 1914.

<sup>177</sup> See chapter V.

<sup>178</sup> *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, 19 March 1914.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4.3.2. 'God save all Prisoners who are being tortured': the Forcible Feeding of Prisoners and Christian Ministers

The government also implemented a policy of the forcible feeding of suffragette prisoners who were on hunger strike. In Britain, the first incident of forcible feeding occurred in Winson Green Gaol at Birmingham in September 1909.<sup>180</sup> In Scotland, the first case of force-feeding took place in Calton jail at Edinburgh in February 1914.<sup>181</sup> There was much criticism of this policy, and the burning of Whitekirk Church was carried out, in part, to express opposition to it.<sup>182</sup>

When force-feeding was introduced into Scotland, the Scottish prison officers used bromides which lessened muscular resistance and prevented vomiting. This was proved by the report of the Laboratory of Pathology and Public Health at Edinburgh.<sup>183</sup> In the case of Miss Moore, the first test for bromides marked a negative result on 7 April 1914. However, from 8th April to 10th April, the result was positive. Tests on the other prisoners, Miss Phyllis Brady and Miss Marion, also produced the same result as Miss Moore's.<sup>184</sup> The use of bromides was criticised by Dr. Flora Murray in a letter to the *Glasgow Herald*. In her view, bromides

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<sup>180</sup> Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, p. 123; June Purvis, '"Deeds, Not Words": The Daily Lives of Militant Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol 18, No 2 (1995), pp. 96-99; J. Purvis, 'The Prison Experiences of the Suffragettes in Edwardian Britain', *Women's History Review*, Vol 4, No 1 (1995), pp. 103-124.

<sup>181</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 13 and 20 March 1914; *The Vote*, 7 March 1914; *The Suffragette*, 27 March 1914; *Votes For Women*, 13 March 1914. See also *The Christian Commonwealth*, 11 February and 22 July 1914.

<sup>182</sup> Christabel Pankhurst to Janie Allan, 15 March 1914, Janie Allan Collections. Here C. Pankhurst criticised 'coercion and torture to women.' At that time, she lived in Paris and controlled the movement from there secretly. (C. Pankhurst to Miss McIquham, 8 June 1914, Letters of Mrs. E. C. W. Elmy, Dep. of Manuscript Collections, British Library)

<sup>183</sup> Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/2/86.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*.

caused depression, dullness, mental deterioration and the 'drug habit'.<sup>185</sup>

Women suffragettes sought the support of the Churches for the prisoners. *The Suffragette* reported that 'members of the WSPU began to visit the Churches in order to offer up prayers for the victims of the Government's torture.'<sup>186</sup> To explain and justify their action, a manifesto entitled 'the Appeal to God' was published.<sup>187</sup> At the end of 1913, the East London suffragettes of Sylvia Pankhurst also adopted the "Church Protest" method, such as the interruption to Church services, to draw their attention to the suffragette prisoners.<sup>188</sup> Many similar protests by the suffragettes were made at other public meetings in Scotland, and in England. For example, in a gathering which was held in South Leith United Free Church on 6 October 1913, Mr. A. M. Anderson, the Solicitor-General of Scotland, was interrupted by suffragettes, three men and three women.<sup>189</sup>

In 1914, Church services were increasingly interrupted,<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, Acc 4498/2/83.

<sup>186</sup> *The Suffragette*, 2 January 1914.

<sup>187</sup> Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/4/137, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>188</sup> S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 510. The East London Federation of suffragettes was formed by Sylvia Pankhurst after being expelled from the WSPU in 1913. (*Ibid.*, p. 471) See also Patricia W. Romero, *E. Sylvia Pankhurst: Portrait of a Radical* (New Haven 1986), pp. 62-63; I. Bullock and R. Pankhurst (eds.), *Sylvia Pankhurst: From Artist to Anti-Fascist* (Macmillan 1992), pp. 58-59.

<sup>189</sup> *The Scotsman*, 6 October 1913; *Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 10 October 1913.

<sup>190</sup> Interruptions to Church Services in Scotland during the period February-July 1914.

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Date (M)	Place	Number
February	Edinburgh (1)	1
March	Aberdeen (1), Dundee (2)	
		(continued ...)

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culminating on 15 March 1914, just after the arrests of Mrs Pankhurst and Helen Crawford in Glasgow.<sup>191</sup> On that Sunday, some militant women attended the morning service in Glasgow Cathedral, whose minister was M'Adam Muir, a Vice-President of the GWSAWS and of the SCLWS, and in the middle of the service, the women made a demonstration and chanted their prayer for the suffragette prisoners.<sup>192</sup> Because of the minister's favourable attitude to the movement, 'no notice was taken of the interruption, and there was no excitement.'<sup>193</sup> Disturbances also took place during the services at the Tron Kirk in Edinburgh, St. Paul's Cathedral Church in Dundee, and the West Parish Church in Aberdeen.<sup>194</sup> Such interruptions of Church services continued, and on Sunday, 2 August 1914, Professor Paterson of Edinburgh University wrote that 'I went to the morning service at St. Paul's, there were suffragette interruptions and only fragments were heard of a futile sermon.'<sup>195</sup>

In addition, at the request of the militant women, a special

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(continued ...)

	Edinburgh (1), Glasgow (over 50)	over 54
July	Perth (4)	4
Total Number		over 59

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Sources: *The Suffragette*, 27 February, 20 March, 27 March, 17, 24, 31 July 1914; *Votes For Women*, 20 March 1914; *Forward*, 21 March 1914; *Evening Citizen*, 16 March 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 16 March 1914.

<sup>191</sup> *Evening Citizen*, 10 and 11 March 1914.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 March 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 16 March 1914.

<sup>193</sup> *Evening Citizen*, 16 March 1914.

<sup>194</sup> *The Suffragette*, 12 June and 10 July 1914; *Votes For Women*, 12 June 1914; *The Woman's Dreadnought*, 27 June 1914; *The Scotsman*, 16 March 1914; *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 16 March 1914; *The Scotsman*, 16 March 1914; *The Times*, 16 March 1914.

<sup>195</sup> C. L. Rawlins (ed.), *The Diaries of William Paterson Paterson* (Edinburgh 1987), p. 113. See also *The Times*, 3 August 1914.

prayer was offered for Mrs Pankhurst, for Mrs Helen Crawford, and for other suffragette prisoners, at some Church services in Glasgow, including St. Mary's Cathedral (Provost Deane), St. Paul's (the Bishop of Glasgow), St. Columba's (Rev. John Maclean, CS), St. Cuthbert's (Rev. Charles. W. Hutcheson, CS), St. Peter's (Rev. Gordon Quig, CS), and Great Hamilton Street Congregational Church or Christ Church (Rev. David Hobbs).<sup>196</sup> Over 50 local Churches in Glasgow were also approached by the suffragettes who chanted prayers and distributed pamphlets entitled 'The Prayer to God'.<sup>197</sup>

Perth prison became the main centre for the forcible feeding of prisoners. Mr. A. F. Whyte, a supporter of the women prisoners, asked 'why all these prisoners were being sent to Perth.'<sup>198</sup> Mr. M'Kinnon Wood, Secretary of State for Scotland, replied that 'the doctors in Perth prison were skilled in forcible feeding.'<sup>199</sup> The suffragettes protested by means of picketing, holding several meetings, petitioning to the authorities, and by offering prayers in local Churches.<sup>200</sup>

Five women visited St. Ninians' Cathedral in Perth for the purpose of praying for the suffragette prisoners, as part of what was called 'the appeal to God'.<sup>201</sup> In the middle of the service, before the singing of the first hymn, the women rose and uttered the prayer: 'God save Emmeline Pankhurst, Arabella Scott, and all prisoners who are being tortured for conscience sake. Open the eyes of Thy Church that it may understand the spirit of this

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<sup>196</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 16 March 1914; *Forward*, 21 March 1914. For Churches and clergymen, see *FES* III, pp. 438, 466; McNaughton, pp. 67, 377.

<sup>197</sup> *Evening Citizen*, 16 March 1914.

<sup>198</sup> *Perthshire Courier*, 21 July 1914.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*; *Forward*, 25 July 1914; the NMFWS to the Scottish Secretary, Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/2/76; L. Leneman, *Martyrs In Our Midst* (Dundee 1993), pp. 35-38.

<sup>201</sup> *Perthshire Courier*, 21 July 1914.

movement.'<sup>202</sup> The *Perthshire Courier* reported that 'the militants had a position in the middle of the Church, and instantly the demonstration began, they were forcibly conducted to the door.'<sup>203</sup> But some Perth congregations joined the protest against the policy of force-feeding and prayed for the imprisoned suffragettes.<sup>204</sup> The *Forward* reported that

prayer was offered for the prisoners in three Churches in Perth on Sunday. The supplicants prayed that those women might be strengthened who were in prison suffering for their faith and for conscience sake.<sup>205</sup>

In addition to this, sympathetic support for the suffering of the imprisoned suffragettes and their agitation for women's suffrage in general came from many Christian ministers.<sup>206</sup> Their names can be listed: Dr. John Hunter, a Vice-President of the SCLWS;<sup>207</sup> Dr. M'Adam Muir, a Vice-President of the SCLWS; David Watson; David Graham, CS minister of St. Gilbert's, Pollokshields; James Montgomery Crawford, CS minister of St. Nicholas, Prestwick; Matthew Gardener, CS minister and a member of the General Council of the SCLWS; William Ross, CS minister of St. Mary's, Partick; David Ness, CS minister of Whiteinch; Norman Maclean, CS minister of The Park Church (1910-1915); W. Chalmers Smith, CS minister of Calton, Glasgow, and husband of Elizabeth Dorothea Chalmers Smith, a militant suffragette;<sup>208</sup> John

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches', pp. 247-249.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. *Glasgow Herald*, 22 July 1914.

<sup>205</sup> *Forward*, 11 July 1914.

<sup>206</sup> Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/4.

<sup>207</sup> Hunter, *John Hunter*, pp. 133, 218-219; *DSCHT*, p. 418.

<sup>208</sup> *FES* III, pp. 58 (Crawford), 404-405 (Smith), 418 (Gardener), 428 (Ross), 445 (Graham), 459-460 (Muir), 471-472 (MacLean), 477 (Ness); *DSCHT*, p. 529 (MacLean). For Rev. Chalmers Smith and his wife, see *St. Mungo's Bairns: Some Notable Glasgow Students Down the Centuries* (Glasgow 1990), Elizabeth Dorothea Chalmers Smith (1872-1944).

Hutton, UFC minister of Belhaven and the editor of *The British Weekly* in 1925; James Wells, UFC minister of Pollokshields West until 1913; Andrew James Forrest, UFC minister of Shettleston; Robert Primrose; W. Logan, UFC minister of Lanark Bloomgate; James Gray, UFC minister of Rose Street, Glasgow, and the member of General Council of the SCLWS; R. J. Drummond, UFC minister of Lothian Road Church, Edinburgh, the first convener of the Social Problems Committee, and a Vice-President of the SCLWS; James Robertson Cameron, UFC minister of Helensburgh Park;<sup>209</sup> Provost Deane; John Thomas Forbes, Baptist minister of Hillhead, Glasgow, and a member of the General Council of the SCLWS;<sup>210</sup> and Ambrose Shepherd, Congregational minister of Elgin Place Church, Glasgow.<sup>211</sup>

Of the clergymen listed above, a distinguished figure was Dr. Deane who in 1904 became Provost of St. Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow.<sup>212</sup> Provost Deane was concerned for social and economic issues and played an important role in the Scottish Council for Women's Trades as a member of both Committee of Investigation into Women's Employment and Parliamentary Bills Committee.<sup>213</sup> He was also an enthusiastic supporter of the political enfranchisement of women, acting as a Vice-President of the GWSAWS and a member of the Church League for Women's Suffrage.<sup>214</sup> Through the agitation for the female vote, Deane was convinced that 'the vast majority of the clergymen in this country were on the side of this movement', and that women, having the political

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<sup>209</sup> *FUFCS*, pp. 200 (Logan), 204 (Primrose), 210 (Hutton), 241 (Wells), 245 (Gray), 272 (Cameron), 385 (Forrest). *DSCHT*, p.258 (Drummond). See also chapter VI.

<sup>210</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 328.

<sup>211</sup> MacNaughton, p. 145.

<sup>212</sup> F. Goldie, *A Short History of the Episcopal Church in Scotland* (London 1951), p. 141; *CCD* (1915), p. 405.

<sup>213</sup> Tenth Annual Report of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades (1904-1905), SRA.

<sup>214</sup> Report of the GWSAWS (1915), Fawcett Library, London; *Church League for Women's Suffrage*, July 1912.

vote, could bring into 'political life their vast reserves of moral and spiritual and intellectual force'.<sup>215</sup> In spite of the difference in ideology between the militant suffragettes and the constitutional suffragists, Deane agreed to include Mrs Pankhurst among those for whom prayer was offered at the Sunday morning Communion service held on 15 March 1914.<sup>216</sup> His commitment to the female suffrage movement was thus deeply appreciated by women campaigners, and when he was elected as Bishop of the diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney in 1917, the GWSAWS expressed their congratulations and gratitude to him.<sup>217</sup>

The protest by some Churches and clergymen against the policy of force-feeding was significant as part of the religious dimension of the suffragette movement. Although women were adopting militant tactics against the Churches in Scotland, some ministers still showed sympathy for their cause because of the suffering which they endured at the hands of the authorities. The women were seen by some as Christian agents for women's enfranchisement who were motivated by the principles of the Kingdom of God.

#### **4.4. The Christian View of the Militant Suffragette Movement and its Use of Violence**

Although several Churchmen had contributed to support the suffragettes in spite of the employment of militant tactics, the views of the UF Church remained opposed to the use of violence, while in the Church of Scotland the support of David Watson continued to be given to the cause.

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<sup>215</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 11 January 1914.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 March 1914.

<sup>217</sup> The GWSAWS letter books, No 136, Dep. of Rare Books and Manuscript, Mitchell Library.

#### 4.4.1. 'The Use of Force in Life': the United Free Church

The attitude of the members of the UF Church to the use of force can be seen in *The Missionary Record* (UFC) and in the writings of the Rev. Professor William Clow.

The editorial of *The Missionary Record* dealt with the question of violence employed by the suffragettes in July 1914.<sup>218</sup> It was noted that the use of force by men and women was spreading throughout the country and was weakening the stability of the nation. The editor doubted how the reforms desired by the suffragettes could be obtained, and recommended 'a policy of non-resistance and submission'.<sup>219</sup>

He distinguished between the right and wrong uses of force in the following terms:

We have no terms to express exactly the one and the other; and where we go wrong is in applying the word only to the energy of lawlessness. Right force is not shut out of our life. It is, in fact, the basis of the universe. Love and influence are forces of the most potent kind. Christ Himself was a force, and His act in driving the money-changers out of the Temple was a manifestation of force. We use force when we exercise self-control or resist temptation. Right force is the method of our spirits: it is reason in action. Evil force belongs to a lower plane: it is the power of our animal nature operating in opposition to the spiritual.<sup>220</sup>

He linked the right use of force to humanity and its wrong use to brutality. The editor thought that those men and women who attempted 'deeds of violence' were making a wrong use of force.<sup>221</sup> The right use of force involved the spiritual dimension of humanity, and was 'disciplined and trained by its best minds

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<sup>218</sup> *The Missionary Record*, July 1914.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*; Cf. Rosen, *Rise up, Women*, pp. 189-214.

<sup>220</sup> *The Missionary Record*, July 1914.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

acting in the spirit of the Father revealed through Christ'.<sup>222</sup>

According to the editorial, Jesus' teaching gave some hints as to how the Church was to judge the militancy of the women's suffragette movement. Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of peace and righteousness, as seen in such sayings as turning the other cheek, letting him who 'takes our cloak have our coat', and going 'another mile with the man who compels us to travel one'.<sup>223</sup> His teaching was not therefore compatible with retaliation, which was on the same level as 'vengeance, or more plainly revenge'.<sup>224</sup> The writer described the Lord's attitudes to the issue of violence as follows:

His own career was a campaign against lawlessness; but He did not use the weapons of lawlessness, He never rendered evil for evil; when reviled He did not revile again, when struck He did not return the blow. To have done so would have been to sink to the level of those who injured Him. "My Kingdom," He said, "is not of this world; if it were, my servants would fight." It was a Kingdom where a force reigned far more powerful than that of the crude methods of men.<sup>225</sup>

The editor believed that the spirit of right would prevail in the end. He therefore made a strong plea against the use of violence and militant tactics by the suffragettes, sometimes excercised by the authorities.

Professor Clow,<sup>226</sup> in his book, *Christ in the Social Order*,<sup>227</sup> was also critical of militancy but supported the cause of women's

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<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> Stewart Mechie, *Trinity College Glasgow 1856-1956* (Glasgow 1956), p. 35; *DSCHT*, p. 191.

<sup>227</sup> The book was widely read and sometimes used by political orators. For example, a speaker in the Keith Unionist Meeting quoted some sentences from the book. (*Banffshire Herald*, 21 February 1914)

suffrage. Clow argued that the vast majority of women were not 'in revolt':<sup>228</sup>

At the outset we may remark that it is doubtful whether the woman's movement is entitled to be termed a revolt. There is no general agreement amongst women in the demands made in the name of womanhood. There is a large number of women who are eager in making a variety of demands, and a few who are aggressive and violent in their endeavour to enforce some of them ... But there are no figures to declare the number who give silent consent, and the number who maintain a silent dissent ... There are others whose ideal has been expressed by a witty woman writer as "the woman's purpose of making a man of herself."<sup>229</sup>

Yet he still supported women's enfranchisement, and declared that 'there is nothing in Christian ethics directly to deny this claim.'<sup>230</sup> Indeed, the municipal franchise had already been given to women, and the Christian Church had enfranchised women members in the election of their minister and office-bearers.<sup>231</sup>

However, according to Clow, the most serious obstacle to preventing the progress of enfranchising women was 'the violence and the lawlessness of what is known as the militant section of the suffragettes'.<sup>232</sup> He regarded 'the arson and mischievous destruction of innocent people's property' as 'a silent fear' and as 'an open antipathy'. Professor Clow warned that

No one who takes any part in such doings can claim Christian sanction. That is not the way of Christ at all, even when suffering the most grievous wrong. But such conduct has produced a state of mind not merely of protest against it, but of conviction that there are among women an increasing number who have not sufficient self-control to be of service in public life, and that these women are to be found in large

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<sup>228</sup> W. M. Clow, *Christ In The Social Order* (London 1913), p. 222.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.* See also chapter II.

<sup>232</sup> Clow, *Christ in the Social Order*, p. 246.

numbers among the wealthy and well placed and idle, among the very class for whom this demand is most emphatically made. It is not that they are roused to indignation by the irrational and hysterical outrages of a few. It is that they begin to see that such women are numerous, and that they would import into political life an element of passion which would endanger the well-being of the State.<sup>233</sup>

Consequently, Clow warned that because of the use of violent methods, many who had advocated the cause had changed their minds, and had given up supporting women's suffrage.<sup>234</sup>

#### 4.4.2. 'The Battle for Women's Rights': the Church of Scotland

In the Church of Scotland, David Watson<sup>235</sup> represents these ministers who, irrespective of the militant campaign of the suffragettes, still laboured to promote the cause in a variety of ways. Watson's suffragism had its root in the fundamental principles of Christian socialism.

Watson believed that social advancement had religious, ethical, economic, and political aspects. The religious aspect was fundamental and worked out through the spiritual dynamics of the Divine Kingdom.<sup>236</sup> Watson reminded the Church of the importance of not remaining 'silent on questions which deeply affect the material and moral well-being of the people'.<sup>237</sup> He thus asserted that in every portion of society, the Church should proclaim the principles of Christian socialism, that is, liberty, equality, and fraternity.<sup>238</sup>

It was on this basis that his female suffragism was developed.

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<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>235</sup> Watson, *Chords of Memory*, pp. 63-81; *DSCHT*, p. 856.

<sup>236</sup> D. Watson, *Social Advance: Its Meaning, Method, and Goal* (London 1911), pp. 23-45.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-136, 164.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

From Watson's point of view, women's role in society had become more responsible than in the past, for men had failed to discharge their civic and political duties based on these social principles.<sup>239</sup> Watson noted that 'the entrance of women into many spheres formerly closed against them is one of the most significant features of our time.'<sup>240</sup> Describing women's demands for equal opportunity, Watson drew particular attention to the demand of public service. He put it in the following terms:

The battle for 'woman's rights' now rages around one point - the parliamentary franchise. I confess I do not feel its importance and urgency so keenly as some do. Women's influence is independent of the franchise, and she has hitherto won her rights by influencing those who exercise the franchise ... At the same time there is nothing unreasonable in woman seeking to have a share in the Government of the country, a share in making the laws under which she lives, so far as a vote for a member of parliament will give her that a share one thing we may be sure of that when she wins the franchise, although it may not bring in the millennium, her influence will always be cast on the side of religion and purity, temperance and peace ... No one can doubt that she will play an important part in social regeneration, social reconstruction, in bringing in the new day, the golden year.<sup>241</sup>

Watson thought that women's hour was at hand and that their opportunity was great.<sup>242</sup> He concluded that giving voting rights to women was for 'humanity's sake', and that it would be the only way to end the suffragettes' violent acts.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> D. Watson, *Perfect Manhood* (London 1905), pp. 231.

<sup>240</sup> D. Watson, *Perfect Womanhood* (London 1906), p. 21.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 163-165.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

#### 4.5. Different Interpretations of John Knox's Position on the Use of Force and the Role of Women

In the controversy surrounding militant action, those for or against women's franchise in Scotland claimed support from John Knox, whose thoughts and actions had been so important in the Scottish Reformation.<sup>244</sup> There were two areas of discussion: the use of violence in promoting a righteous cause, and the role of women in society, and these will be dealt with in turn.

##### 4.5.1. The Use of Violence in Promoting a Righteous Cause

From the militant suffragette's point of view, Janie Allan, who was the daughter of a Glaswegian merchant and an ardent member of the WSPU, contended that those opposed to militancy 'must take steps to repudiate that champion destroyer of God's edifices, John Knox.'<sup>245</sup> Another defender of the use of violence was Mrs Catherine Blair. Although due to her family duties, Blair did not participate in the militant campaigns such as secret arson and window breaking, she defended militancy by innumerable letters to the press.<sup>246</sup> In doing so, Blair referred to John Knox as the first militant reformer in Scotland. Why did she regard Knox as a supporter of violence? There were two main reasons: her individual faith and John Knox's role in the Reformation.

Blair had been brought up as a member of the Evangelical Union which followed an Arminian theology.<sup>247</sup> She was born in Bathgate on 8 January 1872, the daughter of James Shields. Her father was

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<sup>244</sup> For Knox's writings, see Ian Hazlett, 'A Working Bibliography of Writings by John Knox', R. V. Schnucker (ed.), *Calviniana. Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin* (Kirkville 1988), pp. 185-193.

<sup>245</sup> *Forward*, 5 May 1914. See also chapter V.

<sup>246</sup> Quoted from Monica Sharon, 'Catherine Blair: Living her 'Splendid Best,' p. 745. See also Blair, *Rural Journey*, pp. 14-17.

<sup>247</sup> Sharon, 'Catherine Blair', p. 743.

an active member of the Bathgate Evangelical Union Church, formerly the United Secession Church. The minister was Robert Morison who was father of James Morison and who later joined the Evangelical Union.<sup>248</sup>

In May 1843, the Evangelical Union was formed by James Morison, Robert Morison, John Guthrie, and A. C. Rutherford. The Union's theology had its roots in Arminianism which focused on the universality of the atonement, the universality, moral nature of the influences of the Holy Ghost, and the simplicity of faith.<sup>249</sup> The Union held annual meetings, and the Conference controlled the Union's Theological Academy. The Union was in existence until 1897, when it was reunited with the Congregational Union.

James Shields had learned an Arminian theology from Robert Morison, and had led his children from 'the doctrine of Predestination' of Calvinism to 'the Freewill of Man' by 'the principle of Universal love' of Arminianism.<sup>250</sup> Its influence upon Catherine Shields (Blair) was significant. It led her into fighting for women's emancipation from what could be regarded as their predestined subjection. It also made her more critical than other suffragettes of the influence of John Knox upon the reformed tradition in Scotland.<sup>251</sup>

Catherine Blair contrasted the criticism of the suffragettes with the support for John Knox and his fellow reformers, even although the latter had destroyed more Churches than the former:

In order to bring about the Reformation, Scotsmen burned down East Parish Church. John Knox, directly or indirectly, caused the sack of all the Perth Churches and of St. Andrews Cathedral. The people burned the venerable Abbey of Scone, with its treasures more

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<sup>248</sup> Harry Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow 1960), pp. 116-117, 121.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123; J. H. Leckie, *Fergus Ferguson, D.D.: His Theology and Heresy Trial* (Edinburgh 1923), pp. 36-41; *DSCHT*, pp. 305-306, 607-608.

<sup>250</sup> Sharon, 'Catherine Blair', p. 743.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 744-745, 756-757.

valuable than ten Whitekirks. At last the Reformation came with a crash. We deplore the terrible price we had to pay for reform, but does any sane person lay all the blame on the ardent reformers?<sup>252</sup>

In another letter, she went on arguing that

When they asked "Who burned Churches?" we could have replied "John Knox"; and as there is a Knox Institute in Haddington today so may there be a Pankhurst Institute in Manchester in days to come!" He fought the corruption of the Church; she is fighting the corruption of the State. Delay in granting reform has in both cases brought the same results.<sup>253</sup>

According to Blair, the militant actions employed by suffragettes paralleled the events of John Knox's Reformation. But it was unfair that the militant reformer of the Church was still honoured by Scotsmen and women, while the female reformers of the State were condemned by many, especially by John Knox's followers.

Arguing from a different viewpoint as a non-militant suffragette, Miss Eunice G. Murray saw John Knox as an inciter of violent actions.<sup>254</sup> Murray was Scottish President of the Women's Freedom League (WFL), which was formed in 1907 by Mrs Despard who had split from the WSPU because of the Pankhursts' undemocratic leadership.<sup>255</sup> She was one of the principal suffragette writers, and her arguments for women's suffrage were often based on Scottish religion and its history. Her booklets published by the WFL were widely circulated, and during the first month of 1914, a copy of *Liberal Cant* was sent to each minister of the Established Church in Glasgow and that of *Prejudices Old*

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<sup>252</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 13 March 1914.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 March 1914.

<sup>254</sup> Eunice G. Murray, *Scottish Women in Bygone Days* (Glasgow 1930), pp. 32-67; *The Church of Cardross And Its Ministers* (Glasgow 1935), pp. 26-28; *Prejudices Old and New*, pp. 1-14.

<sup>255</sup> Rosen, *Rise Up, Women*, pp. 86-94.

and New to each UFC minister in the same city.<sup>256</sup> Murray pointed to the negative results of the Knoxian Reformation. In Perth, the reformer's preaching against Romanism and its idolatry had caused the plundering by protestant mobs of ancient parish Churches, monasteries, nunneries, and other ecclesiastical buildings.<sup>257</sup> The Protestant nobles had confiscated the vast revenues which had been reserved for the service of God:

Money was very scarce, for the nobles in many cases threw in their lot with the reformers with extraordinary zeal, not ... for the sake of reform, but because of the saving effected to their pockets in payment of Church dues and to share in the plunder of property ... all that was left were empty churches, manses and glebes.<sup>258</sup>

Murray thus argued against taking the actions of the reformers as a role model. The use of violent methods had had a negative influence upon the Church in Scotland.

An alternative view was presented by the Rev. Dr. John Glasse of Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, who saw John Knox as a soldier who fought for the Kingdom of God. A well-known Christian socialist, Glasse was an active member of the Scottish Land and Labour League, and in 1907, he was elected as the first President of the Edinburgh branch of the Fabian Society established in 1884 to achieve socialism through gradual and democratic means. A representative contributor to *The Christian Socialist*,<sup>259</sup> this

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<sup>256</sup> *The Vote*, 16 January 1914.

<sup>257</sup> Murray, *The Church of Cardross and Its Ministers*, p. 26.

<sup>258</sup> Murray, *The Church of Cardross and Its Ministers*, p. 26. Cf. John Knox, *The Reformation In Scotland* (Edinburgh 1982), pp. 164-165; W. D. Simpson, *A History of Saint John's Kirk Perth* (Perth 1958), pp. 23-25; J. W. D. Carruthers of Perth, 'John Knox In Perth', pp. 544-547 in *The Missionary Record* (UFC), December 1904; J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London 1960), pp. 143-144.

<sup>259</sup> D. C. Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest* (New York 1987), pp. 335-336; The ENSWS Annual Report (1907), Fawcett Library and National Library of Scotland; *Glasgow Herald*, 21 May 1906, 4 April 1908; *FES* I, p. 44.

radical clergyman took an important part in the trade union movement. He developed a close friendship with Scottish labour leaders, such as Keir Hardie.<sup>260</sup> An enthusiastic supporter of women's causes, Glasse was involved in the activities of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades, as Chairman of the Edinburgh Branch Committee.<sup>261</sup>

From the viewpoint of Christian socialism and female suffragism, Glasse reviewed John Knox and his reforming activities.<sup>262</sup> He considered that the Scottish Reformation was inevitable.<sup>263</sup> In Perth, Knox had preached against idolatry, and the Church was 'forthwith purged of idolatry', and the monasteries pulled down.<sup>264</sup> Glasse justified the reformer's violence, by asserting that 'he smashed them without pity because they were symbols of falsehood.'<sup>265</sup> Therefore, the reformer was really a soldier who fought for the Heavenly Kingdom.

In the eyes of Sir John Stirling Maxwell, the joint President of the SLOWS, the anti-suffrage organisation, John Knox was a 'political propagandist'.<sup>266</sup> The formation of the SLOWS was a reaction to both militant and non-militant suffrage organisations. The League was formed on 11 May 1910, with the Duchess of Montrose appointed as President.<sup>267</sup> Its object was 'to

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<sup>260</sup> William Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie; A Biography* (London 1921), p. 205.

<sup>261</sup> Annual Report of the SCWT (1904-1905), SRA. See also chapter II.

<sup>262</sup> John Glasse, *John Knox: A Criticism and An Appreciation*, (London 1905).

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p.192. Cf. Carruthers, 'John Knox in Perth', pp. 544-547.

<sup>266</sup> John Stirling Maxwell Papers, T-PM 122/1/29, SRC, Mitchell Library; Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA; *Saint Andrew*, 11 April, 9 May, 13 June 1901; *Glasgow Herald*, 29 December 1913.

<sup>267</sup> *The Anti-Suffrage Review*, June 1910.

meet the earnest desire of a large number of women, who are anxious to unite in opposing the enfranchisement of women'.<sup>268</sup> Fourteen objections were made to women's suffrage:

no time over politics ... always be quarrelling with her husband about politics ... it would come to a married man having two votes ... the sex is too intellectually feeble to have a vote ... if women are allowed to vote they will become MP ... if women will have patience, men will in time do what they want for them..women have a great deal of influence over men now, and would lose it if they became so unwomanly as to take an interest in the Government ... Society is based upon force women cannot fight ... there are more women than men in the country ... there would be war between the sexes ... they are physically incapable of doing the sort of work that men do ... they are from character and intellect incapable of doing properly the sort of work that men do ... women do not want a vote ... Men don't like it.<sup>269</sup>

Since the founding of the SLOWS, the Pros and the Antis regarding women's suffrage had frequently collided in Scotland. They each sought to counter-act against the activities of the other, whether by sending letter to the press, or organising deputations and demonstrations.<sup>270</sup>

Sir John Stirling Maxwell viewed Knox as a great statesman, who devoted his abilities to the cause of reform.<sup>271</sup> Even the murder of Cardinal Beaton was justified:

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<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, May 1910.

<sup>269</sup> *Fourteen Objections to Women's Suffrage Considered*, p. 1ff.

<sup>270</sup> For demonstration, *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, 13 November 1913 (SLOWS), 11 December 1913 (NUWSS); *The Ayr Observer*, 31 October (NUWSS), 14 November (SLOWS) 1913; *The Ayr Advertiser*, 6 November (NUWSS), 29 November (SLOWS) 1913. For deputation, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, SRA, Mitchell Library, 13 November, 11 December, 23 December 1913 (GWSAWS and SLOWS). For public argument, *Perthshire Courier*, 3 March 1914 (NUWSS and SLOWS in a meeting of the Young Scots Society). See also Annual Report of the SCWT (1904-1905), SRA, and Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>271</sup> J. S. Maxwell, 'John Knox As A Statesman', John Stirling Maxwell Papers, T-PM 122/4/31, SRA.

Knox, by his own admission, approved the deed, and joined the murderers in the Archbishop's stronghold after their end had been accomplished. It would be too cold-blooded to describe a murder as statesmanlike. But the Cardinal was undoubtedly the chief obstacle to the Reformation in Scotland ... To Knox, after Wishart's death, it probably seemed an act of mere justice.<sup>272</sup>

As a politician, Knox's speeches and sermons could also be seen as his weapon in encouraging violence by the local population. In 1559, Knox used this weapon, and after the reformer preached his famous sermon against idolatry, Protestant mobs acted violently. Knox then used the same weapon at St. Andrews' Cathedral, by preaching that 'the buyers and sellers in the Temple did agree to remove all monuments of idolatry.'<sup>273</sup> There were the same results in St. Andrews as in Perth.<sup>274</sup> When Perth was again taken by the reformers, the Abbey and Palace of Scone were burned down, and Cambuskenneth was sacked.<sup>275</sup> Maxwell concluded that this violent behaviour by the reformers was thus justifiable since it was part of a political campaign.

Thus, militant suffragettes defined John Knox as 'the champion destroyer of ecclesiastical buildings', although they had to recognise that he was also against women rulers. Non-violent suffragettes called him an inciter of violent actions and objected to taking the activities of the reformer as a role model of militancy, while the constitutional suffragists were largely in agreement in that Knox was a soldier who fought a Holy War rather than a man of violence. Unlike the suffrage bodies, the anti-suffragists regarded him as a great statesman who took a unique position in this issue.

In the light of recent studies of John Knox, however, the above

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<sup>272</sup> Maxwell, 'John Knox as a Statesman', p. 4. Cf. John Knox, *The Reformation in Scotland*, pp. 63-69.

<sup>273</sup> Maxwell, 'John Knox as a Statesman', pp. 11, 13.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. John Knox, *The Reformation*, pp. 174-178.

<sup>275</sup> Maxwell, 'John Knox as a Statesman', p. 14; John Knox, *The Reformation*, pp. 178-179.

opinions of his attitude in relation to the issue of violence have to be reconsidered. Although Knox was involved in the siege at St. Andrews in 1547, the reformer was actually reluctant to use violent methods,<sup>276</sup> the reason being that the Knoxian Reformation was generally based on Christian principles rather than political ideology. The main concern was the advancement of the Christian religion which would lead to the liberty of the country.<sup>277</sup> Following biblical precepts, Knox argued for the duty of rebellion against idolatrous and tyrannical sovereigns, thus showing that he viewed violence in a religious light.<sup>278</sup> While Knox's views stemmed from his theological convictions, he did condone the use of violence in overthrowing an ungodly ruler, and thus went further than other reformers, such as Calvin.<sup>279</sup> But, as Dr. Kyle has insisted, John Knox was not 'a political theorist'.<sup>280</sup> As his goal in life was 'to glorify God and to perform His work', the Reformation of religion in Scotland was a Divine work. Knoxian political thought was thus only 'an extension of his religious thought'.<sup>281</sup>

#### 4.5.2. The Role of Women in Society

The suffragettes also criticised Knox for his treatment of Mary Queen of Scots because of her gender, religion, and politics. According to Murray, when Mary had been sent to France for safety, John Knox was deeply concerned about the influence of

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<sup>276</sup> Richard L. Greaves, *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation; Studies in the Thought of John Knox* (Michigan 1980), p. 127.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 155; R. D. Kyle, 'The Mind of John Knox' (Unpublished New Mexico Ph.D thesis 1972), p. vi.

<sup>279</sup> Greaves, *Theology and Revolution*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>280</sup> Kyle, *The Mind of John Knox*, p. 282.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

Romanism upon her.<sup>282</sup> On her return, the reformer noted that 'the time of her arrival did manifestly speak what comfort was brought into this country with her-to wit, sorrow, dolour, darkness and all impiety.'<sup>283</sup> Mary was astonished because of the reformers' zeal and their intolerance, but she was not afraid; as Miss Murray said, 'her courage was invincible.'<sup>284</sup> Even though the reformers had prohibited plays, sports and other entertainments, Mary re-introduced the Masques which had been regarded as "devices of the devil". Apart from this, other entertainments which she enjoyed were dancing with great banquets, horse-riding, hunting, cards and chess playing, puppet performing, golfing, and archery practice.<sup>285</sup> Knox admonished her, and eventually reduced her to tears. Murray called the Queen "Poor Mary".<sup>286</sup> Seen in this light, Knox was a misogynist who used another form of violence against a 'feeble lady'.

In agreement with Murray, Glasse seemed to think that the reformer had been a misogynist. This was because Knox wrote a tract in 1558 called *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*,<sup>287</sup> with the purpose of opposing the reign of the Queen Regent of Scotland and Queen Mary of England. Knox stated: 'I am assured that God hath revealed to some ... it is more then a monstre in nature that a woman shall reigne and have empire above man.'<sup>288</sup> But, according to Glasse, although Knox protested against the rule of women, the reformer regarded Queen

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<sup>282</sup> Murray, *Scottish Women in Bygone Days*, p. 34.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36. Cf. John Knox, *The Reformation*, p. 267.

<sup>284</sup> Murray, *Scottish Women*, p. 53.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-50.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 44. Cf. John Knox, *The Reformation*, pp. 303-306.

<sup>287</sup> Glasse, *John Knox*, p. 37. Cf. John Knox, *The First Blast of The Trumpet Against The Monstrous Regiment of Women*, David Laing (ed.), *The Works of John Knox* (Edinburgh 1855), Vol IV, pp. 351-422 and *The Reformation*, pp. 135-157.

<sup>288</sup> Knox, *The First Blast*, p. 357; Glasse, *John Knox*, p. 39.

Elizabeth as an exception: 'if she would only exercise her prerogative with modesty, and humble herself before God.'<sup>289</sup> Glasse added that:

we must not forget that he could also enter into the sorrows of women, and won not only their respect but their confidence, while he was both admired and beloved in the intimate circle of his friends and family ... He strengthened the feeble knees and made straight paths for the common people.<sup>290</sup>

Therefore, in Knox's view, the crucial issue was whether female rulers obeyed the Divine law.

Sir John Stirling Maxwell regarded Knox's booklet as 'wearisome and unconvincing to us'.<sup>291</sup> It could not be regarded as 'a serious contribution to political science'.<sup>292</sup> Although Maxwell himself was an active anti-suffragist in Scotland, he stated that 'anti-suffragists who go to it for hints will be disappointed.' The reason was that

The argument, if such it can be called, is strictly partisan, a series of assertions backed up by a collection of favourable instances and opinions.<sup>293</sup>

In Maxwell's view, Knox was primarily a statesman who could use evidence to suit his argument:

It would be as easy by the same method to make out as good a case on the other side. Deborah would be to the front instead of Jezebel. Knox was not oblivious of Deborah. He kept her dark ... but trotted her out on

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<sup>289</sup> Glasse, *John Knox*, p. 52.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191. Cf. William Morrison, 'John Knox At Holyrood,' February 1905, pp. 54-58; Guthrie, 'John Knox's Humanity, May 1905, pp. 200-202, in *The Missionary Record* (UFC).

<sup>291</sup> Maxwell, 'John Knox as a Statesman', p. 11.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12. Cf. John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, pp. 351-422.

at least two occasions as a brilliant exception to his rule, once in an attempt to pacify the angry Elizabeth, and the other when he was trying to put a not too unfriendly ending to one of his stormy conversations with Queen Mary. In this essay and elsewhere we observe in Knox a kind of insincerity to which great statesmen do not stoop, though great statesmen often have to dissimulate. It is not insincerity of purpose.<sup>294</sup>

Thus, as a politician, Knox's attitude to women rulers could be justified.

According to recent studies, however, the Scottish reformer was not a misogynist. Knox did not have a natural dislike for women, and he sometimes corresponded with women as a counsellor.<sup>295</sup> Many of Knox's surviving letters were sent to women, and show 'a high regard for the female sex'.<sup>296</sup> Knox also married twice and enjoyed the friendship of women. His attack on female rulers such as Mary Tudor, Mary of Lorraine, Mary Stewart, and Catherine de Medici, was not because of their gender but because of their Roman catholicism.<sup>297</sup> In other words, an acceptable female ruler was determined by whether 'she professes and propagates the true Protestant religion, that is, 'God-fearing' and so faithful'.<sup>298</sup> Therefore, according to Dr. Hazlett, Knox's true position to female rulers could properly be understood through 'his eschatological perceptions' and 'his sense of the immediacy of God's active sovereignty' since for Knox there was only one kingdom governed by God himself.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Maxwell, 'John Knox as a Statesman', pp. 11-12.

<sup>295</sup> Greaves, *Theology and Revolution*, p. 160.

<sup>296</sup> Kyle, *The Mind of John Knox*, p. 299.

<sup>297</sup> Greaves, *Theology and Revolution*, pp. 166-168.

<sup>298</sup> William I. P. Hazlett, '"Jihad" against Female Infidels and Satan: John Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet*', Willem van't Spijker (ed.), *Calvin: Erbe und Auftrag* (Kampen 1991), p. 288.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

#### 4.6. Conclusion: the Controversial Aspect of the Movement regarding its Religious Character

We have examined the extent to which militant women were critical of the Church and why, despite the violence of the suffragettes, some Church members continued to support the campaign for votes for women. Church members often assumed that because suffragettes used militant tactics against the Christian Church, female militants must be un-Christian. In contrast, some suffragettes regarded the Church as an anti-Christian institution, for the Church denied the fundamental principles of the Kingdom of God, such as righteousness, justice, liberty, and fraternity. But other suffragettes disagreed. Lady Ramsay, a member of the Scottish WSPU and a Vice-President of the SCLWS, put it in the following way:

The Movement is essentially spiritual ... it makes a special call to women, for they are naturally susceptible to religious and spiritual impressions. The Divine call has reached them, bidding them rise and do the work God requires of them; and everywhere throughout the world they are responding to the call.<sup>300</sup>

The Churches' response to militant action has also been investigated. In particular, following the burning of the Church of Whitekirk, serious criticisms were made by ecclesiastical courts and by the public. As far as the General Assembly was concerned, the interruptions of the suffragettes provoked a strong antipathy towards them. It was also true that the defence of militancy had a negative impact on some outwith the Church. An anonymous contributor to the *Glasgow Herald* expressed it, as follows:

I hope the members of their various Churches will let them see their disapproval of a minister of the Gospel mixing himself up in politics that lead to lawlessness ... Speaking for myself, I had intended to join a

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<sup>300</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, April 1913.

certain Church in town, but ... I have changed my mind.<sup>301</sup>

Even so, several religious leaders were sympathetic to militancy, in response to the actions of the authorities: the violence of the police and the policy of the force-feeding of prisoner. Some clergymen protested against the brutal treatment of women campaigners by the police. Many Christian ministers supported the prisoners, and prayers were offered by some local Churches.

Christian views of violence have also been examined. In the UF Church, there was criticism of the use of the violence, and in the Church of Scotland, although many clergymen strongly objected to the use of force, some Church leaders defended militancy on the basis of the principles of the Kingdom of God.

Various interpretations of John Knox's position on violence have been explored. The reformer was considered by different organisations of the women's suffrage movement as the destroyer of Church buildings, an inciter of violent acts, a humanist, a religious fighter, a statesman, and a misogynist. Recent studies have placed a new interpretation on the Knoxian Reformation, arguing that it was fundamentally religious, and motivated by Knox's belief in a righteous cause.

No less than the militant suffragette groups, a significant contribution to the movement was made by the constitutional suffrage organisations. It is to this contribution that we now turn.

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<sup>301</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 18 March 1913.

**CHAPTER V 'FROM NEUTRALITY TO ACTION': THE CONSTITUTIONAL WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT AND THE FRANCHISE CASE IN THE SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAL COURTS, NOVEMBER 1913-APRIL 1914**

**5.1. Introduction: to what extent did the Presbyteries and their Members support the Suffrage Issue?**

Having examined the relationship of the Churches to the militant suffragettes, we now focus on the activities of the non-militant groups, such as the NUWSS, the NMFWS, the SLOWS, and the SCLWS.<sup>1</sup> They used only constitutional and peaceful tactics: a number of deputations were sent to a wide range of public bodies; many letters were sent mainly to religious denominations; and demonstrations were organised in the largest cities of Britain.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the NMFWS' approach to the Scottish presbyterial courts was noteworthy as far as the religious dimension of the constitutional suffrage movement was concerned. Following the NMFWS' initiative, many local organisations for women's suffrage also approached the presbyteries in an attempt to gain their full support. As a result, there were many responses, both positive and negative, from the presbyteries; several members of the courts were sympathetic to the franchise issue and took an important part in promoting women's suffrage in their own presbyteries.

Leah Leneman has recently concluded that 'only two CS presbyteries - Glasgow and Irvine - voted in favour of taking action'.<sup>3</sup> It will be shown, however, that this assertion is inaccurate and it ignores the fact that many individuals also

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<sup>1</sup> *The Anti-Suffrage Review*, June 1910; Report of the NMFWS in *Free Church Suffrage Times*, February 1914; *The Scotsman*, 12 March 1912.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, 13 November, 11 December, and 23 December 1913, SRA; *The Free Church Times*, February 1914; *Votes for Women*, 2 January 1914.

<sup>3</sup> Leah Leneman, 'Women's Suffrage and the Churches', *DSCHT*, p. 891.

made a significant contribution.<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, we shall examine to what extent the presbyterial courts and their members supported the cause. After exploring the origin of the Church court debate on women's suffrage, the attitudes of the presbyteries themselves will be investigated. Depending upon the degree of support they gave, their attitudes can be categorised in terms of neutrality or positive action. The criterion determining neutrality is that there was neither acceptance of a deputation, nor an expression of sympathy for women's suffrage. Positive action by the Church courts is evidenced by the passing of a resolution in favour of women's suffrage or the reception of a deputation. However, it is not defined solely by whether an overture was sent to the General Assembly as requested by the NMFWS. Other suffrage organisations were also approaching the presbyteries and the same criteria will be used to judge the responses of the Church courts to their requests. Presbytery minutes will be examined, along with local newspapers which reported the arguments and decisions of presbyteries regarding the franchise issue, as well as the activities of clerical suffragists who played a leading role in their own towns and cities.

We shall first identify the origins of the Scottish presbyterial controversy over the franchise for women.

## **5.2. The Starting Point of the Debate in the Church Courts**

The debate was started by the NMFWS, which was formed in 1913 through the efforts of Mrs Maude Arncliffe-Sennett.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Dorothea Chalmers Smith advised Mrs Arncliffe-Sennett that 'a letter should be sent to the Glasgow CS presbytery,' and that 'it should also be sent to the newspapers.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the NMFWS, *Free Church Suffrage Times*, February 1914.

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. M. Arncliffe-Sennett to the Rev. Robert Pryde (Clerk to Glasgow CS Presbytery), Janie Allan Collections, National Library  
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The role of Dr. Smith was also significant. She was one of the first women graduates in medicine from Glasgow University and served on the staff of Glasgow's Royal Samaritan Hospital for Women.<sup>7</sup> In 1899, she married the Rev. William Chalmers Smith, CS minister of Calton Parish Church at Glasgow.<sup>8</sup> An ardent suffragette and member of the WSPU from 1912, she tried to set fire to an empty house in Glasgow in 1913, and after arrest, was sentenced to eight months imprisonment.<sup>9</sup> In discussing her activities, a recent writer maintains that 'the wife of the Rev. Chalmers Smith ... was arrested for attempted fire-raising, but she did not have the support of her husband, and in fact she left him not many years later.'<sup>10</sup> These remarks, however, do not accurately reflect the situation. First, Mr. Smith was a progressive minister, by then a member of the Scottish Christian Social Union which attempted to promote the status of women within society.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, Smith was a sympathetic supporter of women's suffrage, and was listed as such by Janie Allan, the Glasgow organiser of the WSPU.<sup>12</sup> Thirdly, Mr. Smith gave his wife practical help in regard to looking after their six children, attending her trial, and appealing for her release on the grounds

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of Scotland, Acc 4498/3/95; M. Arncliffe-Sennett Collections, Vol 25, British Library.

<sup>7</sup> S. Livingstone, *Bonnie Fechtters: Women in Scotland 1900-1950* (Motherwell 1994), pp. 18-19.

<sup>8</sup> *FES* III, pp. 404-405.

<sup>9</sup> Unpublished MS of Helen Crawford's Autobiography, William Gallagher Memorial Library, Scottish Trades Union Congress, Glasgow, p. 109; Elspeth King, *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women* (Edinburgh 1993), p. 129.

<sup>10</sup> Leah Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches and "Votes for Woman"', *RSCHS*, Vol XXIV part 2 (1991), p. 236. Cf. Lesley A. O. Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland, c.1830 - c.1930' (Unpublished Edinburgh Ph.D Thesis 1994), p. 384.

<sup>11</sup> *Saint Andrew*, 9 May 1901.

<sup>12</sup> Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/4/137, National Library of Scotland.

of illness.<sup>13</sup> The main reason for their divorce was not therefore direct anti-suffragism on his part, but problems arising from her leaving behind domestic and parish affairs in order to be involved in militant activities.<sup>14</sup>

Following Dr. Smith's advice, letters that the NMFWS drew up were then sent to 150 presbyteries of both the National Church (84) and the UF Church (66).<sup>15</sup> In the letter of the NMFWS, Mrs Arncliffe-Sennett said that the presbyteries should realise their duty and power as spiritual guides in this vital matter.<sup>16</sup> She also indicated that as women's powerful influence on the life and work of the Church and the Nation had already been acknowledged, the granting of the parliamentary franchise to women was a quite natural development.<sup>17</sup> Appealing to the Church for help, she hoped that the presbyterial courts would pass resolutions and send overtures in favour of women's suffrage to the General Assemblies.<sup>18</sup>

The NMFWS' initiative was sufficient to stimulate the SLOWS, which had been founded in 1910.<sup>19</sup> They acted swiftly in response to the NMFWS, and a number of letters were sent to over 1,693 ministers and 84 presbyteries of the Church of Scotland.<sup>20</sup> They

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<sup>13</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 30 April 1985; Leah Leneman, *A Guid Cause: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Scotland* (rev. ed. Aberdeen 1995), p. 159.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Mrs Catherine Blair of East Lothian and Mrs Mary Dickie of Bearsden in chapter IV.

<sup>15</sup> Report of the NMFWS, *Free Church Suffrage Times*, February 1914. For presbyteries, see *The Scottish Church and University Almanac* (Edinburgh 1913), pp. 30-31, 104-105.

<sup>16</sup> *Vote for Women*, 17 October 1913; *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 6 January 1914.

<sup>17</sup> M. Arncliffe-Sennett to the Rev. Robert Pryde.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> See chapter IV.

<sup>20</sup> Janie Allan Collections, National Library of Scotland, Acc 4498/3/95; *Glasgow Herald*, 29 December 1913; *The Vote*, 20  
(continued ...)

were dated 19 December 1913, and were signed by both the Duchess of Montrose and Sir John Stirling Maxwell, who were both in the forefront of the anti-suffrage movement in Scotland.

An ardent anti-suffragist and President of the SLOWS, the Duchess of Montrose also served as President of the Scottish Council of the British Red Cross Society.<sup>21</sup> Sir John Stirling Maxwell enthusiastically involved himself with forestry, art, and architecture, as well as parish Church affairs.<sup>22</sup> These two well-known aristocrats were also Vice-Presidents of the Scottish Christian Social Union.<sup>23</sup>

In this circular letter from the SLOWS, a word of warning was given to the ministers of the Church of Scotland. It was provoked largely by the action of the Glasgow CS presbytery in giving its approbation to women's suffrage. The SLOWS thus made clear their position that:

it does not fall within the province of such courts to deal with the subject, and that they have no right to commit the Church or organisation with which they are connected to their individual views ... Whatever your own views be on woman suffrage, we are confident that you will refuse to allow the National Church to be drawn into a political controversy.<sup>24</sup>

Needless to say, the two letters made a considerable impact on the Churches, and three further questions are raised: what were the key points of the arguments in the Church courts? why should a number of the presbyteries take a neutral position? and why, nevertheless, did several members of the courts support the suffrage issue?

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February 1914. For ministers and presbyteries, see *The Scottish Church and University Almanac* (Edinburgh 1914), pp. 30-33.

<sup>21</sup> *The Anti-Suffrage Review*, June 1910.

<sup>22</sup> Sir John Stirling Maxwell Papers, SRA, T-PM 122/1/29.

<sup>23</sup> Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>24</sup> Janie Allan Collections, National Library of Scotland, Acc 4498/3/95.

### 5.3. Arguments in favour of Neutrality in the Church Courts

Although the CS presbyteries were the major battlefield between the NMFWS and the SLOWS, the UFC presbyteries were also under great pressure because the NMFWS had also sent its letter to them. Further, a number of local suffrage societies had approached the two main denominations, and the UFC presbyteries responded sensitively. Unfortunately, however, the response of the UFC presbyteries to women's suffrage has attracted little attention in recent studies. It is therefore helpful to deal with the UFC presbyteries alongside the courts of the Established Church. Several themes emerge from the debates in the presbyteries.

#### 5.3.1. The Church Courts and Procedural Issues

Generally, the issue was more controversial in the UFC presbyteries than those of the Church of Scotland, even although in many cases the debate was over procedural issues. Four UFC presbyterial courts can be examined: Ayr, Stirling and Dunblane, Deer, and Glasgow.

First of all, a lively debate took place within Ayr UFC presbytery.<sup>25</sup> The presbytery assembled on 27 January 1914, and had to solve the problem of whether the NMFWS' letter should be read. A motion in favour of the Clerk reading the letter was eventually passed by 18 votes to 13.<sup>26</sup> Even so, when the Rev. A. Taylor spoke about the suffrage movement, Mr. Binnie interrupted repeatedly and argued that 'the presbytery ought not to listen to Mr Taylor if he insisted in giving a learned disquisition on what he called the women's movement.'<sup>27</sup> His interruption made Mr. Taylor furious, and the Moderator ruled that Mr. Taylor was

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<sup>25</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Ayr, Ayrshire County Archives, CH3/35/3, 27 January 1914; *Ayr Advertiser*, 27 January 1914; *Ayrshire Post*, 30 January 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 28 January 1914.

<sup>26</sup> *Ayr Advertiser*, 27 January 1914.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

perfectly in order. Taylor thus proposed a resolution that 'the Presbytery ... should express and record its sympathy.'<sup>28</sup> But Taylor's motion was defeated by 26 votes to 8.<sup>29</sup>

Another serious argument occurred in the UFC presbytery of Stirling and Dunblane.<sup>30</sup> The court met on 3 February 1914, and tried to deal with the agenda of women's suffrage in a summary way. But two ministers, Mr. David Smith and Robert Primrose, objected to this, for the Rev. D. D. Ormond (the Clerk) had kept private for over a month his receipt of four letters from the women's suffrage organisations, including the one from the NMFWS, and he had also burned one of them.<sup>31</sup> In protesting at this, the Rev. Alexander of Dunblane expressed his astonishment at the Clerk's behaviour, and Smith, who was seconded by Primrose, moved that the court should appoint an order of the day for next meeting to discuss the women's suffrage issue. But, as the Rev. Chalmers who was ex-Provost of Kinross supported Mr. Ormond and emphasised that this was not the business of the court, the Clerk's motion was carried by 20 votes to 3. Three ministers, Revs. Smith, Primrose, and Alexander, dissented from the court's decision.<sup>32</sup>

One of the dissenting clergymen, the Rev. Robert Primrose<sup>33</sup> was an outstanding supporter of women's issues. The minister of Stirling Erskine, he played an important part in the promotion of women's status in society as a member of both the Scottish Council of Women's Trades and the Executive Committee of the

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<sup>28</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Ayr, 27 January 1914.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Stirling-Dunblane, Central Region Archives, CH3/286/22, 3 February 1914; *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, 5 February 1914; *The Stirling Observer*, 3 February 1914; *The Scotsman*, 4 February 1914; *The British Weekly*, 12 February 1914.

<sup>31</sup> *The Stirling Observer*, 3 February 1914.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Stirling-Dunblane, 3 February 1914.

<sup>33</sup> *FUFCS*, p. 204. Also, see chapter IV.

Scottish Christian Social Union.<sup>34</sup> An enthusiastic suffragist, Primrose reconciled the difference in methodological ideology within the movement as he and his wife supported both the militant and non-militant organisations for women's suffrage.<sup>35</sup>

More extreme opposition to the letter was expressed in the UFC presbytery of Deer. When they discussed what to do with the letter from the NMFWS, a member of the presbytery cried, 'put it in the fire', and another 'we don't discuss those things in our Presbytery.'<sup>36</sup> The court declined to read the letter.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, a critical situation developed in the UFC presbytery of Glasgow. The presbytery had already received the NMFWS' letter, but, on 9 December 1913, had simply remitted it to the Business Committee.<sup>38</sup> An additional factor in Glasgow was the existence of the GWSAWS, which had been founded in 1902.<sup>39</sup> Before the presbytery assembled on 10 February 1914, following the advice of the Rev. W. Mill, the GWSAWS contacted some members of the court. Miss K. W. Lindsay, Secretary of the GWSAWS, sent a letter to the Rev. W. B. Hutton who was a member of the GWSAWS,<sup>40</sup> asking that at its next meeting, the presbytery appoint a delegate to be sent to London.<sup>41</sup> Miss Lindsay added that the Rev.

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<sup>34</sup> Annual Report of the SCWT (1904-1905) and of SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>35</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 14 March 1913; *The Common Cause*, 1 August 1912.

<sup>36</sup> *Aberdeen Free Press*, 4 February 1914.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Glasgow, SRA, CH3/146/471-1, 9 December 1913.

<sup>39</sup> Minutes of the GWSAWS, Dep. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Mitchell Library.

<sup>40</sup> Annual Report of the Glasgow Society for Women's Suffrage (1915), SRA.

<sup>41</sup> K. W. Lindsay to the Rev. W. B. Hutton, the Glasgow and West of Scotland Association for Women's Suffrage, letter books 1913-1918, Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Mitchell Library, letter 257-8, 21 January 1914.

James Barr, who was a member of the General Council of the SCLWS, and later the leader of the UFC minority in the 1929 Union, and a Labour MP from 1924 to 1945,<sup>42</sup> had rung up and advised her: 'get Hutton to move the notice for you and I will be very glad to second.'<sup>43</sup> Another letter was sent to the Rev. D. Lamont, who was an experienced parliamentarian and a good friend of women's suffrage. Here she asked him to become a seconder on the reception of a deputation to be moved by Mr. Mill at the meeting of the court to be held on 10 February.<sup>44</sup>

However, at the presbytery meeting on 10 February 1914, the motion on the delegation to be sent to London was not introduced since Hutton was totally silent. Mr. Mill moved that the presbytery should receive a deputation from GWSAWS at the next meeting. Mr. Mill's motion was entirely in agreement with the GWSAWS' request. But the seconder of the motion was not Lamont but Mr. J. Barr, for Lamont had not attended the meeting.<sup>45</sup> The motion was eventually defeated by 52 votes to 40.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the episode of the presbytery was unusual because the debate had been initiated by a member of the Church court, Mr. Mill. It seems likely, therefore, that the other suffrage societies could have also used the same tactic as the GWSAWS.

### 5.3.2. The Church and Politics

In most cases, the political character of the women's suffrage movement was a critical issue in the presbytery debates. Both those for and against women's franchise argued over whether the

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<sup>42</sup> Report of the SCLWS, A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who* (London 1913), p. 104; *Glasgow Herald*, 22 April 1912; *DSCHT*, p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> K. W. Lindsay to W. B. Hutton.

<sup>44</sup> K. W. Lindsay to D. Lamont, letter 283-4, 29 January 1914.

<sup>45</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Glasgow, 10 February 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 11 February 1914; *Evening Citizen*, 11 February 1914.

<sup>46</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Glasgow, 10 February 1914.

issue was one of political expediency, or rather a moral, social, and religious question.

As mentioned in chapter II, in the party political arena the main support for women's suffrage came from the Liberals, although some key leaders such as the Prime Minister Asquith were strongly opposed,<sup>47</sup> and the Liberals generally feared that the women's vote would add to the strength of the Tories.<sup>48</sup> Unlike the Liberals, most Conservatives were from the first reluctant to give their support to the cause of female enfranchisement, and no Conservative leaders had a mandate for supporting the women's franchise.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the two older parties, the Labour party declared itself in favour of enfranchising women. But there were two other factors which reduced the party's support, the demand for a wider adult suffrage, and the instinctive dislike of women's franchise by some Labour men.<sup>50</sup> In relation to party politics, therefore, the issue of female suffrage was regarded as problematic.<sup>51</sup>

The debate in the UFC presbytery of Perth was a typical example of the way in which women's suffrage was seen as a political issue. The presbytery received a letter from the NMFWS and passed it on to the Social Problems Committee which had already been established according to the resolution of the UFC General Assembly.<sup>52</sup> When the court gathered on 3 February 1914, the Rev. Millar Patrick, who was convener of that committee, a prominent

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<sup>47</sup> Constance Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London 1967), p. 127; Neal Blewett, 'The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918', *Past & Present*, No. 32 (December 1965), p. 54.

<sup>48</sup> Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics*, p. 181.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>51</sup> Neal Blewett, 'The Franchise in the United Kingdom', pp. 52-55.

<sup>52</sup> See *Report of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1912).

hymnologist, and a clerical suffragist,<sup>53</sup> submitted the deliverance of the committee as follows:

The Presbytery rejoices in the claims which women in increasing numbers are advancing to be admitted to a larger share in efforts to secure moral and social betterment for their sex and for the community ... and views with deep sympathy all measures fitted to enlarge their usefulness ... and therefore declines to take that action to which it has been invited.<sup>54</sup>

Patrick explained the background to this refusal, by saying that 'if they were to admit into their presbytery for discussion questions that were political because they had religious connections, he did not see where they were to end.'<sup>55</sup> Patrick concluded that 'the claim must be very much more direct and powerful than it was before they felt themselves warranted in intervening.'<sup>56</sup>

The Rev. J. W. Slater, a member of the SCLWS,<sup>57</sup> presented a mild amendment to the effect that the presbytery, since

the claim of women for Parliamentary franchise was non-party, and was in the interests of social purity, temperance, and industrial reform, would rejoice at the granting of it; at the same time the Presbytery deemed it inexpedient to take such action.<sup>58</sup>

Slater held that the Christian Church could not lag behind other

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<sup>53</sup> *The Common Cause*, 11 April 1913; *DSCHT*, pp. 648-649; D. Forrester and D. Murray, *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland* (2nd rev. ed. Edinburgh 1996), p. 98.

<sup>54</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Perth, SRO, 6 January 1914; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 4 February 1914; *The Peoples Journal*, 7 February 1914; *The Scotsman*, 4 February 1914; *The British Weekly*, 12 February 1914.

<sup>55</sup> *Perthshire Advertiser*, 4 February 1914.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, July 1913; *The Common Cause*, 27 June 1913; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 23 July 1913.

<sup>58</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Perth, 4 February 1914.

public bodies, such as Perth Town Council and the Independent Labour Party, who had already made strong announcements in favour of women's suffrage. He added that 'the church in previous great questions made a great mistake in lagging behind public opinion in regard to slavery and temperance.'<sup>59</sup> Slater thus suggested that they should go a little further than proposed by Mr. Patrick and the Committee.<sup>60</sup>

The Rev. Percy Hepburn, an enthusiastic supporter for women's suffrage as a member of the SCLWS,<sup>61</sup> proposed a more radical amendment in the following terms:

That while declining to take the motion ... the presbytery express its conviction that the time has now come when the Parliamentary franchise should be granted to women on the terms on which men now enjoy it. Copies of this resolution be sent to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the members of Parliament for Perth and county.<sup>62</sup>

Hepburn maintained that the issue of parliamentary votes for women was not simply a political one, but also a moral, religious, socio-economic, and political one. He thus said that they should decline what was 'a most unchivalrous' motion from Mr. Patrick and take his proposed motion instead. But, on a vote being taken, Patrick's motion was carried by a huge majority.<sup>63</sup> Even so, the attitude of the court was more enlightened than that of other presbyteries because it had escaped from the polarized mentality which regarded issues as simply either political or religious.

However, a large number of presbyteries still clung to a black and white approach. A typical example was the CS presbytery of

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *The Coming Day*, June 1916; *Perthshire Advertiser*, 25 March 1914.

<sup>62</sup> *Perthshire Advertiser*, 25 March 1914.

<sup>63</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Perth, 3 February 1914.

Stirling.<sup>64</sup> On 27 January 1914, the presbytery considered four different letters: in addition to the letters from the NMFWS and the SLOWS, there were letters from the Alloa Society for Women's Suffrage, asking the presbytery to send one or more representatives on a planned deputation to the Prime Minister, and from the Stirlingshire Branch of the NUWSS, entreating the court to give special consideration to the letter of the NMFWS.<sup>65</sup> At the beginning of the meeting, the Moderator, the Rev. John Fairley of Larbert, ruled that 'the matter should be taken up in private,' but most members objected to this.<sup>66</sup> Then, the Rev. Dr. Robertson moved that the matter should not be considered in the presbytery, for 'we were met as a Presbytery to discuss the business that directly belonged to them as ministers and office bearers of the Church.'<sup>67</sup> Robertson added that it was totally political rather than religious. In agreement with Robertson, the Rev. A. S. Forbes insisted that the Church court could not be the place for forming public opinion, let alone for the expression of political opinions. Contradicting the two other ministers, the Rev. D. P. McLees suggested that 'the Presbytery would never interpret their duty in a narrow way.'<sup>68</sup> He then moved that although the court should not take action, it should express sympathy with the movement. However, McLees' mild and general amendment was defeated by a huge majority.<sup>69</sup>

A number of the other presbyteries were united in seeing the approach as 'pure politics' or 'a divisive item'. Among the UFC presbyteries were: Annandale, Auchterarder, Dumbarton, Banff-

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<sup>64</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Stirling, Central Region Archive, CH2/722/29, 27 January 1914; *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, 29 January 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 28 January 1914; *The British Weekly*, 5 February 1914.

<sup>65</sup> *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, 29 January 1914.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Stirling, 27 January 1914.

Strathbogie, Cupar, Haddington and Dunbar, Edinburgh, and Elgin.<sup>70</sup> And, the CS presbyteries were Cupar, Dumbarton, Dumfries, Haddington, Kelso, Kirkwall, Paisley, Perth, Stranraer, and Dunbar.<sup>71</sup>

### 5.3.3. The Church and the Principle of Justice

The echo of the debates were heard in UFC presbytery of Irvine and Kilmarnock. When the presbytery assembled on 3 February 1914, it considered a letter from the NMFWS. The Rev. Taylor moved that the letter be left on the table, and the Rev. W. M. Trail seconded the motion. In opposition to this, the Rev. W. Baird proposed the following amendment:

That this Presbytery expresses sympathy with the movement to grant women the franchise on the same terms as men, and also sympathy with all

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<sup>70</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Edinburgh, SRO, CH3/111/46, 3 February 1914; Minutes of UFC Prebytery of Haddington and Dunbar, SRO, CH3/170/8; Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Cupar, Department of Mss and Rare Books, University of St. Andrews, CH3/65/17, 10 February 1914; Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Elgin, Morayshire district Record Office, CH3/121/7, 10 February 1914; *The Scotsman*, 4 February 1914; *The British Weekly*, 12 February 1914; *Banffshire Herald*, 7 February 1914; *The Elgin Courant and Courier*, 6 February 1914; *Aberdeen Free Press*, 4 February 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 2 February 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 2 February 1914.

<sup>71</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Cupar, Department of MSS and Rare Books, University of St. Andrews, CH2/82/27, 10 February 1914; Minutes of CS Presbytery of Dumbarton, SRO, CH2/546/20, 4 February 1914; Minutes of CS Presbytery of Dumfries, SRO, CH2/1284/28, 4 February 1914; Minutes of CS Presbytery of Dunbar, SRO, CH2/99/9, 5 February 1914; Minutes of CS Presbytery of Stranraer, SRO, CH2/341/13, 3 February 1914; Minutes of CS Presbytery of Perth, SRO, CH2/299/66, 4 February 1914; Minutes of CS Presbytery of Paisley, SRO, CH2/294/27, 4 February 1914; Minutes of CS Presbytery of Haddington, SRO, CH2/185/17, 25 November 1913; *Glasgow Herald*, 26 November 1913; *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 28 November 1913; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 28 November 1913; *The Scotsman*, 26 November 1913 and 5 February 1914; *The Vote*, 9 November 1914; *St. Andrews Citizen*, 14 February 1914.

constitutional means to gain this end.<sup>72</sup>

Baird's argument was entirely based on the theology of the Kingdom of God - a Kingdom of 'justice and fairness', and 'love and peace'. As noted in chapter II, during the second half of the nineteenth century, new historical and biblical scholarship had contributed to the rediscovery of the significance of the Kingdom of God.<sup>73</sup> In particular, the scholarly efforts of A. B. Bruce, professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis in Glasgow College from 1875 until his death in 1899, had shed new light on its meaning and nature. In an article on 'The Kingdom of God', Bruce remarked: 'the term *kingdom* conveys the idea that Christianity is a social thing, that man in religion is not an isolated unit, but a member of a social organism, and that his well-being and perfection ... is to be sought and found only in communion with his fellows.'<sup>74</sup> He went on to indicate the extent and task of the Divine Kingdom. 'A Kingdom of God is', said Bruce, 'a perfect society ... not to be identified with any church or any state, but of essential importance both to church and to state, tending, insofar as it is operative to make the one a truly 'holy commonwealth', and the other 'a truly righteous nation.'<sup>75</sup> According to Donald. C. Smith, the new emphasis on the Kingdom had 'far-reaching implications for the Christian attitude to society.'<sup>76</sup>

Keeping in mind the principles and characteristics of the Kingdom of God, Baird compared the political situation of women with the Churches' attitude towards them. He held that although the Churches had not recognised women's rights at an earlier

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<sup>72</sup> *The Kilmarnock Standard*, 7 February 1914.

<sup>73</sup> D. C. Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest* (Peter Lang 1987), p. 255.

<sup>74</sup> A. B. Bruce, 'The Kingdom of God', *Christianity and Social Life: A Course of Lectures* (Edinburgh 1885), p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest*, p. 255.

stage, they had welcomed the support of women and had given them the vote in the election of ministers. On the political situation, he asked 'if they allowed women the vote for a minister of religion why not for a Member of Parliament and why deprive them of a similar privilege in regard to the government of the nation?'<sup>77</sup> To him, it was definitely 'illogical' and 'unfair'. Baird went on to suggest that, if the vote was given to women, they would be able to solve many serious problems. He concluded that 'the Church courts should not go in for politics, but they should go in for justice and fairness.'<sup>78</sup> In seconding the motion, the Rev. A. C. Gordon reminded the members of the presbytery that the principle of justice would be violated unless they made this concession. Unfortunately, this proposal was defeated by an overwhelming majority. Nonetheless, Baird's viewpoint on the issue of women's franchise was unusual in the Church court debates because he stressed "justice" and "righteousness" as belonging to the Kingdom of God.

#### 5.3.4. The Contribution of Women to the Work of the Church

The recognition by the Church courts of the contribution of women to the life of the Church was a critical factor, as will be seen in the next chapter. Both those for and those against female suffrage did not hesitate to show their appreciation of this contribution.<sup>79</sup> For example, a member of the Auchterarder Established Presbytery, the Rev. H. H. Murray, expressed gratitude for the work of women in the Church, although most members of the court did not wish to show any sympathy for women's political suffrage.<sup>80</sup> Or again, at a monthly meeting of

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<sup>77</sup> *The Kilmarnock Standard*, 7 February 1914.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> See chapter VI.

<sup>80</sup> *The Scotsman*, 4 February 1914.

the Aberdeen UFC presbytery,<sup>81</sup> Dr. Morrison reminded the court of the Church's debt to women:

they owed a great deal to women, who collected for their Central Fund, and for mission, formed the greater body of their Sunday School teachers, made up the greater part of the congregation, and listened patiently to the sermons.<sup>82</sup>

Morrison claimed that the court ought to be with 'the women's demand for the full rights and privilege of citizenship', and that the matter might be remitted to the Committee on Public Questions.<sup>83</sup> The presbytery, however, did not take any action on women's suffrage.<sup>84</sup>

At the CS presbytery of Dundee, on 3 December 1913,<sup>85</sup> the Rev. J. F. G. Orr moved that the presbytery should agree to the request of the NMFWS, while the Rev. Harcourt Davidson, who had attended suffrage meetings as a guest but without changing his anti-suffragism,<sup>86</sup> proclaimed the uselessness of women's suffrage.<sup>87</sup> Orr held that 'in regard to the intellectual and social well-being of the state women stood really first,'<sup>88</sup> and that 'if they went to a Church meeting or a meeting in connection with the social well-being of the people they would find three-

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<sup>81</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Archives, CH3/2/22, 5 January 1914; *The Scotsman*, 4 February 1914; *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 6 January 1914.

<sup>82</sup> *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 6 January 1914.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Dundee, Dundee Archives and Record Office, CH2/103/27, 3 December 1914; *The Dundee Advertiser*, 4 December 1913.

<sup>86</sup> Report of the Scottish Federation for Women's Suffrage in *The Common Cause*, 19 September 1912.

<sup>87</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 4 December 1913.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

fourths of the audience composed of women.'<sup>89</sup> As the Rev. N. K. Mackenzie thought that Orr's motion was too radical to appeal to the members of the court, he proposed an amendment:

The Presbytery expresses appreciation of women's work in social, municipal, and religious spheres, and the Presbytery would be pleased if the proposed extension of the vote to women duly qualified should have the beneficent results expected of it.<sup>90</sup>

In spite of this, however, the presbytery decided to take no action.<sup>91</sup> Thus, although presbyteries expressed an appreciation of the work of women within the Church, this factor did not lead them to support women's suffrage.

#### 5.3.5. Several Views on the Neutrality of the Church

While the SLOWS' letter was being widely circulated, serious criticisms of it were made by those in favour of women's suffrage. A contributor to the *Evening Citizen*, Mr. S. C. Wilson, characterised the Antis' action as a political move, rather than a personal warning on the part of the Duchess of Montrose. According to Wilson, suffrage women had 'a definite and positive ideal for the progress of the race', an ideal which 'on its moral and spiritual side appeals to the Church through the attitude of Christ to women.'<sup>92</sup> The writer concluded that the Antis' letter was not therefore designed to save the Church but to check the progress of the women's cause.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> See also Minutes of CS Presbytery of Dundee, 4 February 1914. On 4 February 1914, the presbytery was again requested by the Dundee Women's Suffrage Society to appoint a representative to accompany a deputation to the Prime Minister in London. However, it was declined.

<sup>92</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 4 December 1913.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

In spite of this, the SLOWS' appeal to all CS clergymen and presbyteries not to interfere with women's suffrage seemed to be very successful. There were two main reasons. First, a great number of CS presbyteries took a neutral position. Secondly, on account of a widespread response to the Antis' letter, the SCLWS issued their own circular letter.<sup>94</sup>

Both of the suffragist groups, militant and non-militant, did not hesitate to express their feelings of disappointment at the response by the Church. From the militant point of view, Miss Janie Allan, who was the Glasgow organiser of the WSPU and a contributor to 'Our Suffrage Columns' for *Forward*, condemned their lack of courage:

When this subject is introduced into our Church Courts, even, indirectly, the members of these Courts, both lay and clerical look as scared as though a bomb had been thrown into their midst.<sup>95</sup>

The editor also held that in relation to women's suffrage, the problem was that the courts did not wish to do anything they could not uphold: 'the Church is infinitely more ready to cry out against injustices in far lands than against those at her own doors.'<sup>96</sup> She then asked: 'why should the Christian conscience grow so tender when the policy of our own country towards more than one half of its inhabitants is under consideration? Why can't we say with perfect frankness in our Church courts or as Christian people that we consider the withholding of the vote from women a grave injustice?'<sup>97</sup> Janie Allan deplored the Church's hesitation and said 'certain people are apt to imagine there is something wrong and unnatural in the movement.'<sup>98</sup> The

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<sup>94</sup> *The Scotsman*, 13 February 1914; *The Irvine Herald*, 20 February 1914. See also Chapter VI.

<sup>95</sup> *Forward*, 27 December 1913.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

writer warned those who were involved in the Scottish presbyterial courts:

if this silence or indifference continues much longer on the part on the Church, the supporters of Women's Suffrage will be sorely tempted to think little of the Church's conscience ... the next generation, however, will not endorse with its approval the Church's neutrality.<sup>99</sup>

In another edition of *Forward*, Allan also expressed her feeling of disappointment, in the following terms:

It seems a great pity that Presbytery after Presbytery should refuse to help this great movement; help which the Church could so easily give, which indeed, it might almost be said to owe to women. Where would the Church be without women? It will certainly lose the support of so many women as a result of its unsympathetic attitude to this appeal to its Presbyteries.<sup>100</sup>

Like Allan, Mrs Catherine Blair, a suffragette in East Lothian and a contributor to *The Christian Commonwealth*, mounted a criticism of the Church ministers who had been silent in the debates.<sup>101</sup> In her eyes, their attitude to female votes was contrary to Christianity. Blair reminded them of the danger of the "evil philosophy of the clean stall":

The ministers may refuse to take action on their behalf, thereby hoping to have peace. They may regard approvingly the "clean stall"; but there will be no increase by the strength of the ox.<sup>102</sup>

From the constitutional suffragist's perspective, Dr. Elsie

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Forward*, 17 January 1914.

<sup>101</sup> *The Christian Commonwealth*, 15 February 1914. See also *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 5 December 1913; *Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 2 January 1914.

<sup>102</sup> *The Christian Commonwealth*, 15 February 1914.

Inglis, secretary of the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies, Hon. Vice-President of the ENSWS, and a member of the General Council of the SCLWS, was in agreement with those writers, although she had never been sympathetic to their militant and violent methods.<sup>103</sup> Unusually, Inglis criticized two theological prejudices which were prevalent in that period: that women were still under a special curse from the days of Eden, and that St. Paul's standpoint on women was the last revelation in relation to their future position.<sup>104</sup> Elsie Inglis concluded by saying that

the Churches were equally timid in aught that gave comfort or consolation to those who were loyal to their Christian social ideal for women ... Nobody of administrators have been slower to perceive that women in responsible positions would be a strength to the Church than have been the clergy of the Church.<sup>105</sup>

Another non-militant suffragist, Margaret Millar Nicholson of Tranent, characterised the ministers' neutral attitude as like that of 'the old world Pharisees', for they did not follow the Lord's teaching on earth.<sup>106</sup> According to Nicholson, women understood that 'to be a "Christian minister" is a position which "demands nothing" but to be a "Christ-like minister" is one which "demands all".'<sup>107</sup> But she did not wish to condemn the ministers 'in a wholesale fashion', and simply reminded them of 'the awful need for the repeated call of Christ's, "Feed my lambs" to be heeded'.<sup>108</sup>

A clerk of a UFC presbytery put forward his point of view on

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<sup>103</sup> Lady Frances Balfour, *Dr. Elsie Inglis*, pp. 104-105; Forty-Fifth Report of the ENSWS (1913), Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University.

<sup>104</sup> See Chapter VI.

<sup>105</sup> Frances Balfour, *Dr. Elsie Inglis*, p. 106.

<sup>106</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 13 February 1914.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

the Church court's position on women's suffrage anonymously in a letter to *The Scotsman*.<sup>109</sup> The clerk displayed an unwillingness to lead the Church into the midst of controversies, although he recommended that a member, or members, of a congregation had the right of access by petition or memorial to the presbytery.<sup>110</sup> He thought that there were two main reasons why the UFC presbyteries took a neutral position: first, the matter was clearly a divisive one; and secondly, the suffragists did not use the constitutional procedure of petitioning.<sup>111</sup>

The editorial of *The Missionary Record* (UFC) seemed to agree with the clerk's opinion.<sup>112</sup> However, the writer was concerned that because the easiest course was to let the matter "lie on the table" and "await developments", in most UFC presbyteries 'many are restless and dissatisfied with their position, particularly among the younger class.'<sup>113</sup> The editor thus appealed to the General Assembly to deal with the issue:

The problem is reacting on the spiritual life of thousands in the Church, and the Assembly would probably earn greater respect by taking up a definite stand on the matter, according to the light given it, than by ignoring it altogether.<sup>114</sup>

#### 5.3.6. Conclusion

Why, in spite of such criticisms, did most presbyteries take a neutral position to the suffrage issue? Three reasons for this can be given. First, those against women's suffrage in the courts saw it as a purely political issue beyond the scope of an

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<sup>109</sup> *The Scotsman*, 16 February 1914.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> 'The Church and the Women's Movement', *The Missionary Record of the UF Church of Scotland*, April 1914.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

ecclesiastical institution. The case could not be therefore handled within the Church courts, for a number of ministers still paid heed to the teaching of the Second Book of Discipline: 'no melling with only thingis pertening to the civile jurisdiction.'<sup>115</sup> Secondly, the anti-suffrage ministers in the Church courts also regarded the question as an issue which mixed political and other factors with religious issues and should therefore not be discussed within the courts of the Church. Finally, it was characterised as a controversial and divisive matter among the congregations, dividing men and women, women and women. Thus, although the traditional ideology of the domesticity and inferiority of women, or of 'separate spheres' between men and women had been strong amongst Churchmen within the courts, it was not the major reason for presbyterial neutrality on the women's suffrage issue.<sup>116</sup>

While the presbyteries did not take action, many individuals in the courts expressed a sympathetic attitude to the agitation for women's suffrage and supported the place of women within the Church in general. In reply to the Greenock Association for Women's Suffrage, the UFC Presbytery of Greenock expressed it in the following manner:

The Presbytery was aware that the movement for the extension of the parliamentary suffrage to women had the support of many members of presbytery.<sup>117</sup>

Why did several members in the presbyteries support this matter? There are four main reasons for this. Theologically, the suffragists within the courts believed that it was rooted in the fundamental principles of the Kingdom of God. Historically, they were concerned that as the Rev. Donald Davidson in the Ayr UFC

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<sup>115</sup> James Kirk, *The Second Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh 1980), chapter VII, code 6. p. 196.

<sup>116</sup> Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches', p. 251.

<sup>117</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Greenock, SRO, CH3/166/12, 28 April 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 29 April 1914; *The Common Cause*, 8 May 1914.

presbytery had insisted, nobody could really separate political questions from those of purity, righteousness, and morality.<sup>118</sup> Politically, they thought that it was a non-party matter, and thus an appropriate issue for Christians to support. Practically, they believed that promoting the status of women in society would lead to the improvement of social conditions. These factors also led some presbyteries to take official action.

#### **5.4. 'Beyond Shades of John Knox': the Active Support of Presbyterian Courts**

##### **5.4.1. The Action of some Presbyteries of the Established Church**

As mentioned already, recent studies of the presbyterial action on the political enfranchisement of women lead us to ask how many other presbyteries, apart from Glasgow and Irvine, expressed a measure of support.<sup>119</sup>

Several presbyteries provide answer to this question. The first is Edinburgh CS presbytery. The women's suffrage controversy within the court can be divided into three stages: 1) the approach of the NMFWS, the SLOWS, and the ENSWS 2) the counter-action of the SLOWS 3) the activities of the ENSWS and SLOWS.<sup>120</sup> First of all, on 7 January 1914, the presbytery considered both the NMFWS' letter which requested that an overture be sent to the General Assembly and the ENSWS' request to receive a deputation. However, they did not deal with the SLOWS' letter, for it had not

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<sup>118</sup> *Ayrshire Post*, 30 January 1914.

<sup>119</sup> Leneman, *A Guid Cause*, p. 170 and 'The Scottish Churches', pp. 245-247; Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism', pp. 385-387.

<sup>120</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Edinburgh, SRO, CH2/121/35, 7 January 1914; *The Scotsman*, 8, 22, 29 January 1914; *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 12 March 1912; *Glasgow Herald*, 8 January 1914; *Aberdeen Free Press*, 8 January 1914; *Forward*, 17 January 1914; *The Elgin Courant and Courier*, 9 January 1914; *The Christian Commonwealth*, 14 January 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 23 January 1914; *The Vote*, 23 January 1914.

asked them to take any practical action and they seem to have thought that their opposition to the requests of the other letters would be considered by the Antis as a favourable response. It was in this atmosphere that, on a motion from Mr. Pagan, the NMFWS' request was declined in the following terms:

That the Presbytery while fully sympathising with the desire of women for a free and orderly life and while approving of the efforts that are being made to improve the conditions of female labour and social morality, does not find it within its province to overture the General Assembly in favour of granting the Parliamentary franchise to women.<sup>121</sup>

The presbytery then entered briefly into the debate as to whether a deputation was to be received. Some ministers were of the opinion that this request should also lie on the table. The Rev. Dr. Burns held that the presbytery should be reminded of a principle of the Second Book of Discipline: 'Diligence shall be taken chiefly by the Moderator that only ecclesiastical things be handled by the Assembly, and that there be no meddling with anything pertaining to the civil jurisdiction.'<sup>122</sup> Burns then insisted that in the light of such precedents, the presbytery should keep to its neutral position on the women's political suffrage issue, for it was a controversial and divisive issue, even among women.<sup>123</sup>

Dr. Thomas Burns' assertion on this issue could be understood in the light of his involvement in the Knox Club. An anti-Roman Catholic society, the Club was formed in Edinburgh in 1909. Its aims were 'to promote the study of Scottish history, and especially the age of John Knox', 'to maintain the Protestant succession to the throne', and 'to resist the efforts of the

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<sup>121</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Edinburgh, 7 January 1914.

<sup>122</sup> *The Scotsman*, 8 January 1914. See Kirk, *The Second Book of Discipline*, p. 196

<sup>123</sup> *The Scotsman*, 8 January 1914

Roman Catholic Church to regain influence in Scotland'.<sup>124</sup> The Club had local branches in Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Belfast. By 1912, its membership was over 3,000, and its office-bearers were Dr. Burns as President and D. Hay Fleming as Vice-President. Among well-known Hon. Vice-Presidents were H. R. MacKintosh, Alexander Whyte, and George Adam Smith.<sup>125</sup>

In disagreement with Burns, Professor William Paterson raised some doubts concerning Burns' objection to women's enfranchisement.<sup>126</sup> Paterson took a prominent role in the presbyterian reunion movement, which led to the Union of the CS and the UFC in 1929.<sup>127</sup> Apart from his ecclesiastical commitments, Paterson was also involved in the activities of the Scottish Christian Social Union as a Vice-President.<sup>128</sup> A supporter of the women's suffrage movement,<sup>129</sup> Paterson had a close friendship with many female suffragists, such as Lady Frances Balfour and Dr. Elsie Inglis.<sup>130</sup> Although Dr. Baird, one of his Australian friends, strongly opposed women's enfranchisement, Paterson's views on this issue did not change.<sup>131</sup>

Professor Paterson criticized Burns' historical point of view on the subject of women's franchise and indicated that the present was not the past, that is, John Knox's days were not modern times. Furthermore, the history of Scotland indicated that

<sup>124</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 465.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> C. L. Rawlins, *The Diaries of William Paterson Paterson* (Edinburgh 1987), pp. 1-22; *DSCHT*, p. 648.

<sup>127</sup> Rolf Sjolinder, *Presbyterian Reunion in Scotland 1907-1921* (Edinburgh 1962), pp. 176-182.

<sup>128</sup> Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>129</sup> Report of the ENSWS (1907), Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University and National Library of Scotland; *Glasgow Herald*, 8 October 1908.

<sup>130</sup> Rawlins, *The Diaries of William Paterson Paterson*, pp. 96, 108.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

'political questions, and moral, religious, social questions could not in principle be separated.'<sup>132</sup> Paterson then moved, and Mr. Findlay seconded, that a deputation be received at the next ordinary meeting to be held on 28 January 1914.<sup>133</sup> In contrast, the opponents of women's suffrage within the presbytery concluded that it was a non-ecclesiastical subject and beyond their scope, and Mr. Pagan, who was seconded by Mr. M. Brown, moved that a deputation not be received.<sup>134</sup> After taking a vote, the presbytery resolved to receive a deputation on 28 January 1914.<sup>135</sup>

We now come to the second stage, the counter-action of the SLOWS. When the presbytery met on 21 January 1914, consideration was given to a letter from the SLOWS which asked the court to receive a deputation at its next ordinary meeting.<sup>136</sup> The SLOWS' approach to this presbytery was simply a response to the ENSWS' initiative. This was plain in the SLOWS' letter: 'we understand the Presbytery of Edinburgh have agreed to receive a deputation from those in support of women's suffrage on January 28.'<sup>137</sup> But the anti-suffragists faced a dilemma in that they had officially declared that they would not ask for assistance from the ministers of the Church.<sup>138</sup> The SLOWS also did not conceal their inner conflict between the Executive members and Professor Hepburn Millar, who was chairman of the Executive Committee of the SLOWS. Millar sent a private letter to the court to say that the presbytery should not receive the two deputations at the same

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<sup>132</sup> *The Scotsman*, 8 January 1914.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Kenneth M. Boyd, *Scottish Church Attitude to Sex, Marriage, and the Family 1850-1914* (Edinburgh 1980), pp. 209-211.

<sup>134</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Edinburgh, 7 January 1914.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 January 1914; *The Scotsman*, 22 January 1914.

<sup>137</sup> *The Scotsman*, 22 January 1914.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. *Glasgow Herald*, 29 December 1913.

time.<sup>139</sup> However, on the ground of 'courtesy, policy, and justice', the court agreed to receive the deputation on the 28th January with the ENSWS.<sup>140</sup>

The third stage represented a climax, with both the ENSWS and the SLOWS deputations being received on 28 January 1914. Apart from Glasgow CS presbytery, none of the other presbyteries involved in the deputation debate received the two deputations at the same time. On behalf of the ENSWS, Miss Frances H. Simson, a Vice-President of the ENSWS, a member of the General Council of the SCLWS, and President of the Scottish University Women's Suffrage Union,<sup>141</sup> held that all kinds of problems relating to their sex were the result of the failure to grant the parliamentary vote to women. Simson said that the Church should support the women's suffrage movement because 'too many christian women were self-sacrificing ... and taking life seriously.'<sup>142</sup> Like Simson, Dr. E. Inglis insisted that the movement was worldwide, and their fight to get the vote did not provide a basis for ruling over men but rather one for the service of mankind.<sup>143</sup>

Opposing the suffragists, Professor Hepburn Millar, speaking on behalf of the SLOWS, said that the validity of their views was doubtful. In his eyes, the demand for female suffrage would not lead to 'the efficacy of legislation making everybody happy and everybody good',<sup>144</sup> and would become instead "a root of bitterness" because of its divisive nature amongst large numbers

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<sup>139</sup> *The Scotsman*, 22 January 1914.

<sup>140</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Edinburgh, 21 January 1914.

<sup>141</sup> Report of the ENSWS (1912-13), Fawcett Library; Report of the SCLWS (1913) and Report of the SUWSU (1913), A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>142</sup> *The Scotsman*, 29 January 1914.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

of men and women.<sup>145</sup>

After hearing these speakers, the Rev. Findlay, who was seconded by Colonel Martin, moved in the following terms:

The Presbytery having heard the deputations thank them for their presentation of their case. The Presbytery deplore the social and economic evils from which so many women suffer and sympathise with every legitimate effort to improve the position of women, but express at present no opinion on the question of the political enfranchisement of women.<sup>146</sup>

It was unanimously adopted.

When the Church court refused to send an overture to the General Assembly and simply received the deputations, many critics condemned their inconsistency towards women's enfranchisement. An editorial in *The Scotsman* regarded their attitude as displaying "woeful logic" and as a "ridiculous and absurd" decision.<sup>147</sup> The editor then asked: 'what is the sense in receiving a deputation?', and suggested that in doing so, the court:

have already been judged and found wanting. It is more likely to offend the supporters of the Suffrage movement than a blunt refusal of both requests.<sup>148</sup>

The writer came to the conclusion that:

The women suffrage agitation has a much wider significance than the mere right to vote ... The end of the agitation is absolute political equality for the two sexes.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Edinburgh, 28 January 1914.

<sup>147</sup> *The Scotsman*, 8 January 1914.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

Mr. J. A. Findlay, a member of the Edinburgh CS presbytery, maintained that the editorial had misrepresented the facts. Findlay stated that the letters from the NMFWS and the ENSWS were not handled together but letter by letter, for they formed separate and distinct issues. According to Findlay, the NMFWS' letter was refused on the motion of Mr. Pagan and then the motion of Professor Paterson to receive a deputation from the ENSWS was carried. Findlay thus believed that there was no inconsistency.<sup>150</sup> In agreement with Findlay, Miss K. M. Loudon, Hon. Secretary of the ENSWS,<sup>151</sup> made it clear:

there may not, therefore, be any inconsistency in the ecclesiastical support of the rights of women to vote at Parliamentary elections ... all suffragists heartily thank them.<sup>152</sup>

But the editorial of *The Scotsman* disagreed and held that the court's procedure had not followed the path Mr. Findlay had outlined. The editor stressed that the letters had been dealt with together in the court. On this basis, the writer repeatedly condemned the court's inconsistency, and questioned their deliberate decision against the issue of women's suffrage:

What sort of courtesy of policy is it to say to a woman that you are willing to listen to her but not before deliberately arranging that you shall do nothing to assist her?<sup>153</sup>

In fact, because of the inaccurate account of the meeting in the press, only those present knew the exact procedure which had been followed.

While Edinburgh CS presbytery changed its position to one of general sympathy and remained in a politically neutral attitude,

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 January 1914.

<sup>151</sup> Report of the ENSWS (1913), Fawcett Library.

<sup>152</sup> *The Scotsman*, 9 January 1914.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

Greenock CS presbytery was being challenged by a local suffrage organisation, the Greenock Women's Suffrage Association. The presbytery had already declined the NMFWS' request to send an overture to the General Assembly.<sup>154</sup> The Business Committee had dealt with the letter, and had reported that it was not 'advisable to take any action on the political question.'<sup>155</sup> The presbytery had also passed this letter over to just two members of the court, Allan and John Young, to draw up a resolution. That court had also decided to take no action.<sup>156</sup>

Unusually, Greenock CS presbytery found itself again faced with the women's suffrage issue. At the meeting of the court on 31 March 1914, a letter was read from the Greenock Women's Suffrage Association asking the presbytery to receive a deputation from the Association.<sup>157</sup> Mr. Ganford moved, and Mr. J. S. McCallum seconded, that a deputation be heard. Against this, Mr. Mick, who was seconded by Mr. Campbell, moved that the presbytery should adhere to its former resolution. On a vote being taken, the court resolved by 12 votes to 9 to receive a deputation at its next meeting.<sup>158</sup>

Meanwhile, news of the Church court's resolution seems to have reached the anti-suffragists, for a letter from Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart was presented to the court at its next meeting on 28 April.<sup>159</sup> Stewart protested that the presbytery had taken one side by resolving to receive a deputation. He went on to argue that:

Individual members of the Church, lay or clerical, are

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<sup>154</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Greenock, SRO, CH2/517/5, 24 February 1914.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Minutes of the Greenock UFC Presbytery, SRO, CH3/166/12, 3 February 1914, 7 April 1914, 28 April 1914; *The Common Cause*, 8 May 1914

<sup>157</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Greenock, 31 March 1914.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 April 1914; *The Glasgow Herald*, 29 April 1914; *The Common Cause*, 8 May 1914; *The British Weekly*, 5 March 1914.

happily in this country free to embrace any opinion they choose; but for the church in its corporate capacity to take a definite side ... would inevitably bring sorrow and offence.<sup>160</sup>

In spite of his protest, the deputation was received and the presbytery was requested to send an overture to the General Assembly and petition parliament to grant the vote to women. After hearing them, the court discussed the issues very carefully, but eventually reaffirmed the finding of the business committee which it had approved on 24 February 1994. The women's suffrage case was thus considered no further within the presbytery. Thus, this presbytery, like Edinburgh, ended up by taking no action, although it had decided to receive a deputation.

Ayr CS presbytery also gave some support to the movement. At its monthly meeting, on 3 December 1913, the court dealt with a letter from the NMFWS asking for the presbytery's support.<sup>161</sup> For the first time, the debate was started by the Clerk, Rev. J. Mitchell, CS minister of Mauchline. An ardent supporter of female suffrage along with his wife, the Rev. J. Mitchell was a member of the Church Service Society and later became Moderator of the CS General Assembly in 1929.<sup>162</sup> Mitchell moved and Mr. Crawford seconded that the presbytery ought to pass a resolution in favour of women's suffrage.<sup>163</sup> His proposed resolution was that:

The Presbytery receive the communication from the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage, and while dissociating themselves as a presbytery from questions of party politics, they desire to express

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<sup>160</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Greenock, 28 April 1914.

<sup>161</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Ayr, Ayrshire County Archives, CH2/532/21, 3 December 1913; *The Ayr Advertiser*, 4 December 1913.

<sup>162</sup> J. Kerr, *The Renaissance of Worship* (Edinburgh 1909), p. 211; G. M. Reith, *Reminiscences of the United Free Church General Assembly 1900-1929* (Edinburgh 1933), p. 339.

<sup>163</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Ayr, 3 December 1913. For Mitchell, *Glasgow Herald*, 14 March 1913; *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 20 March 1914.

their deep sense of the grave social and moral evils against which the movement for women's suffrage is mainly directed; their thankfulness for the beneficent influence of women in the affairs of the Church and of the community; their sympathy with the desire for greater power to promote moral purity and social reform which political enfranchisement would confer upon them; their recognition of the justice of the claim that women's point of view should be represented in the Government of the nation; and their earnest hope that by the co-operation of christian men and women, the evils referred to may be overcome, and the social, moral, and religious condition of the nation raised to a higher level.<sup>164</sup>

The Rev. J. C. Higgins, who was seconded by Mr. D. A. Reid, proposed an amendment requesting the omission of some terms, namely, 'political enfranchisement' and 'the Government of the nation'.<sup>165</sup> According to *The Ayr Advertiser*, however, the terms to be omitted were longer, comprising the words: 'which political enfranchisement would confer upon them ... their recognition of the justice of the claim that women's point of view should be represented in the government of the nation.'<sup>166</sup> Unusually, the Moderator (Mr. Duncan) took one side and argued of women that 'if they paid their taxes and bore a share in the burdens of the empire, they had a right to the same recognition that had been extended to men in the past'.<sup>167</sup> But, on a vote being taken, the amendment became the finding of the court by 19 votes to 11.

Although the court did not resolve to make an overture to the General Assembly, the court's resolution was in favour of women's suffrage. It still retained supportive terms, such as 'desire for greater power' and 'the social, moral, and religious condition of the nation raised to a higher level'.<sup>168</sup> It was a wide-ranging resolution which included moral, social, religious, and political

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<sup>164</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Ayr, 3 December 1913.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> *The Ayr Advertiser*, 4 December 1913.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Ayr, 3 December 1913.

considerations.

Peebles CS presbytery was another court which expressed a measure of support. When the presbytery gathered on the 14th February 1914, the court considered four different communications from the Peebles Branch of the NUWSS, the NMFWS, the SCLWS, and the SLOWS.<sup>169</sup> At first, Mr. Murray, who was seconded by Mr. Leslie, proposed a resolution as follows:

The Presbytery appreciating the zeal, devotion and helpfulness of women in Church work and in all works of charity remembering also that in the election of ministers of this Church they have a right to vote and do vote and believing that their political enfranchisement would tend to the moral and spiritual elevation of the people; sympathises with women in their desire to obtain the right and exercise the duties of citizenship in this realm.<sup>170</sup>

Although it was moved and seconded that this matter should not be dealt with by the court, Murray's motion was carried by six votes to five.<sup>171</sup> The resolution of the court was more advanced than that of Ayr CS presbytery, for the court used radical terms, such as 'political enfranchisement' and the desire of women to obtain 'the right and exercise the duties of citizenship in this realm'.

The second question which is raised by recent studies is: did Glasgow presbytery support the movement? We need to clarify the nature of the controversy within the presbytery which took place from 29 October 1913 to 24 March 1914.<sup>172</sup>

First, the court received a letter from the NMFWS and remitted it to the Presbyterian Interests Committee for a suitable reply.<sup>173</sup> A month later, when the presbytery met on 26 November

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<sup>169</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Peebles, SRO, CH2/295/16, 26 February 1914.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, SRA, CH2/171/29.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 October 1913.

1913, Dr. MacMillan acting as convener of the Committee, submitted the reply in the following terms:

The presbytery, after careful consideration of your communication of 11th October, desires to express its high appreciation of woman's work in the Church, and of the inspiration which Ministers and Members alike receive from her zeal and devotion and aspiration towards all spiritual and moral excellence. The Presbytery also gratefully recalls the fact that it is entirely due to the teaching and example of our blessed Lord that woman has been raised to her present exalted place in society; and deeply conscious of the evils that still beset the nation, it would gladly welcome and encourage every help that woman's heart should prompt and zeal might accomplish; and, as the Presbytery is assured that her claim to the Parliamentary franchise is non-political, but entirely in the interests of moral and social purity, of temperance and industrial reform, it would rejoice if such a concession, which many hold to be a right, would result in the lessening, if not in the removal, of the evils which the Christian Church so deeply deplores.<sup>174</sup>

Without discussion, it was unanimously approved. As indicated already, the approbation of the court was attacked by a number of critics and led the SLOWS to attempt to counteract its effects by sending a warning letter to all presbyteries and ministers of the Church of Scotland.

Secondly, on 28 January 1914, the court was asked by the GWSAWS to receive a deputation, and was also urged to appoint a representative to join the delegation which was to meet the Prime Minister.<sup>175</sup> The NUWSS was by then organising a delegation that was composed of representatives from all the men's organisations in the country. It was to wait on the Premier and the Cabinet Ministers before Parliament met to demand a government measure in respect of women's suffrage.<sup>176</sup> In dealing with the request,

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<sup>174</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, 26 November 1913; *Glasgow Herald*, 27 November 1913.

<sup>175</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, 26 November 1913.

<sup>176</sup> The GWSAWS letter books, letter 273-6, 23 January 1914; *The Scotsman*, 29 January 1914.

three different motions were proposed. First, Mr. Provand moved, and Dr. Brown seconded, that no further action should be taken. Secondly, Mr E. S. Gunson, who was a member of the General Council of the SCLWS and a member of the Church Service Society,<sup>177</sup> moved that a deputation be received at the next meeting. Thirdly, Dr. P. M'Adam Muir, who was a Vice-President of both the SCLWS and the GWSAWS, and a member of the National Executive Committee of the SCSU,<sup>178</sup> moved that:

The presbytery having already expressed their sympathy with the objects for which votes for women are specially sought, and many individual members of the presbytery being actual supporters of the movement for the extension of the franchise to women, do not see the necessity of taking any further steps in the matter.<sup>179</sup>

On a vote being taken, the second motion was carried against the third by 29 votes to 22, and thereafter was carried against the first by 34 votes to 22. Thus, the presbytery eventually decided to invite a deputation.<sup>180</sup> Shortly after that, on 11 February 1914, the presbytery received a letter from the SLOWS asking it to receive a deputation from them, and the court decided it would be prepared to do so on 25 February 1914.<sup>181</sup>

At the meeting of the court on 25 February 1914, the key point that the court discussed was whether the deputations should be heard in public, or in private. Dr. Brown moved and the Rev. W. S. Provand seconded that it should be heard in private. Against this, the Rev. A. J. Campbell, who was seconded by the Rev. W.

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<sup>177</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-13), p. 104; Kerr, *The Renaissance of Worship*, p. 212.

<sup>178</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1913), p. 103; Annual Report of the GWSAWS (1915), Fawcett Library; Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>179</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, 28 January 1914.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, 11 February 1914; *The Common Cause*, 20 February 1914.

Rattray, moved that they might be heard in public. It was then decided to hear the deputations in private.<sup>182</sup>

In the first instance, four members representing the GWSAWS were introduced: Mrs I. T. Hunter, a Vice-President; Miss Buchanan, a member of the Executive Committee and the Finance Committee; Miss Lindsay, Secretary; and Miss M. C. Morrison, a member of the Executive Committee and the Organising Committee.<sup>183</sup> Mrs Hunter addressed the court in favour of women's suffrage. Then, four representatives from the SLOWS were introduced: the Countess of Glasgow, President of the Glasgow Branch; Sir John Stirling Maxwell, Co-President of the SLOWS; Miss Eleanor M. Deane, Hon. Secretary of the Glasgow Branch; and Mr. Andrew Aitken, Hon. Treasurer of the Glasgow Branch.<sup>184</sup> Sir John Stirling Maxwell delivered a short address against women's suffrage. After hearing the deputation, Mr. E. S. Gunson notified the presbytery that he would present a motion at the next ordinary meeting as follows:

The Presbytery being assured that this modern claim for the Parliamentary Franchise is non-political, and entirely in the interests of moral and social purity, of temperance and industrial reform, expressed its sympathy with the general aims of the movement, and especially with the social, moral, and spiritual reforms which its advocates hope by its attainment to secure.<sup>185</sup>

When the court assembled on 24 March 1914, its members were informed of the burning of Whitekirk and Tynningham by the militant suffragettes,<sup>186</sup> and the Rev. Professor Reid of Glasgow University solemnly condemned their wrong-doings in the following

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<sup>182</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 26 February 1914.

<sup>183</sup> Annual Report of the GWSAWS (1915), Fawcett Library.

<sup>184</sup> Report of the Glasgow Branch of the SLOWS (1913), *The Anti-Suffrage Review*, December 1913.

<sup>185</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, 25 February 1914.

<sup>186</sup> See chapter IV.

terms:

The Presbytery, further, most humbly invoke the clemency of Almighty God for the sacrilege thereby committed: and exhort their faithful people to make earnest prayers to God that the present tide of anarchy and cruel outrage may be speedily checked.<sup>187</sup>

Professor Reid had long laboured to promote women's status and their welfare in society. He took an active role in the works of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades as a member of the Parliamentary Bills Committee which tried to remove evil laws in relation to women and of the Committee on Children's Employment which attempted to protect boys and girls under 16.<sup>188</sup> Reid also played a part in the Scottish Christian Social Union as a member of its National Executive Committee.<sup>189</sup> In spite of his favourable attitude to women's issues, he was now opposed to the use of force in the suffragette movement.

When the court next gathered on 29 April 1914, none of them in the court could speak in support of women's suffrage, for the suffragettes had attempted to blow up another ecclesiastical building, the Belmont Church in Glasgow.<sup>190</sup> In consequence, Professor Reid's motion, which was seconded by the Rev. W. S. Provand, was unanimously adopted.<sup>191</sup> Had these incidents not occurred, the court would have passed an advanced resolution for further action, possibly sending an overture to the General Assembly.

Therefore, the presbytery's continual and supportive stance towards women's suffrage ended. Glasgow presbytery made a strong

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<sup>187</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, 24 March 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 26 March 1914; *The Christian Commonwealth*, 1 April 1914; *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 27 March 1914.

<sup>188</sup> Annual Report of the SCWT (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>189</sup> Annual Report of the SCSU (1909-1910), SRA.

<sup>190</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 4 and 30 April 1914.

<sup>191</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Glasgow, 29 April 1914; *Forward*, 9 May 1914; *The British Weekly*, 5 May 1914.

and sympathetic response in favour of women's suffrage, but following the violent tactics of the suffragettes, the court decided to make neither a resolution of sympathy, nor an overture to the General Assembly.

We now turn to the final question, that is, did Irvine CS presbytery transmit an overture to the General Assembly? Before the presbytery was held, the deputation of the Kilmarnock Women's Suffrage Society, whose Hon. Secretary was Mrs Austin, had visited the members of the Church court, and had earnestly requested their support for the resolution submitted by the NMFWS.<sup>192</sup> When the presbytery met on 13 January 1914, they dealt with a communication from the NMFWS and discussed three main issues: 1) whether or not to send an overture to the General Assembly 2) whether or not to continue the discussion of women's suffrage 3) whether or not to express the court's hearty sympathy.<sup>193</sup> In relation to the first issue, the Rev. A. Burns (the Clerk) characterized it as a political subject and a very controversial issue, and objected to the matter being tackled by the court. Burns warned that if they overtured the General Assembly on the matter, the presbytery would make a great mistake.<sup>194</sup> Mr. Burns moved, and Mr. Dunnett seconded, a motion that the presbytery should not send an overture to the General Assembly.<sup>195</sup> Against the motion, the Rev. Smith, who was seconded by Mr. Alexander, moved that an overture be sent to the highest Court of the Church. Unlike Burns, Smith saw it as a moral and social issue: 'this was not intended for any political purpose ... It was intended for the amelioration of certain social evils which men did not appreciate, evils such as sweating and white

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<sup>192</sup> *The Common Cause*, 23 January 1914.

<sup>193</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Irvine, SRO, CH2/197/15, 13 January 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 14 January 1914; *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 16 January 1914; *The Irvine Herald*, 18 January 1914; *The Kilmarnock Standard*, 17 January 1914; *Forward*, 24 January 1914; *The Vote*, 23 January 1914.

<sup>194</sup> *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 16 January 1914.

<sup>195</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Irvine, 13 January 1914.

slavery.'<sup>196</sup> In a close vote, Smith's motion was carried by 12 votes to 11.<sup>197</sup> Accordingly, the court decided to send an overture in favour of women's enfranchisement to the General Assembly.

Shortly after the voting, Mr. MacArthur moved, and Mr. Sutherland seconded, that there not be further discussion on this matter. However, in response to a counter motion from Smith, which was seconded by Mr. G. K. Thomson, the court agreed to continue the discussion.<sup>198</sup>

In handling the third item, namely, whether or not to express the court's sympathy, the Rev. H. Rankin moved that the presbytery should express its hearty sympathy with the political enfranchisement of women.<sup>199</sup> He thought that the principles of justice and natural necessity were involved in the issue of votes for women. Rankin thus asked, 'why should they not ask the support of the Church?' He went on to argue, as follows:

Who was it that did the best work in the Churches? To whom did the ministers turn when they wanted good work done, and where did they, every one of them, in their experiences find the most willing hands and hearts for their church works? They found them amongst the ladies.<sup>200</sup>

In disagreement with Rankin and his motion, the Rev. MacArthur, who was seconded by Mr. Dunnett, moved that they should not express their sympathy with regard to women's suffrage.<sup>201</sup> MacArthur reminded the members of the court that a number of women opposed their political enfranchisement. To illustrate this, Dunnett pointed to the political colour of Rankin's terms: 'the promoters of the suffrage movement ... had very skilfully

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<sup>196</sup> *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 16 January 1914.

<sup>197</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Irvine, 13 January 1914.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 16 January 1914.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

referred to the high moral purposes to which this political power might be directed.'<sup>202</sup> However, Rankin's motion was carried by 12 votes to 4.<sup>203</sup> This presbytery thus achieved a reputation for being sympathetic to suffrage.

A month later, at the meeting held on 10 February 1914, Smith gave notice that at the next meeting, he would submit a draft of the overture for transmission to the General Assembly.<sup>204</sup> The terms of the proposed overture were:

Whereas the denial of all women of the power ... in the election of representatives of the Parliament to Great Britain and Ireland has caused and is causing great injustices to many of the women of Great Britain and Ireland; whereas the denial of the progress of social reform has been and is greatly impeded; whereas it is wholly desirable that in all legislation the point of view of women should receive full and clear expression; whereas the granting of women of the power invoke in the election of members of Parliament would make for the moral and spiritual welfare of the nation; whereas it is fitting that in every movement for its uplifting and purifying of the national life, the mind of the church should receive full and ... expression; and whereas the Church of Christ should acknowledge and fulfil her imperative duty to lead ... for the establishing and extending of the kingdom of God and of the Son-; it is humbly overtured by the Presbytery of Irvine to the venerable the General Assembly ... in favour of extension of the Parliamentary franchise to women who shall possess the same qualification as those required by male voters.<sup>205</sup>

The court also decided to select commissioners for the General Assembly to be held in May.

But, when the presbytery gathered on 7 April 1914, the court was no longer concerned about an overture to be transmitted to

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Irvine, 13 January 1914.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 February 1914.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

the General Assembly.<sup>206</sup> The Rev. Dunnett, who was one of the presbytery's leading anti-suffragist, condemned the present tactics of the women's suffrage movement. He reminded them of a series of violent actions by the militant suffragettes, such as the burning of the Whitekirk Church and the attempt to blow up the Belmont Church in Glasgow.<sup>207</sup> He claimed that the presbytery should not go further because the court's action was sufficient. In agreeing with Dunnett, the Rev. Sutherland was concerned that the overture would be rejected by the General Assembly, and suggested that:

If the overture was refused the Church of Scotland stood out against women suffrage before the world.<sup>208</sup>

According to the notice given at the last ordinary meeting on 10 February, Smith moved, and Mr. Thompson seconded, that the presbytery should transmit the overture regarding women's suffrage to the General Assembly. In opposition, Mr. Moore proposed an amendment that the court should not transmit the said overture as prepared by Smith. On a vote being taken, Moore's amendment was carried by 11 votes to 5.<sup>209</sup> Accordingly, Irvine CS presbytery declined to transmit the overture. As noted in chapter IV, the burning of the Whitekirk Church by the suffragettes seriously affected in the attitude of that presbytery

Even so, it is worthwhile to note that two presbyteries, Edinburgh and Greenock, received deputations on the issue of women's suffrage, and that some Church courts, such as Ayr, Glasgow, Irvine, and Peebles, recognised that women's power should be extended to the political arena. Furthermore, although the proportion of some presbyteries taking official action was only 6 per cent of the total, several members contributed

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<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 April 1914; *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 10 April 1914.

<sup>207</sup> See chapter IV.

<sup>208</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Irvine, 7 April 1914.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

significantly to the promotion of the franchise issue within their presbyteries. They hoped that moral and social problems would be alleviated by women having the vote.

#### 5.4.2. The United Free Church Presbytery and Women's Political Franchise

Until fairly recently, little attention has been paid to the attitudes of the UFC presbyteries to women's suffrage. One writer simply concentrated on the approach of the NMFWS, although noting that 'some of the constitutional women's suffrage societies in Scotland approached their own presbyteries.'<sup>210</sup> The writer also conjectured that 'if any UFC presbytery had passed a resolution in favour of women's suffrage, it would have been reported in the suffrage press.'<sup>211</sup> But there was an exceptional case, Ardrossan UFC presbytery.

When the presbytery met at Salcoats within the Hall of the South Beach Church on 3 February 1914, the court received a petition from the members of the Ardrossan and Salcoats Women's Suffrage Society and of the Largs Women's Suffrage Society, whose Hon. Secretaries were Mrs Kerr and Miss Margaret Paton.<sup>212</sup> The petitioners asked the court to pass a resolution in favour of enfranchising women and to send a delegate to a demonstration in London. The court carefully discussed this. At first, Mr. Young, who was seconded by Mr. J. Cant, moved that the letter be laid on the table. Disagreeing with Young, Provost Boyd held that 'this question is simply a matter of justice', as women who paid rates should have representation.<sup>213</sup> Boyd also insisted that the resolution to be passed by the court was based on a religious

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<sup>210</sup> Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches', p. 243.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>212</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Ardrossan, SRO, CH3/24/3, 3 February 1914; *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 6 February 1914; *The Common Cause*, 9 April 1914.

<sup>213</sup> *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 6 February 1914.

interest rather than a political one. He thus claimed that women should be allowed to vote for Members of Parliament, and moved as follows:

The Presbytery declares itself in favour of Women's Suffrage.<sup>214</sup>

The Rev. C. Stephen seconded 'with very great pleasure',<sup>215</sup> and Boyd's motion was supported by a majority.<sup>216</sup>

This resolution of Ardrossan UFC presbytery is significant because no other presbyteries, CS or UFC, passed a resolution on women's suffrage in response to a petition from a local suffrage society. There were two main reasons for this unusual step. First, there was the court's awareness of social problems. The presbytery had already decided to organise a Social Problems Committee on 7 October 1913,<sup>217</sup> and it had been remitted to the Nomination's Committee to submit a list of members of this Committee at the next meeting.<sup>218</sup> On 4 November 1913, the presbytery had listed the members of the Committee, including Moodie, Adamson, Watson, Gardner (convener), and Stephen. On 3 February 1914, the Committee had presented its first report on social problems.<sup>219</sup> Secondly, the petitions by these suffrage societies had a great impact, and this tactic seemed to make a strong appeal to the members of the presbytery. In addition, although only one presbytery took official action, there were a number of individual supporters of women's suffrage in the UFC presbyteries. They continued to play a major role in the promotion of both the movement and the status of women within the Church, as will be seen in the following chapters.

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<sup>214</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Ardrossan, 3 February 1914.

<sup>215</sup> *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 6 February 1914.

<sup>216</sup> Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Ardrossan, 3 February 1914.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 October 1913.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 November 1913 and 3 February 1914.

#### 5.4.3. Different Opinions on the Church Courts' Action

Shortly after Glasgow CS presbytery published its approbation in favour of women's suffrage, the editor of *The Glasgow Herald* characterized it as a "political trespasser".<sup>220</sup> The editorial held that the issue was not appropriate to a presbytery because of its party political nature. The editor concluded that 'the members of the Presbytery had no authority from their constituents to pronounce upon it.'<sup>221</sup>

A serious response was made by an anonymous contributor to *Forward*.<sup>222</sup> The writer made it clear that the matter was religious and moral as well as political. To support this, the writer used the example of the Home Rule Bill which was held to be 'a fit and proper subject for the Church's interference'.<sup>223</sup> The contributor underlined the importance of the religious facets of the movement, and thought that 'the co-operation of the Church ... should be greater.'<sup>224</sup> In emphasising the faithful and humble sacrifices made by women for the Church, the writer concluded that 'the time has now come to make some reparation, to pay off part of a long overdue debt.'<sup>225</sup>

From a different point of view, in a letter to *The Herald*, 'A layman' argued that the actions of some ministers on this question had already seriously affected the personal influence of ministers upon the Churches and their members.<sup>226</sup> He also reminded the clerical suffragists that 'the strong difference of opinion amongst its own members must have fatal results in the

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<sup>220</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 28 November 1913.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Forward*, 6 December 1913.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 27 November 1913.

usefulness of the church.'<sup>227</sup> In contrast, in another letter, 'A laywoman' said that the teaching of history asserted that the Church fought for good against evil and for right against wrong,<sup>228</sup> and that the Church should protect the cause of the weak against the strong, of the oppressed against the oppressor.<sup>229</sup> Therefore, the writer very warmly welcomed the action of the ministers, for 'it is a sign that the church is awakening to the fact that it has a duty to perform as well as a theory to preach.'<sup>230</sup>

Very strangely, Mrs Maud Arncliffe-Sennett, who had sent the original letter of the NMFWS to Glasgow CS presbytery, showed profound dissatisfaction, feeling the court had not taken any practical action in response to its request.<sup>231</sup> Regarding the court's reply as only words, she contended that

the Christian Church should have the courage of its convictions, and take some action to help women to gain authority to lessen and remove evils, rather than continually "deplore" them. The lack of moral courage in the public bodies of the country, the lack of courage in the men who hold official positions, is as much to be deplored as the evils.<sup>232</sup>

According to the organiser, the Church's inaction led to a mistrust of Christian principles. She concluded that 'if its great Founder, the Man born of woman, had conceived a thing to be "in the interests of moral and social purity", He would at least have gone forth and worked for its realisation.'<sup>233</sup>

Janie Allan used strong language to attack the inaction of

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 December 1913.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> *Evening Citizen*, 2 December 1913.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

Glasgow CS presbytery, by stating that 'these clerical gentlemen did not go a little further.'<sup>234</sup> Concerning Glasgow presbytery's criticism of the burning of Whitekirk by militant suffragettes,<sup>235</sup> the editor felt it deplorable that 'they consider God's stone temples of more value than his human ones.'<sup>236</sup>

Margaret Miller Nicholson of Tranent, who was another well-known suffragist in East Lothian with Catherine Blair and wrote innumerable letters to the press, criticised the way in which the Edinburgh CS presbytery had dealt with the matter.<sup>237</sup> Nicholson noted that one member of the court favoured receiving a deputation but also felt that national affairs were not the province of women. In her eyes, the member's divided outlook had caused the court's inconsistent attitude to the political enfranchisement of women. According to Nicholson, God did not mean 'a woman's home to be the altar where she must sacrifice every other God-given instinct.'<sup>238</sup> No good man thus looked upon woman as 'his inferior'.<sup>239</sup> Nicholson regarded women's plea for the vote as part of 'the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ'.<sup>240</sup> On this basis, she emphasised that men and women were equally Divine agents. For women's potential power to be ignored by men was therefore 'the greatest tragedy of a woman,' for it was against the Divine command.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> *Forward*, 9 May 1914.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. *The Christian Commonwealth*, 1 April 1914.

<sup>236</sup> *Forward*, 9 May 1914.

<sup>237</sup> *The Haddingtonshire Advertiser*, 23 January 1914.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

### 5.5. Conclusion: the Flowering of the Religious Aspect of the Movement

Why, despite the above criticisms, did not some presbyteries - Ardrossan, Ayr, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greenock, Irvine, and Peebles - send an overture to the General Assembly? Two main reasons for this can be suggested. In the first place, many members of the courts realised that the highest court was not a suitable place for such discussion, and that the franchise issue would be rejected in the assembly because it would be regarded as a political matter. In the second place, there was the effect of the Whitekirk incident upon the attitude of some presbyteries, especially upon that of Irvine, for it led the courts either to pass a simple resolution in favour of the issue, or to give up transmitting an intended overture to the General Assembly.

But many individuals remained supportive in fostering the franchise issue within their own presbyteries. Positive attitudes to the issue made by several ministers and presbyteries were welcomed by many, and an unknown contributor to the *Glasgow Herald* expressed it as follows:

Everyone therefore who has the welfare of the Church at heart will surely welcome this pronouncement ... on woman suffrage, for it is a sign that the Church awakening to the fact that it has a duty to perform as well as a theory to preach.<sup>242</sup>

Meanwhile, the support from Churchmen was frequently in evidence. The contribution of the SCLWS to the cause was particularly outstanding, as its members were in the forefront of the debates. In the next chapter, we shall examine the contribution of the SCLWS to the movement.

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<sup>242</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 28 November 1913.

## CHAPTER VI 'A CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT': THE SCOTTISH CHURCHES LEAGUE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 1912-1918

### 6.1. Introduction: was the SCLWS only a small Group in the Women's Suffrage Movement?

In the previous chapter, it was shown that the members of the SCLWS played a crucial role in the presbytery debates on female suffrage. In spite of their activities, an unknown contributor to *The Scotsman* simply regarded the SCLWS as 'a little group' in the Scottish Churches.<sup>1</sup> In addition, recent scholars seem to share this writer's opinion.<sup>2</sup>

Yet these views would seem to underestimate the scope and the work of the SCLWS. Therefore, in this chapter we shall examine the extent and the result of the activities of this organisation. To this end, the formation of the SCLWS and its activities as a Christian movement will be investigated. We shall also explore the reception of the principles of the SCLWS amongst both the Churches and women's suffrage organisations at different stages of the movement. Finally, the impact of the war-time work of the SCLWS and its members on the success of the suffrage movement will be assessed.

We have to ask what led to the formation of the SCLWS; which denomination gave it the most support; and how significant it was.

### 6.2. 'The Emergence of a Christian Movement': the Formation of the SCLWS

The Scottish Churches League for Woman Suffrage was formed in the Goold Hall in Edinburgh on 11 March 1912.<sup>3</sup> *The Scotsman* reported

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<sup>1</sup> *The Scotsman*, 16 March 1912.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter I.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913), A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who* (London 1913), p. 105; *The Scotsman*, 12 March 1912; *Glasgow Who* (continued ...)

that it was 'a largely-attended meeting', and that it was chaired by the Rev. Dr. R. J. Drummond. The minister of the UP Church at Kilmarnock (1883-1890) and of Lothian Road Church in Edinburgh (1890-1951), Drummond was active in promoting social and economic issues, and was appointed as the first convener of the innovative UFC Social Problems Committee. Elected to the Moderatorship in 1918, Drummond also promoted Presbyterian Church union.<sup>4</sup> In his opening remarks, Dr. Drummond said that the Rev. Fleming Williams, Secretary of the Free Church League for Woman Suffrage in England and Wales, had approached a number of clergymen in Scotland to form a League to support the cause. He said that many Church members had expressed their sympathy with the proposal for such an organisation. Dr. Drummond emphasised the necessity of forming an ecclesiastical organisation for women's political franchise, and claimed that 'the Church should not be silent.'<sup>5</sup>

Thereafter, three subjects were discussed, namely the title of the body to be formed, its membership, and its tactics. Initially, the Rev. W. H. Matthews, who was minister of Dublin Street Baptist Church, objected to the use of the name of the 'Scottish Churches' on the grounds that within the Churches there were many members opposed to the cause. But Dr. Cargill Knott, who was to become a Vice-President of the SCLWS, disagreed. He thought that many members were indeed antagonistic but that this was totally due to their ignorance of their duty. Dr. Knott then moved and Lady Ramsay seconded that a Scottish Churches' League for Woman's Suffrage be established, and it was carried by a large majority, with objection being made by only seven.<sup>6</sup>

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(continued ...)

*Herald*, 12 March 1912; *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 12 March 1912; *Free Church Suffrage Times*, December 1912. The *Free Church Suffrage Times* reported 'it being held in March, 1911', but this was inaccurate.

<sup>4</sup> R. J. Drummond, *Lest We Forget* (London 1951), pp. 7, 22, 28, 32, 42-45, 100, 112; *DSCHT*, p. 258.

<sup>5</sup> *The Scotsman*, 12 March 1912.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

In relation to its membership, the Rev. Dr. R. Craig suggested that 'the League should consist of members of all the Scottish Churches.'<sup>7</sup> It was asked if Roman Catholics were included, and Dr. Drummond replied that he did not see why they should not be.

Speaking on the subject of methods, Lady Ramsay, who was a member of the Scottish WSPU, declared that the women's suffrage movement was essentially 'a Christian movement', and that even the militant suffragettes were essentially Christian women.<sup>8</sup> We need to pause here to consider Lady Ramsay's claims. A typical example of the women she had in mind was Mrs Helen Crawford. She was brought up in a comfortable environment, for her parents were devoutly religious people, her father Presbyterian and her mother Methodist.<sup>9</sup> In 1898, she married the Rev. Alexander Montgomery Crawford, CS minister of Brownfield Church in Glasgow. In 1910, Mrs Crawford joined the WSPU at a meeting held in Rutherglen.<sup>10</sup> From this time on, she became an ardent campaigner for women's suffrage, and participated in a mass demonstration held in London in 1912. Still very religious, she looked upon this task as 'a holy crusade for the liberation of women'.<sup>11</sup> In the words of Helen Crawford,

On the Sunday before making up my mind to undertake the job, I went to Church, and prayed that I would get a message in the sermon. Little did my husband realise what he was doing, when he preached that sermon. His sermon was about the Christ making a whip of cords and chasing the money changers out of the temple. This I took as a warrant that my participation in the raid was right. If Christ could be Militant so could I.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 12 March 1912.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Unpublished MS of Helen Crawford's Autobiography, William Gallagher Memorial Library, Glasgow, p. 6; *Glasgow Herald*, 4 February 1987.

<sup>10</sup> Unpublished MS of Helen Crawford's Autobiography, p. 38.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

A Christian socialist, Crawford joined the Independent Labour Party and soon became an eloquent orator. During the First World War, her greatest success was in helping to organise the Rent Strike of 1915 which was provoked by private landlords increasing the rents twice within a short period of time.<sup>13</sup> As a result, the government introduced the Rent Restriction Act which froze rents. Crawford also helped to form the Women's Peace Crusade on 10 June 1916 and became its secretary. Throughout her life, she was selfless, 'possessing a great courage which she had to use time and again to fight the forces of reaction'.<sup>14</sup> But, in relation to her religious background and development, a writer has simply stated that 'although brought up in a conservative home, her involvement in the women's movement changed her outlook, and she became a socialist'.<sup>15</sup> This seems to distort the truth somewhat, for as Helen Crawford wrote, political and religious discussions were common in her home and helped to develop her critical faculties.<sup>16</sup>

To return to Lady Ramsay's argument, she asserted that the militant suffragettes' work could be paralleled with the work of Christ. She went on to say that 'the longer she had been connected with the movement, the more it had been impressed upon her that it was not a narrow movement'.<sup>17</sup> In disagreement with Ramsay, Drummond made it clear that the work of the SCLWS should be carried out using religious and educational methods, and operate on non-party lines in the same way as English religious

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<sup>13</sup> Joseph Melling, *Rent Strikes: Peoples' Struggle for Housing in West Scotland 1890-1916* (Edinburgh 1983), pp. 30, 59-74.

<sup>14</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 4 February 1987.

<sup>15</sup> Leah Leneman, *A Guid Cause: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Scotland* (rev. ed. Aberdeen 1995), p. 258. See also Lesley A. O. Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland, c.1830 - c.1930' (Unpublished Edinburgh Ph.D Thesis 1994), p. 383.

<sup>16</sup> Unpublished MS of Helen Crawford Autobiography, pp. 22-23.

<sup>17</sup> *The Scotsman*, 12 March 1912.

bodies. Like Drummond, the Rev. Dr. W. Morison, who was minister of Rosehall UF Church,<sup>18</sup> wished to intensify the movement's Christian spirit, while strongly opposing militancy. He held that the movement should display 'the great earnestness and self-denial' of Christianity.<sup>19</sup>

Accordingly, a provisional committee was appointed at Dr. Drummond's suggestion with the Rev. Dr. R. Craig as its convener. It was expected that the committee would be able to submit a draft Constitution to the next public meeting. Dr. Craig played a significant role on this committee. A Congregationalist, he ministered in several Churches, including Brighton Street E. U. Church and Bristo Place Congregational Church in Edinburgh. Professor of New Testament Exegesis and Biblical Criticism (1876-1879) in the Evangelical Union's Theological Academy, Dr. Craig was elected as President of the Evangelical Union in 1876.<sup>20</sup> He also played an important role in the Committee on the English Education Bill which was appointed by the General Committee of the Congregational Union of Scotland in 1903. As convener of this Committee, Craig sought to remove the injustice of the Bill excluding Non-conformists' schools, and particularly, those of the Congregationalists', from receiving public funds.<sup>21</sup>

After the meeting, the decision to use the name of the SCLWS was criticised by an unknown contributor to *The Scotsman*.<sup>22</sup> Pointing to the size of the meeting, the contributor suggested that the name of the SCLWS would be better changed to "the Tooley Street Ecclesiastical League for Woman Suffrage".<sup>23</sup> The writer added that since at the national level there were more important

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<sup>18</sup> *FUFCS*, p.26.

<sup>19</sup> *The Scotsman*, 12 March 1912.

<sup>20</sup> W. D. McNaughton, *The Scottish Congregational Ministry from 1794 to 1993* (Glasgow 1993), p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> H. Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow 1960), pp. 198-199.

<sup>22</sup> *The Scotsman*, 16 March 1912.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

issues than women's suffrage, such as an equitable redistribution of seats, "the Scottish Churches Equitable Registration of Votes League" would be a more suitable name than the SCLWS.<sup>24</sup> In conclusion, the contributor criticised that the SCLWS for seeking to use ecclesiastical influence in purely political matters.<sup>25</sup>

Taking the contrary view, Lady Frances Balfour defended the use of the name.<sup>26</sup> Balfour reminded the readers of the activities of the English ecclesiastical suffrage bodies, such as a major demonstration in favour of women's suffrage which was held by these organisations in London on 18 March 1912. In her eyes, members who belonged to the Scottish Churches should support women's political suffrage, since the cause was based on the Christian religion would help the weak resist oppression as the Lord had done. For this task, she requested the prayers of the faithful and hoped that in quietness and confidence, the SCLWS and its members would fight those who objected to the Divine principles of the Kingdom.

Although there remained dissatisfaction among many, a public gathering for the practical promotion of the SCLWS was held as proposed in Edinburgh on 24 May 1912.<sup>27</sup> The Rev. R. J. Drummond took the chair, and the Rev. Dr. Craig as convener of the Provisional Committee submitted a report regarding a constitution as follows:

Object: To unite on a non-party basis members or adherents of any of the Scottish Churches who are in favour of Women's Suffrage, in order to secure for women the Parliamentary Vote on the same conditions as men.

Methods: The work shall be carried on by religious and educational methods, and shall include the distribution of literature and the holding of meetings

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 March 1912.

<sup>27</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 25 May 1912; *The Vote*, 13 July 1912; *The Common Cause*, 11 July 1912.

for devotion and conference.

Membership: All men and women who are members or adherents of any of the Scottish Churches, and who approve of the League, may become Members on payment of an annual subscription of not less than one shilling.<sup>28</sup>

It was adopted by a majority, and office bearers were appointed with Lady Frances Balfour as President, Miss Annie G. Ferrier, Edinburgh, as Hon. Secretary, and Sterling Craig, Esq., Edinburgh, as Hon. Treasurer. There were also ten Vice-Presidents consisting of six clergymen and four lay persons. The clerics were the Rev. C. M. Black of Christ Episcopal Church in Edinburgh acting as a member of the Church League for Women's Suffrage; Dr. Robert Craig; Dr. R. J. Drummond; Dr. C. M. Grant, CS minister of St. Mark', Dundee, and from the beginning of the movement an enthusiastic supporter; Dr. John Hunter; and Dr. P. M'Adam Muir.<sup>29</sup> A General Council was elected with 50 members comprising 19 clergymen and 31 lay persons. Nine members were appointed to an Executive Committee and these included two prominent ministers, the Rev. James Black and Dr. David Watson.<sup>30</sup>

Although it is impossible to measure the extent of support given by Church members of different denominations, some hints on this can be gleaned from the number of its clerical office-bearers.<sup>31</sup> The United Free Churchmen were clearly the best

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<sup>28</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 25 May 1912; Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913), p. 106.

<sup>29</sup> *CCD* (1915), p. 139 and *Church League for Women's Suffrage*, August 1914 (Black); *McNaughton*, p. 29 (Craig); *FUFCS*, pp. 18, 569 (Drummond); *FES V.*, p. 339 (Grant). See, also, chapters III (Grant) and IV (Hunter and Muir).

<sup>30</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913), pp. 103-105; *Glasgow Herald*, 25 May 1912.

<sup>31</sup> The statistics below are provided by the author according to the number of its clerical office-bearers belonging to various denominations. Source: Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913)

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denomination	number	resulting order
		(continued ...)

represented as they accounted for 48 per cent of the total, while the proportion of Established Churchmen appointed was 36 per cent. The proportion from the Congregationalist, Episcopalian, and Baptist Churches appointed were 8, 4, and 4 per cent respectively.

The SCLWS, however, was not officially recognised by the Scottish Churches. As far as its recognition was concerned, the editor of *Women's Who's Who* (1913) reported that 'the League was formed ... to express recognition by the Churches.'<sup>32</sup> In an official letter, however, Lady Frances Balfour made its position clear: 'the Scottish Churches' League does not possess, and does not pretend, as some might infer from its name, to possess any recognition by the Churches of Scotland.'<sup>33</sup>

Even so, the formation of the SCLWS was regarded as the emergence of a Christian suffrage movement, and had five significant aspects. First, the SCLWS was an ecumenical organisation, and like the Scottish Ecclesiological Society, included Roman Catholics.<sup>34</sup> The *Free Church Suffrage Times* introduced the SCLWS as an organisation of the 'Scottish Presbyterian Churches' but this was inaccurate.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, when compared with the other female suffrage organisations, there was no gender distinction in the appointment of office-bearers, and

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Church of Scotland	9	2
United Free	12	1
Congregationalist	2	3
Episcopalian	1	4
Baptist	1	4
Total	25	

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<sup>32</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913), p. 105.

<sup>33</sup> *The Irvine Herald*, 20 February 1914; *Free Church Suffrage Times*, March 1914.

<sup>34</sup> For the Scottish Ecclesiological Society, see *DSCHT*, p.273.

<sup>35</sup> *The Free Church Suffrage Times*, December 1913.

both men and women held office. By then, the office-bearers of the ENSWS were all women, and in the case of the GWSAWS, there were very few male office-bearers. The other non-militant suffrage groups were the same.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, the membership of the WSPU was strictly confined to women.<sup>37</sup> Thirdly, although the SCLWS adopted only legal and constitutional means, it overcame the division over methodological ideology, that is, either militant or non-militant, by admitting suffragettes like Lady Ramsay and others as its members. Fourthly, the key members of the SCLWS such as D. Watson, P. M'Adam Muir, and L. McLean Watt were closely linked to the Scottish Christian Social Union which attempted to promote the status and welfare of women within society.<sup>38</sup> Finally, some female office-bearers, such as Lady Frances Balfour and Elsie Inglis, also played an important role in the Woman's Guilds of the major presbyterian denominations. From that time on, the SCLWS was characterised as an official organisation of the Christian suffrage movement, and eventually its foundation and development was to have a far-reaching influence.

### **6.3. 'A Phase of the Progress of Civilisation': the Spread of the Christian Movement**

According to its constitution, the SCLWS used educational and religious methods to promote the suffrage issue. In terms of educational methods, various activities were carried on, such as the distribution of suffrage literature and letters, the organisation of public gatherings, and cooperation with other non-militant suffrage groups. As regards religious methods, monthly devotional meetings were held regularly, and the SCLWS

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<sup>36</sup> Annual Report of the GWSAWS (1915), Fawcett Library; Annual Report of the ENSWS (1913), Fawcett Library; Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913).

<sup>37</sup> Constance Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914* (London 1967), p. 74.

<sup>38</sup> Annual Report of the SCSU (1901-1902), SRA.

played a crucial part in the ecumenical suffrage movement which was mobilised by different religious organisations throughout Britain. To what extent did such methods affect Church life and the suffrage movement? What was the main result of the activities of the SCLWS?

#### 6.3.1. 'The Sanction and Approval of the Christian Faith': its Educational Methods (I)

The SCLWS sought to justify its existence as an organisation and to put forward its theological position on women's suffrage. To these ends, regional meetings were organised in both the Highlands and the Lowlands. In the Highland region, a public gathering of the SCLWS was held in the Town Hall, Inverness, on 11 February 1913.<sup>39</sup> One writer has stated that the occasion was held 'under the auspices of the Inverness Women's Suffrage Society',<sup>40</sup> but in fact, it was arranged by the SCLWS, in cooperation with the Society.<sup>41</sup> The main speakers were Rev. R. J. Drummond, Vice-President of the SCLWS, and Mrs Hunter, President of the Inverness Women's Suffrage Society. In the Lowland area, a SCLWS' meeting was held in St. Cuthbert's Hall in Edinburgh, on 12 March 1913.<sup>42</sup> The speakers on this occasion were Rev. Dr. Whitelaw, Kilmarnock, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the UF Church; Rev. Dr. Butler, CS minister of Galashiels and Bolsoide; Rev. C. M. Black; and Lady Ramsay.<sup>43</sup> The theological position of the SCLWS can be discussed under three headings.

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<sup>39</sup> *The Inverness Courier*, 14 February 1913; *Common Cause*, 14 March 1913.

<sup>40</sup> L. Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches and "Votes for Women"', *RSCHS*, Vol XXIV (1991), p. 240.

<sup>41</sup> *The Inverness Courier*, 14 February 1913.

<sup>42</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1913) in *Free Church Suffrage Times*, July 1913; Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913); *The Christian Commonwealth*, 28 May 1913; *The British Weekly*, 29 May 1913; *Free Church Suffrage Times*, April 1913; *The Vote*, 19 March 1913.

<sup>43</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 13 March 1913; *FES* II, p. 180 (Butler).

### A. *The Woman's Question and the Bible*

From a biblical point of view, Mrs Hunter insisted that a Christian movement should be tested in the light of the authority of the Gospel given by Christ.<sup>44</sup> In agreement with her, the Rev. C. M. Black attempted to examine the biblical foundation of the movement and described Christ's attitudes to women.<sup>45</sup> He paid particular attention to the incarnation of Christ, noting that 'he was in the days of His flesh born of a woman.'<sup>46</sup> Christ's incarnation, for Black, was the starting-point of his respect for womanhood. During his public life, many women followed and served him, including the Samaritan woman, Martha, Mary of Magdala, the Syrophoenician woman, the woman who was cured of her twelve years' sickness, and the women who surrounded the Cross. On this basis, Black held that Christ was 'the first to assert the infinite value of every human soul, and the equal approach of every soul to God.'<sup>47</sup> He concluded that between men and women there was 'no question of superiority or inferiority, for both are needed by Christ as both are consecrated by his life, death, and resurrection.'<sup>48</sup>

Dr. Butler attempted to re-interpret such Pauline verses, as 'wives obey your husbands ... slaves obey your masters.' (Ephesians 5:21-6:9) He held that 'it was not St. Paul's business, nor was it consistent with his object, the propagation of Christianity, to excite rebellion against the existing laws.'<sup>49</sup> Paul accepted all social institutions, but this should not be construed as 'disapproval of attempts to improve them at

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<sup>44</sup> *The Inverness Courier*, 14 February 1913. See also chapters II and III.

<sup>45</sup> 'The Religious Aspect of the Woman's Question', *Free Church Suffrage Times*, April 1913.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

their proper time.'<sup>50</sup> St. Paul's true mind on social structure, according to C. M. Black, was found in another text: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28)<sup>51</sup> Butler insisted that Christianity's endeavour to accept existing forms of government and society was 'to reduce Christianity to the level of Islamism or Brahminism.'<sup>52</sup> He added that it was because 'Christianity refused to protect society from change that it has become the religion of the progressive part of mankind.'<sup>53</sup> Butler concluded that from the beginning Christianity had possessed a revolutionary character, including the promotion of women and their welfare in society.

#### *B. Woman's Progress and Christian History*

The scriptural recognition of women was also reflected in the history of the Church.<sup>54</sup> C. M. Black surveyed it from the viewpoint of women's history. In the early Christian Church, the ministry of women had 'an important place', and the Church recognised the difference of the ministries of men and women. There was no gender rivalry, and women were admitted to the Deaconess Order.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the history of the Church of Scotland showed its historical appreciation of women. Women had played a particular role in 'its religious and social work'.<sup>56</sup> In

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> See also chapters II and III.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Ian Hazlett (ed.), *Early Christianity*, (London 1991), p. 108. At that time, Churches employed male and female servants to do menial work. The word 'servant' became 'deacon' or 'deaconess'.

<sup>56</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, April 1913.

Black's view, the Church had come to accept that there were no more 'effectual propagators of Christianity'.<sup>57</sup> Lady Ramsay, a Vice-President of the SCLWS,<sup>58</sup> wished to emphasise that the movement had a longer history than the Church and turned to general and cultural history to find the origin of the movement. Ramsay, however, regarded the movement as an essentially spiritual one,<sup>59</sup> and with the rise and spread of Christianity, the place of women in society had been considerably advanced.

### *C. The Divine Call to Women and Christian Ethics*

There was also an ethical dimension to this issue. While women had rights, they also had responsibilities. Butler thought that the women's suffrage issue was a question of women's duties as well as a question of women's rights.<sup>60</sup> He went on to maintain that:

These duties are the duties of good citizenship, the duties of co-operating to enact wise laws, to obtain good government and freedom for all, to make the best of oneself and of one's fellows ... it is a moral evil to the individual and to the community that any of us should exercise power and influence without corresponding responsibilities ... the woman's political influence ... is not exposed to the searchlight of publicity and responsibility.<sup>61</sup>

The Rev. C. M. Black also pointed out that the want of the political franchise was an obstacle to the exercise of this responsibility. He thus claimed that 'women, who are near God, ought to have a direct means of incarnating their ideal on the

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-13).

<sup>59</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, April 1913.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1913.

politics of their time.'<sup>62</sup> Giving the vote to women, for him, was the way of making this world the city of God.<sup>63</sup>

Militancy, however, was a most serious problem. Lady Ramsay, who had defended the militant women and was an enthusiastic supporter of the WSPU,<sup>64</sup> supported militant as well as constitutional tactics.<sup>65</sup> Unlike Ramsay, Dr. Whitelaw of Kilmarnock strongly opposed the use of such methods. He doubted that 'the movement would be advanced, promoted or hastened in the slightest degree by those methods.'<sup>66</sup> Like Whitelaw, Dr. Drummond denounced the militant tactics and repeatedly encouraged a religious emphasis.<sup>67</sup> The movement thus held both views within its ranks and did not take a stance on either side of this issue.

### 6.3.2. Educational Methods (II)

The SCLWS employed other educational methods, such as distributing suffrage literature and letters. Soon after its foundation, suffrage literature was sent to the secretaries of Church organisations including 765 branches of the CS Woman's Guild, and other societies directly related to the Scottish Churches.<sup>68</sup> A pamphlet entitled 'Freedom for Service' was published in 1913, and it was sent with its annual report to the members of the SCLWS and others.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *The Scotsman*, 12 March 1912.

<sup>65</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 13 March 1913.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *The Inverness Courier*, 14 February 1913.

<sup>68</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913); *Free Church Suffrage Times*, December 1913. For the CS Woman's Guild, see *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1912), p. 641.

<sup>69</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, July and December 1913, and June 1914.

In addition, letters were sent to various bodies, culminating in "an appeal to presbyteries and ministers" issued in February 1914.<sup>70</sup> At that time, the SLOWS had approached the presbyteries of the Established Church, urging them to declare themselves against the enfranchisement of women,<sup>71</sup> and immediately the SCLWS forwarded a counter-appeal. Nearly 5,000 letters were sent to 150 presbyteries and over 3,291 ministers of both the Established Church and the UF Church, and to other ministers in the Scottish Churches.<sup>72</sup> Copies were also made available to the national press. It was signed by Lady Frances Balfour acting as President.

In this letter, the SCLWS urged that 'the sacred character of their movement should be steadily kept in view,' and added that:

They feel strongly that the cause for which they stand is so closely bound up with the social, moral, and spiritual well-being of the community, the preservation of the sanctity of the home, and the adequate protection of the honour and life of women and children that the Church of Christ cannot consistently with its high mission refuse to identify itself with the movement.<sup>73</sup>

Extracts from the reply of the Glasgow CS Presbytery to be sent to the NMFWS were quoted, and the SCLWS invited 'the sympathetic consideration' of all ministers in the Scottish Churches.<sup>74</sup>

Shortly after the issuing of the SCLWS' letter, another counter communication from the SLOWS was issued.<sup>75</sup> In their official

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<sup>70</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1914) in *Free Church Suffrage Times*, June 1914.

<sup>71</sup> See chapter V.

<sup>72</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, March and June 1914; *Common Cause*, 20 February 1914. It was printed in *The Scotsman*, 13 February 1914; *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, 19 February 1914; *The Irvine Herald*, 20 February 1914. For ministers, see *The Scottish Church and University Almanac* (Edinburgh 1914), pp. 30, 104.

<sup>73</sup> *The Scotsman*, 13 February 1914.

<sup>74</sup> See chapter V.

<sup>75</sup> Alice A. Gemmell (Secretary of the SLOWS) to the editor in *The Scotsman*, 14 February 1914.

letter, the secretary criticised Lady Frances Balfour's assertions that the SLOWS had asked the help of ministers in opposing woman suffrage. She was reminded of the SLOWS' previous letter issued in December 1913, which stated that 'it is entirely contrary to the principles of our League to ask any religious or public body to support its proposals.'<sup>76</sup> The secretary concluded that the SLOWS did not approve of 'either side of the suffrage controversy being advocated by the Churches in Scotland.'<sup>77</sup> Such disputes provoked public debate. For example, the Rev. Harold Mayhall, clergyman of the Episcopal Church at Crombie, received two letters, one from the SCLWS and the other from the SLOWS, and showed his objection to women's suffrage because of the militant tactics of the suffragettes.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the letter writing method resulted in the addition of new members to the SCLWS,<sup>79</sup> and it led some presbyteries to pass resolutions in favour of women's suffrage, such as that of the Peebles CS presbytery.<sup>80</sup> This method thus played an important part in spreading the cause of Christian suffragism.

### 6.3.3. Religious Methods: (I) Devotional Meetings

As indicated in chapter II, liturgical reform had been carried out in the Scottish Churches during the late nineteenth century, and some of SCLWS' key members, such as Hunter and Grant, had played a crucial role in this movement. Daily services had been introduced in certain Churches, and special services such as monthly devotional meetings had been organised to awaken and

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *The Scotsman*, 14 February 1914.

<sup>79</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913).

<sup>80</sup> See chapter V.

deepen religious and spiritual life.<sup>81</sup> Worship was also an aspect of the work of the SCLWS.

A special service was held by the Provisional Committee of the SCLWS in Edinburgh on 20 and 21 March 1912.<sup>82</sup> Then, after its formation, monthly devotional services were held on Sunday afternoons. The first such service was held at the Queen's Hall in Edinburgh on 26 May 1912.<sup>83</sup> At that service, the Rev. Lauchlan MacLean Watt, CS minister of St. Stephen's, a member of the Executive Committee of the Scottish Christian Social Union, a member of the SCLWS, and one of the most popular preachers in Edinburgh, gave an address with the title 'Suffrage'. His address was thought to be 'admirable and convincing', and it was printed by the SCLWS and widely circulated.<sup>84</sup>

During 1913, devotional services were more structured than before as they were regularly held on the first Sunday of each month.<sup>85</sup> For example, a devotional meeting was held by the League in Edinburgh on 1 February 1914.<sup>86</sup> It was conducted by Miss Frances Simson, who was a member of the General Council of the SCLWS, President of the Scottish University Women's Suffrage Union, and a Vice-President of the ENSWS.<sup>87</sup> There was 'a good

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<sup>81</sup> D. Forrester and D. Murray, *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland* (2nd rev. ed. Edinburgh 1996), p. 112; J. R. Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland 1875-1929* (Edinburgh 1933), p. 199; Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 156-157; L. S. Hunter, *John Hunter* (London 1921), pp. 211-213.

<sup>82</sup> Lady Frances Balfour to the editor, *The Scotsman*, 20 March 1912.

<sup>83</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-13); *Common Cause*, 11 July 1912; *The Vote*, 13 July 1912.

<sup>84</sup> FES I, pp. 116-117; Annual Report of the SCSU (1901-1902); Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 194.

<sup>85</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1913) in *Free Church Suffrage Times*, July 1913. See *The Christian Commonwealth*, 28 May 1913; *The British Weekly*, 29 May 1913.

<sup>86</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, March 1914.

<sup>87</sup> Report of SCLWS (1912-1913); Report of the ENSWS (1913), Fawcett Library, London Guildhall University.

attendance' and a considerable time was then spent in 'silent prayer', topics being given out from time to time by the chairman.<sup>88</sup> In addition, Miss Simson gave a short address regarding the religious basis of the women's movement.

Since the formation of the SCLWS, a number of meetings had been organised, and 60 monthly devotional meetings were held in Edinburgh from January 1913 to December 1917.<sup>89</sup> These services were significant in emphasising the religious aspect of the movement.

#### 6.3.4. Religious Methods: (II) 'an Example of Unity'

As an ecumenical organisation, consisting of Scottish Church members from different denominations, the SCLWS cooperated with other religious bodies for women's suffrage. In November 1913, the religious suffrage leagues in Britain called for 'The National Week of Prayer'.

By this time, six religious leagues for women's suffrage were in existence throughout Britain. The Church League for Women's Suffrage (CLWS) had been founded in 1909, with members from the Anglican and Episcopal Churches.<sup>90</sup> In the following year, and operating in accordance with Nonconformist principles, the Free Church League for Women's Suffrage (FCLWS) was the second group to be founded.<sup>91</sup> The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society (CWSS) was founded third in 1911 and the SCLWS was the fourth.<sup>92</sup> There were also the Friends' League (FLWS) and the Jewish League (JLWS),

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<sup>88</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, March 1914.

<sup>89</sup> Reports of the SCLWS (1913-1917).

<sup>90</sup> Report of the CLWS (1912-1913), in A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who* (London 1913), pp. 18-21.

<sup>91</sup> Report of the FCLWS (1912-1913), in A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who*, pp. 36-38; *Free Church Suffrage Times*, March 1914.

<sup>92</sup> Report of the CWSS (1912-1913), in A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who*, pp. 16-17.

which were organised in March and November 1912 respectively.<sup>93</sup> Although they differed in religious terms, these groups agreed that the women's issue had a spiritual character, that the demand for freedom in its fullest and deepest sense was justified,<sup>94</sup> and that the women's political franchise should be secured through religious, devotional, and educational activities, rather than through militant action.

Prior to the call for a 'National Week of Prayer', several ecumenical demonstrations had been held under the auspices of three of the religious bodies for women's suffrage: the CLWS, FCLWS, and CWSS.<sup>95</sup> An important meeting had been arranged and held in June 1912, and special reports had been issued by *The Christian Commonwealth*.<sup>96</sup> Other joint religious meetings had followed.<sup>97</sup> In spite of such activities, there was no sign of change in the situation with regard to women's suffrage. Suffragists in the various religious leagues thus decided to undertake more intensive ecumenical activities than before.

At this point, a joint committee of these societies met and the delegates of each of the leagues decided to observe a 'National Week of Prayer', from 1st to 8th November 1913. The Joint Committee also invited other suffragists, the Churches, and the public to join in this effort.<sup>98</sup> For example, Miss Annie G. Ferrier, Hon. Secretary of the SCLWS, sent a letter to the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee asking the Guild to join with the

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<sup>93</sup> Reports of the FLWS (1912-1913) and JLWS (1912-1913), in A. J. R. (ed.), *ibid.*, pp. 38-39, 42-44.

<sup>94</sup> *The British Friend*, November 1913.

<sup>95</sup> Reports of the CLWS, FCLWS, and CWSS (1912-1913), in A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who*, pp. 16, 18, 37.

<sup>96</sup> *The Christian Commonwealth*, 26 June 1912; *The Common Cause*, 13 and 20 June 1912; *The Vote*, 29 June 1912.

<sup>97</sup> *The Vote*, 30 November 1912.

<sup>98</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, September and November 1913; *Church League For Women's Suffrage*, November 1913; *The Common Cause*, 24 October 1913; *The Vote*, 31 October 1913; *The British Friend*, November 1913.

League in prayer that week. But the committee took no action.<sup>99</sup> However, many local events were held,<sup>100</sup> including those at Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, Inverness, Dunbar, Leven, Troon, Ayr, Kilmanock, Glasgow, Oban, and Nairn.<sup>101</sup> In Edinburgh, for example, a Sunday afternoon devotional gathering was held, with Miss Grant in the chair. She was formerly a CS missionary at Kurseong, was a member of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, and was an ardent suffragette.<sup>102</sup> In addition, a public evening meeting was organised under the auspices of the Edinburgh Branch of the SCLWS, and the Rev. James Black, who was President of the Branch and a member of the Executive Committee of the League, took the chair. At the latter, an Intercessory prayer was conducted by the Rev. G. S. Stewart, who was assistant minister of Edinburgh St. George's (1912-1914) and was later minister of Cairns Memorial (1914-1928).<sup>103</sup> Miss Williamson, a member of the SCLWS, member of the Woman's Guild Central Committee, and Convener of the Fellow Workers' Union Model Study Circles, delivered an address.<sup>104</sup> She spoke of 'the Call to Prayer as a wonderful example of a Unity wider than Christendom itself.' She went on to say that 'even the

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<sup>99</sup> Minutes of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, SRO, CH1/38/1/5, 16 October 1913.

<sup>100</sup> In England, there were many meetings including Brighton, Eastbourne, Bournemouth, Ipswich, Birmingham, Cardiff, Swansea, Swindon, York, and other places. (*Church League For Women's Suffrage*, December 1913; *The Vote*, 14 November 1913)

<sup>101</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1914) in *Free Church Suffrage Times*, June 1914; *Church League For Women's Suffrage*, December 1913; *Free Church Suffrage Times*, December 1913; *The Common Cause*, 21 and 28 November, 12 December 1913; *Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 7 November 1913; *The Ayr Advertiser*, 6 November 1913; *The Leven Advertiser*, 20 November 1913.

<sup>102</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1914); Minutes of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, SRO, CH1/38/1/4, 18 January 1912; *Dundee Advertiser*, 5 December 1913.

<sup>103</sup> *FUFCS*, p.5.

<sup>104</sup> Minutes of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, SRO, CH1/38/1/4, 26 March 1912; *Woman's Guild Supplement*, July 1912.

World Missionary Conference was nothing like this.'<sup>105</sup>

At the national level, the united meeting of the religious suffrage bodies was held at Caxton Hall in London on 6 November 1913.<sup>106</sup> It came at the height of the ecumenical activities of the united religious leagues and was 'one of the most impressive ever held in a hall famous for its suffrage gatherings.'<sup>107</sup> The hall was crowded to 'its utmost limits' and 'the beauty of the various banners' was displayed on the walls.<sup>108</sup> Lady Frances Balfour had been asked to be the Chairman but instead of her, Lady Spicer, a Vice-President of the FCLWS, presided at the meeting.<sup>109</sup> In the opening address, Lady Spicer spoke of 'the common purpose uniting representatives of widely differing religious opinions', and 'of their common prayer,' and underlined 'the importance of the spiritual aspect of the movement.'<sup>110</sup>

On behalf of the CLWS, the Rev. C. Hinscliffe, who was founder and secretary of the CLWS, gave an address.<sup>111</sup> He described the meeting as 'unique and historic', and proposed a motion to form a Standing Committee of the religious suffrage societies.<sup>112</sup> Representing the FCLWS, the Rev. Fleming Williams, who had urged the formation of the SCLWS and was Hon. General Secretary of the League, defined the movement as essentially 'a spiritual

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<sup>105</sup> *Free Church Suffrage Times*, December 1913.

<sup>106</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1914) and *The Christian Commonwealth*, 27 May 1914; Second Annual Report of Friends' League for Women's Suffrage (1914), The Religious Society of Friends Library, Friends House, London; *Church League For Women's Suffrage*, December 1913; *The Vote*, 14 November 1913;

<sup>107</sup> *The Vote*, 14 December 1913.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*; Report of the FCLWS (1912-1913), in A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who*, p. 37.

<sup>110</sup> *The Vote*, 14 December 1913.

<sup>111</sup> Report of the CLWS (1912-1913), in A. J. R. (ed.), *Women's Who's Who*, p. 18.

<sup>112</sup> *Church League for Women's Suffrage*, November 1913.

movement'.<sup>113</sup> The following speakers also spoke of the movement in the light of their theological convictions: Miss Abadam of the CWSS; Mrs Ford Smith of the FLWS; and Dr. J. Hochman of the JLWS.<sup>114</sup> At the end of the meeting, Lady Frances Balfour of the SCLWS reminded the hearers of the 'goodwill and comradeship' that was the 'one great purpose on which God's blessing was asked.'<sup>115</sup>

This national gathering passed two crucial resolutions. The first resolution was that 'this Joint Meeting of the Religious Societies in favour of Women's Suffrage calls upon the Government to extend the Parliamentary franchise to women in the interests of justice, morality, and religion.'<sup>116</sup> Another was the formation of a Standing Committee of the Religious Suffrage Societies. This was called the United Religious League for Women's Suffrage and held a demonstration in Hyde Park in London, on 18 June 1914. The SCLWS was unable to send a platform representative, but the other religious leagues were well represented.<sup>117</sup> The religious suffrage leagues overcame their theological differences and worked together for women's enfranchisement. The ecumenical suffrage movement was thus recognised and appreciated at both local and national level.

In short, the SCLWS used religious and educational methods that touched on many aspects of Church life. The principles of the Christian suffrage movement were widely disseminated and a network for the promotion of the suffrage movement regarding its religious character had been established.

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, December 1913.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*; *The Vote*, 14 November 1913.

<sup>116</sup> *Church League for Women's Suffrage*, December 1913.

<sup>117</sup> Third Annual Report of Friends' League for Women's Suffrage (1915), the Religious Society of Friends Library, Friends House, London; *Church League for Women's Suffrage*, June and July 1914; *The Vote*, 26 June 1914.

#### 6.4. The Reception of the Principles of the SCLWS

##### 6.4.1. 'The Feminine Aspect of Religion': the Reception of the NUWSS

From its very beginning, the NUWSS had highlighted the religious basis of the women's suffrage movement, and the members of its Executive Committee, who were evangelicals and non-conformists in religion, were also members of religious suffrage bodies, such as the SCLWS.<sup>118</sup> The NUWSS stressed "the religious aspect of the movement" in various ways.

##### *A. Christianity, the State, and the Female Franchise*

A public gathering was held at the Christian Institute in Glasgow, on 11 November 1912.<sup>119</sup> This was organised under the auspices of the NUWSS and the GWSAWS. The Very Rev. Dr. McAdam Muir, a Vice-President of both the SCLWS and the GWSAWS, presided. The platform was packed with clergymen from various denominations. Those present included the Revs. Prof. John E. M'Fadyen, Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature and Theology at Glasgow UFC College; Provost Deane; John Fairley Daly, UFC minister of Renwick (1882-1901); James Golder Burns, UFC minister of Queen's Park East; Dr. Joseph Corbett, UFC minister of Camphill (1874-1910); William Mirrlees Rankin, UFC minister of Bridgeton; David Marshall Forrester, UFC minister of Glasgow Springburn Wellfield; Duncan Alexander Cameron Reid, CS minister of St. George; Dr. John Hunter; Dr. R. J. Drummond; Norman MacLean; M. Gardner, a member of the General Council of

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<sup>118</sup> L. P. Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies 1897-1914* (London 1982), p. 12.

<sup>119</sup> *The Common Cause*, 31 October (advertising) and 22 November 1912; *Glasgow Herald*, 12 November 1912.

the SCLWS; James Jeffrey; and Robert Primrose.<sup>120</sup>

Among the speakers were Provost Deane, Dr. Drummond, Rev. N. MacLean, and Miss Frances Sterling, who spoke on "Christianity and the State".<sup>121</sup> Miss Sterling attempted to clarify the relationship between Christian political life and the nation. She stressed the Holy Spirit's equal ministry to both men and women, and asserted that due to the equality of Divine gifts, the influence of the women's vote would be the same as the men's.<sup>122</sup> Unlike Dr. McAdam Muir, who had confined women's vote to either ladies of property or highly educated women, the speaker held that political power should represent the view of the average woman. Miss Sterling concluded that the long struggle for women's suffrage had been good training for women in terms of inducing 'fellowship and co-operation between women of different parts, different sects, different education, and different social position.'<sup>123</sup> This speech thus called the attention of some influential ministers in Glasgow to the religious dimension of the movement.

#### *B. Ministerial Education for Women and the Vote*

One of the most successful events in the religious campaign of the NUWSS was the Kirkwall gathering which was held in the Town Hall on 12 February 1913, under the auspices of the Orcadian Women's Suffrage Society.<sup>124</sup> The Rev. George Raymond Murison, CS minister of Stenness, was invited to speak. Speaking on 'A Plea for Equality of Opportunity', Murison applauded the advantages

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<sup>120</sup> *FUFCS*, pp. 244 (Daly), 241 and 271 (Burns), 214 (Corbett), 211 and 423 (Rankin), 197 and 254 (Forrester); *FES* III, pp. 258 and 474 (Reid); *CCD* (1915), p. 405 (Deane). For others, see chapter IV.

<sup>121</sup> *The Common Cause*, 22 November 1912.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 19 February 1913; *The Common Cause*, 7 March 1913.

of the more liberal education now given to women.

In fact, during the second half of the 19th century, Scottish women had fought to obtain the right to higher education. The campaign to admit women to University education had been conducted by several Associations for the Higher Education of Women. In 1868, St. Andrews was the first to form an Association for the Promotion of the Higher Education of Women.<sup>125</sup> A Ladies' Educational Association was then formed in Edinburgh in 1869, Glasgow in 1868, and Aberdeen in 1877.<sup>126</sup> Petitions urging female access to higher education were sent to Parliament, and in 1889, the Universities (Scotland) Act was passed, which appointed a Commission to review and to alter the constitution of the Scottish Universities on this question. Consequently, the Commission had issued an Ordinance in 1892, empowering the Universities to admit women to graduation, and making provision within the Universities for the instruction of women in all subjects.<sup>127</sup> As a result, women had gained entry into certain professions, such as medicine, nursing, and education. For example, in 1851, women teachers comprised 35 per cent of the total but by 1911 it had risen to 70 per cent. The female percentage of the total labour force in 1911 was 28.7 per cent.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, during the Great War, women were to be employed in a variety of occupations, such as transportation, commerce, and industry, and particularly in munition factories where the number of workers increased from 212,000 in July 1914 to 947,000 in November 1918.<sup>129</sup>

In relation to the study of theology, St. Andrews University

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<sup>125</sup> C. S. Bremner, *Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain* (London 1897), p. 265.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>128</sup> E. Gordon, 'Women's Spheres,' in W. H. Fraser and R. J. Morris (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland 1830-1914* (Edinburgh 1990), pp. 209, 213.

<sup>129</sup> Arthur Marwick, *Women at War* (Glasgow 1977), p. 166.

was the first to admit a woman as a BD student, and in 1910, Miss Frances Melville, who joined the women's suffrage movement as Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the GWSAWS and a member of the General Council of the SCLWS,<sup>130</sup> became the first woman to graduate a BD in Scotland.<sup>131</sup> An American student, Olive Mary Winchester, was the first woman to be awarded a BD degree from Glasgow University in 1912, and became the first woman to be ordained as a minister in Scotland.<sup>132</sup> The second woman to graduate BD from Glasgow was Mrs Vera Mary Muir Kenmure in 1929, and she was ordained to the ministry in the Congregational Union of Scotland.<sup>133</sup> In 1926, Elizabeth G. K. Hewat became the first BD graduate of Edinburgh University.<sup>134</sup> Although the Scottish Universities had admitted women since 1892, the number of women who took advantage of this opportunity remained relatively low, perhaps because of the difficulty of acceptance in the professions.<sup>135</sup>

At the Orkney meeting, Murison pointed to the unjust position of women in relation to the professions. As far as the ministry of the Church was concerned, the speaker asked, 'On what grounds

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<sup>130</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913); Report of the GWSAWS (1915), Fawcett Library.

<sup>131</sup> *DSCHT*, pp. 557-558.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 876.

<sup>133</sup> Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, pp. 212-213; Ann Escott, 'True Valour: Vera Kenmure's pioneering efforts for women's ministry in Glasgow', K. McCarra and H. Whyte, *A Glasgow Collection: Essays in honour of Joe Fisher* (Glasgow 1990), pp. 43-52; McNaughton, p. 223; *DSCHT*, pp. 320-321.

<sup>134</sup> Elizabeth G. K. Hewat, *Vision and Achievement, 1796-1956* (Edinburgh 1960), p. vii; *DSCHT*, p. 402.

<sup>135</sup> Shirley Cunningham, 'Women's access to higher education in Scotland,' in S. Acker (ed.), *World Yearbook of Education 1984: Women and Education* (New York 1984); Sheila Hamilton, 'The First Generations of University Women 1869-1930,' in G. Donaldson (ed.), *Four Centuries: Edinburgh University Life 1583-1983* (Edinburgh 1983), pp. 99-115; Carol Dyhouse, *No distinction of Sex? Women in British Universities 1870-1939* (London 1995), pp. 217-221.

are men to bolt and bar the doors against their entrance?' He supposed that:

it will be said that St. Paul wrote on one occasion that it was not permitted to a woman to "wag her head in a poopit". So he did; but St. Paul was a wise man and knew the character of Corinthian women in his day. There are countless women throughout England and Scotland today whom it would be an insult to compare even for a moment with the Corinthian women of St. Paul's time ... women who give large gifts for the furtherance of good ... who, as deaconesses and missionaries, as nurses and teachers in the home and fields, are doing work of the best kind and of utmost value.<sup>136</sup>

Murison repeatedly asked, 'Are women of this type, who may not shrink from larger responsibilities, to be still denied the education required towards the ministry,' and 'still held ineligible to shepherd a flock?' 'If so, why so?' He replied that:

The Church does well to honour the great Head with the lips. It never does better than when it honours Him with deeds. If He did so much to lift women to a level undreamed of before His day, the Church surely should be the last to refuse to women the necessary education, or to ban them as ineligible for the office of her ministry.<sup>137</sup>

Murison claimed that the door for their theological learning should be unlocked. So, his view on this subject was very unusual because until 1913, nobody spoke of the relationship between the study of theology of women and the female suffrage.

### *C. Women's Faith and Politics*

Another meeting was held in Ayr in October 1913.<sup>138</sup> It was

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<sup>136</sup> *The Orkney Herald*, 19 February 1913.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *The Ayr Observer*, 4 November 1913; *Ayrshire Post*, 31 October 1913; *The Ayr Advertiser*, 6 November 1913.

organised by the Ayr and Troon Women's Society, and Lady Frances Balfour was the speaker.

A Churchwoman, suffragist, and writer, Lady Frances Balfour was the fifth daughter of the Duke of Argyll and granddaughter of Queen Victoria.<sup>139</sup> She was active in both political and ecclesiastical affairs.<sup>140</sup> About 1887, Lady Balfour joined the women's suffrage movement. As the years passed and her knowledge grew, she became entirely convinced that 'it was a Cause which would make the world a place of more equal justice', and that 'the position of women was one that could not last because it was supported by prejudice and by arguments which could be defeated by a child.'<sup>141</sup> She thought that women's faith and courage had been shown throughout the history of the Church.<sup>142</sup> She also thought that the domestic role of women had prepared them for further responsibilities. She asked: 'Why should not the State recognise that influence which was of so much worth in the homes of the country?'<sup>143</sup> According to her, the care of the household was quite as good an education as politics. Despite the improvements in housing, however, women could not stay in their home because they were not 'to be allowed the chance of making effective their views as to what the home ought to be'.<sup>144</sup> Although politics were not 'of the kind they used to be', women were 'just as capable of understanding any form of politics as the men'.<sup>145</sup> Women had 'as much power of discernment as men'.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 53.

<sup>140</sup> Hume, *The NUWSS*, p. 11; M. Magnusson, *Out of Silence: Church of Scotland Woman's Guild 1887-1987* (Edinburgh 1987), p.67.

<sup>141</sup> Lady Frances Balfour, *Ne Obliviscaris: Dinna Forget* (London 1930), Vol II, pp. 127-128.

<sup>142</sup> *The British Weekly*, 12 March 1914.

<sup>143</sup> *The Ayr Observer*, 4 November 1913.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

She attributed 'a good deal of the unrest in the country to the unrest in the homes which reacted on the whole community'.<sup>147</sup> Although the lecturer did not think that if the vote was granted to women, there would be 'a new heaven and a new earth', at least the disqualification which marked them as inferior beings would be removed.<sup>148</sup> It was such faith which led her to continue to fight for the promotion of the status and the rights of women in society.

#### *D. Women's Labour and the Parliamentary Franchise*

Another noteworthy gathering was the annual meeting of the Cupar Women's Suffrage Society held in the Hall of the Duncan Institute, on 8 January 1914.<sup>149</sup> The Rev. Christopher Halliday spoke at this meeting. The CS minister of Ferryport-on-Craig, Halliday took part in the women's suffrage movement as a member of the General Council of the SCLWS.<sup>150</sup> The speaker pointed out that women's condition at all levels was important and equal to that of men, and that they worked as doctors, nurses, and in factories.<sup>151</sup> Halliday went on to assert that women were more active than men in the Church. They organised sales of work, visited and cared for the sick and the unfortunate, turned out to the weekly prayer meeting, and acted as teachers in the Sabbath schools. Halliday was thus convinced that 'the Church if it were deprived of the work of its womankind would be a poor stripped ghost of its former itself.'<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *St. Andrew Citizen*, 17 January 1914; *The Common Cause*, 13 February 1914.

<sup>150</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1913), p. 104; *FES* V, p. 202; Kerr, *The Renaissance of Worship*, p. 206.

<sup>151</sup> See E. Breitenbach, *Women Workers in Scotland* (Glasgow 1982), p. 5; Gordon, 'Women's Spheres', pp. 206-216.

<sup>152</sup> *St. Andrew Citizen*, 17 January 1914. Cf. *DSCHT*, pp. 883-891.

The second reason that Halliday gave for supporting women's suffrage was because, despite the work carried out by women, there were inequalities in many areas. He regretted that while women were displacing men in the labour market, they were doing the same work at lower wages. The speaker expected that women's enfranchisement would put this right, and establish 'normal and rational relations between the sexes' in relation to equal payment.<sup>153</sup>

The third reason was that the granting of the franchise to women would be beneficial to society. He illustrated the use made of women's suffrage in the state of Wyoming in the U.S.A. In 1869 women had been enfranchised, and they had been instrumental 'in putting upon the statute-book necessary, wise, and beneficial laws.'<sup>154</sup> For him, this proved that women were likely to have a positive influence on the nation. The same result had been witnessed in Australia and in Finland.<sup>155</sup> Halliday concluded that the enfranchisement of women would have 'a good social result in ridding politics of corruption and in informing legislation with a truer and deeper and nobler humanity.'<sup>156</sup> His speech was supported by the Rev. Stewart Crabb, UFC minister of Cupar St. John's.<sup>157</sup>

There were also several public meetings held under the auspices of the local societies of the NUWSS. At Crieff, a public meeting of the society was held in the Strathearn Institute, on 28 February 1913, when an address on the religious aspect of women's suffrage was delivered by the Rev. Millar Patrick.<sup>158</sup> In

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<sup>153</sup> *St. Andrew Citizen*, 17 January 1914.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* See also Olivia Coolidge, *Women's Rights: The Suffrage Movement in America 1848-1920* (New York 1966), pp. 70-72.

<sup>155</sup> See IDA Husted Harper (ed.), *History of Woman Suffrage* (New York 1922), Vol VI, pp. 752, 772-804.

<sup>156</sup> *St. Andrew Citizen*, 17 January 1914.

<sup>157</sup> *FUFCS*, pp. 370, 397.

<sup>158</sup> *The Common Cause*, 11 April 1913; *FUFCS*, pp. 7, 125, 335, 412; *DSCHT*, pp. 648-649.

performing the opening ceremony, at a fund-raising event in Perth in April 1913, the Rev. John White Slater, UFC minister of Scone West and a member of the SCLWS, insisted that the movement was not a political movement but a religious movement to enable 'the best women to serve the highest interests of their fellow women and of humanity'.<sup>159</sup> Other local meetings in support of the religious campaign were held in Leven, Kircaldy, Falkirk, Dunbar, Alloa, Inverness, Elgin, John O'Groats, Stranraer, Hawick, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright, Oban, Troon, and Kilmarnock.<sup>160</sup> The campaign of the NUWSS thus made a significant contribution to advance the Christian suffrage movement.

#### 6.4.2. 'Struggling For Freedom': the Reception of the WSPU and Miss May P. Grant's Suffrage Activity

Although in contrast to NUWSS, the WSPU was regarded by many as an anti-Church group on account of its militancy, most members of the WSPU were in fact Christians.<sup>161</sup> Like the constitutional suffrage groups, the suffragettes adopted tactics, such as 'the appeal to God' or 'the Church Protest method'.<sup>162</sup> Many Christian women in Scotland participated in the campaign of the WSPU,<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *Perthshire Advertiser*, 23 April 1913. For Mr. Slater, *FUFCS*, p. 338; *Free Church Suffrage Times*, July 1913; *The Common Cause*, 27 June 1913.

<sup>160</sup> *The Common Cause*, 7 March 1913 (Castle Douglas, Hawick, Kirkcudbright, and Stranraer), 14 March 1913 (Inverness and Elgin), 10 May 1912 (Alloa), 27 June 1913 (Falkirk), 21 November 1913 (Ayr and Troon), 28 November 1913 (Oban, Kircaldy, and Leven), 12 December 1913 (Ayr, John O'Groats, Kilmarnock, and Dunbar); *Alloa Advertiser*, 11 May 1912; *The Leven Advertiser*, 20 November 1913; *Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 7 November 1913 (Kilmarnock); *Galloway Advertiser and Wigtownshire Free Press*, 27 February 1913 (Stranraer).

<sup>161</sup> See chapter IV.

<sup>162</sup> Janie Allan Collections, Acc 4498/4/137, National Library of Scotland; Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragettes Movement* (reprint London 1988), p. 510.

<sup>163</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 2 April 1914.

including Miss May Pollock Grant, an ardent Dundonian suffragette and member of the SCLWS. She was born in Partick, Glasgow, on 2 December 1875, a daughter of the Rev. Dr. C. M. Grant, later the CS minister of St. Mark's at Dundee, and Eliza Jamesa Pollock.<sup>164</sup> Dr. Grant influenced his daughter with regard to mission work and the women's suffrage movement, and it is therefore worth considering his outlook first of all.

Mr. Grant had been initially ordained as a missionary to Nova Scotia in August 1866, and he was admitted to St. Andrew's, Halifax, where he ministered from October 1866 to November 1868.<sup>165</sup> While engaged in this work, he read the stirring appeals of the Convener of the India Mission to the General Assembly, and he decided to work for that Mission.<sup>166</sup> From February 1869, Grant began to labour in the Church's Institution at Calcutta. From the beginning of 1870, he took charge of the entrance class and the College classes for religious instruction to young men.<sup>167</sup> Unfortunately, Grant had to give up the work in 1871 because of severe illness.<sup>168</sup> This decision was not an easy one because mission work had been the real ambition of his life.<sup>169</sup> After his resignation, Grant was inducted to St. Mary's at Partick in 1872 and later St. Mark's at Dundee on 16 November 1877.<sup>170</sup> Mr. Grant became an enthusiastic supporter of the cause of women's suffrage

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<sup>164</sup> *FES* V, p. 339.

<sup>165</sup> *FES* VI, pp. 615, 695.

<sup>166</sup> *The Church of Scotland Home and Foreign Missionary Record*, 1 March 1869.

<sup>167</sup> Report of Rev. C. M. Grant in *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1870), p. 129.

<sup>168</sup> *The Church of Scotland Home and Foreign Missionary Record*, 1 April 1871; *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1872), pp. 75-77.

<sup>169</sup> *FES* VI, p. 695.

<sup>170</sup> *FES* V, p. 339.

in that city,<sup>171</sup> and eventually joined the SCLWS as a Vice-President.<sup>172</sup> He was highly regarded as a minister both by the members of his congregation and by the community of Dundee.<sup>173</sup>

Like her father, Miss May Grant served as a CS missionary. Before joining the women's suffragette movement, she served in Darjeeling and later at Kurseong in India, from 1905 to 1911.<sup>174</sup> Like her father before her, however, she had to resign because of ill health.<sup>175</sup>

She then worked for the Fellow Workers' Union, which was instituted as a section of the CS Women's Guild, with the aim of recruiting young women to foreign mission service.<sup>176</sup> From January 1912 onwards, Miss May Grant, representing the Union, was appointed as a member of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee.<sup>177</sup> She was also appointed as the secretary of the Summer School of Mission Study, which aimed to bring this work to the attention of all the girls of the Church.<sup>178</sup> She also acted on Committees of the National Union of Women's Workers in connection with the Insurance Act, a measure which affected women's social welfare.<sup>179</sup>

But her involvement in mission work at home ended abruptly. Her

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<sup>171</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 25 October 1884; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1884.

<sup>172</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913), p. 103.

<sup>173</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 25 September 1913.

<sup>174</sup> *The Scottish Church and University Almanac* (Edinburgh 1906), p. 76 and 1911, p. 78; *News of Women's Missions*, November and December 1905.

<sup>175</sup> Reports of Miss May P. Grant in *Reports of the Schemes of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1907-1912).

<sup>176</sup> *Woman's Guild Supplement*, June 1912.

<sup>177</sup> Minutes of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, SRO, CH1/38/1/4, 18 January 1912.

<sup>178</sup> *Woman's Guild Supplement*, June and July 1912.

<sup>179</sup> Minutes of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, SRO, CH1/38/1/4, 18 April 1912.

last appearance in public was at the meeting of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee held on 17 October 1912.<sup>180</sup> After that, she ceased to be a member of Church committees.<sup>181</sup> As far as her suffrage work was concerned, this timing is significant since at the end of November 1912, she attempted to disturb a political meeting held in Aberdeen and was imprisoned for a short period there.<sup>182</sup> From that time onwards, she began to engage in the work of the women's suffragette movement in Scotland.

Why did May Grant give up working within the Church and instead participate in the suffragette movement? There are three possible reasons. First, along with other militant women, May Grant was dissatisfied with the results of the constitutional methods which were employed by the peaceful suffragists.<sup>183</sup> Secondly, in her view, the militant suffragette movement could be seen as a valid form of service for a Christian.<sup>184</sup> Thirdly, it seems likely that May Grant found great difficulty in getting along with the Marchioness of Tullibardine who was President of the Fellow Worker's Union, and who was by that time a leading anti-suffragist in Scotland.<sup>185</sup> It is likely that relations between them became strained. Outside the FWU, they were on opposite sides of the suffrage issue: May Grant as a member of the WSPU was engaged in militant suffrage activity in Dundee, while the Marchioness of Tullibardine (later Duchess of Atholl) played a leading role in the anti-suffrage movement as one of two Presidents of the Dundee Branch of the SLOWS.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Minutes of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, SRO, 17 October 1912.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 November 1912.

<sup>182</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 12 December 1912.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. *The Dundee Advertiser*, 21 July 1913.

<sup>184</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1914) in *The Free Church Suffrage Times*, June 1914.

<sup>185</sup> *The Anti-Suffrage Review*, December 1912.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, December 1913.

Although May Grant was involved in militant activities, such as the disruption of public meetings,<sup>187</sup> her main contribution to the movement concerned its religious dimension. She wrote a number of letters to the press.<sup>188</sup> During the years 1913 and 1914, Miss Grant sought the help of the Church for the women's movement in 'the interests of justice and purity.'<sup>189</sup> 'What inspired women to work for the vote,' said Grant, was 'the thought of the sufferings of sweated women and little children.'<sup>190</sup> A most striking feature of her letters was her attitude to the Churches' neutral stance on women's suffrage. Grant condemned their decision to take no action in relation to the issue,<sup>191</sup> stating that 'this was not the first time that the Church has refused to support progress' but 'in this case its position is the more reprehensible if we consider how much it owes to those who are struggling for freedom.'<sup>192</sup> She went on to ask,

Who fill the Churches ... ? Who do sunday school work? Who raise Church funds? Who visit the poor and the sick? ... I protest against the attitude of her ministers-an attitude as banal as it is insulting ... The vote is not an article of food or clothing; it is the symbol of free citizenship ... Women should not be denied equality with men ... It seems to me that self-respect demands revolt.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 12, 13, 18 December 1912. See also Leneman, *A Guid Cause*, p. 260 and 'Dundee and the Women's Suffrage Movement: 1907-1914,' C. A. Whatley (ed.), *The Remaking of Juteopolis, Dundee. Circa. 1891-1991* (Dundee 1992), pp. 88-89.

<sup>188</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1914) in *Free Church Suffrage Times*, June 1914; *The Dundee Advertiser*, 5 December 1913.

<sup>189</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1914).

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Minutes of CS Presbytery of Dundee, Dundee Archives and Record Office, CH2/103/27, 3 December 1914; *The Dundee Advertiser*, 4 and 5 December 1913. See also chapter V.

<sup>192</sup> *The Dundee Advertiser*, 5 December 1913.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

She was deeply disappointed when the Church refused to support the cause. She criticised the clerical anti-suffragists, notably the Rev. Harcourt M. Davidson, who had spoken against votes for women in Dundee CS presbytery.<sup>194</sup> Although Mr. Davidson defended himself by writing to the press, no subsequent letters supported him, while several correspondents shared May Grant's views.<sup>195</sup> Her activities had a widespread influence in the ecclesiastical campaign of the WSPU.

In discussing Miss Grant, one writer assumes that 'there is no reason to suppose that May Grant in Dundee had her father's support' in relation to her suffrage activities.<sup>196</sup> But this is mistaken. As we have noted already, she was greatly influenced by her father's attitude both to missionary work and women's suffrage. Also, when the SCLWS was formed in 1912, May Grant and her father joined at the same time.

May Grant is an example of a militant suffragette who had a religious commitment. According to Lady Ramsay,<sup>197</sup> suffragettes were essentially Christian women. The principles of the SCLWS were thus reflected in the activities of the WSPU and this helped to promote the Christian basis of suffragism.

#### 6.4.3. 'Women and Churches': the Parochial and Presbyterian Reception

The SCLWS, as we have seen, sent letters and other literature to congregations and presbyteries. Its members also played a crucial role as agents to promote the Christian suffrage movement. At a parochial level, the movement was welcomed through the efforts of certain Woman's Guilds. The meeting at Elgin South Church was a typical example. In February 1913, it was held under the auspices of the South United Free Church Woman's Guild and in

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<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 December 1913.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 and 8 December 1913.

<sup>196</sup> Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches', p. 252.

<sup>197</sup> *The Scotsman*, 12 March 1912; *Glasgow Herald*, 12 March 1912.

cooperation with the Elgin Women's Suffrage Society of the NUWSS. It was reported that there was 'a large attendance of the members of the Guild.'<sup>198</sup> The meeting was chaired by Mrs Lendrum, wife of the minister, the Rev. John Lendrum,<sup>199</sup> and the main speaker was Mrs James Fraser, a member of the Inverness Women's Suffrage Society. She gave an address entitled "The Moral Aspect of the Women's Movement", and at the close, 11 new members were added to the Society.<sup>200</sup>

Woman's Guilds had become a major force in the life of the Church.<sup>201</sup> Under the leadership of Professor A. H. Charteris of Edinburgh, the Church of Scotland initiated the formation of the Woman's Guild in 1887, along with the setting up of the order of Deaconesses.<sup>202</sup> By 1906, there were 675 branches with 47,143 members, and the Guild cooperated with many affiliated sections in the Church, such as the Fellow Workers' Union.<sup>203</sup> The members were involved in such activities as 'Health Visitation of Infants, Charity Organisation, Red Cross Movement, Cripples' Leagues, Guilds of Play, and Mission Study Circles'.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, the Woman's Guild cooperated for specific purposes with the National Union of Women's Workers as well as with the UFC Woman's

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<sup>198</sup> Report of the North of Scotland Federation for Women's Suffrage in *The Common Cause*, 14 March 1913.

<sup>199</sup> *FUFCS*, p. 464.

<sup>200</sup> Report of the North of Scotland Federation for Women's Suffrage.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism', pp. 75-93.

<sup>202</sup> *Life and Work*, January 1887; Arthur Gordon, *The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris* (London 1913), pp. 355-356; Magnusson, *Out of Silence*, pp. 55-56; Fleming, *A History of the Church in Scotland*, p. 164. For Charteris, see *DSCHT*, p. 167.

<sup>203</sup> Minutes of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, SRO, CH1/38/1/4, 26 March 1912; Magnusson, *Out of Silence*, p. 88.

<sup>204</sup> Gordon, *The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris*, p. 359.

Guild.<sup>205</sup> Following the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, guildswomen provided clothes and food for the fighting men and started war work in the munitions factories. Some members also joined the Women's Royal Army Corps and the Women's Royal Naval Service. After the war, the Girl's Guild was set up in 1918 to meet the needs of young women aged between 15 and 30.<sup>206</sup>

Unlike the Established Church, however, the UF Church had no single national organisation.<sup>207</sup> Instead, there were several organisations, such as the Woman's Guild, the Ladies' Association, and the Girl's Auxiliary.<sup>208</sup> The UFC Woman's Guild was therefore relatively weaker in its structure than the CS Guild. Guildswomen in the two Churches shared the same aim to improve the moral, social, and religious well-being of the country through the service of Christ's Kingdom.<sup>209</sup> Although many guildswomen such as Lady Frances Balfour, Elsie Inglis, and May Grant helped to promote the issue of women's suffrage, it is not possible to measure numerically the extent of the support of the cause from the woman's guilds. The reason is that in spite of requests for help from suffrage bodies, the guilds at the national level did not wish to adopt an official attitude to the cause.

Another means of parochial support was that of sympathetic sermons delivered by Church ministers, something widely done at the time by the clerical suffragists.<sup>210</sup> The Scottish tradition

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<sup>205</sup> Minutes of the CS Woman's Guild Central Committee, 18 April 1912; Minutes of Conference of representatives of the UFC Guild and the CS Woman's Guild, SRO, CH1/38/1/5, 11 December 1913.

<sup>206</sup> Magnusson, *Out of Silence*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>207</sup> Magnusson, *Out of Silence*, p.97.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*; Minutes of Book of College Street UFC Ladies' Association, SRO, CH3/433/14; Minutes of the Executive Committee of Girl's Auxiliary to the Women's Foreign Mission of the UFC, SRO, CH3/377/4; Minutes of the Calton Old Church Woman's Guild, SRA, CH2/725/27.

<sup>209</sup> *Women's Guild Supplement*, August 1914.

<sup>210</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1914); *The Common Cause*, 11 July 1912

of preaching had traditionally demonstrated 'a very concrete application of the scriptural text to contemporary life and manners' and 'the freedom of the pulpit to address social and national questions'.<sup>211</sup> Public issues such as women's suffrage could thus be examined by preachers.<sup>212</sup> Even before the forming of the SCLWS, some clergymen in favour of women's suffrage had used this means. For example, the Rev. James MacDougall Black, who was UFC minister of Broughton Place and later of St. George's in Edinburgh, one of the most distinguished Scottish preachers of his day, and a member of both the General Council and the Executive Committee of the SCLWS,<sup>213</sup> delivered an address at the women's suffrage service held in the Synod Hall, Edinburgh, on 26 March 1911.<sup>214</sup> In this sermon, Black expounded the Christian foundations of the women's suffrage issue in the accepted doctrine of Christian equality, the conception of Christian justice, and the preparation for the coming of Christ's Kingdom.<sup>215</sup> Another example of this is provided by the Rev. George Rae, UFC minister of Gourock Ashton.<sup>216</sup> On one Sunday, he preached a sermon bearing on the women's movement, in which he showed 'how uplifting and far reaching it is in its widest and highest sense.'<sup>217</sup> The Gourock Society expressed their thankfulness to Mr. Rae, and hoped that his example might be imitated by more of the

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<sup>211</sup> David Read, 'The Scottish Tradition of Preaching', Forrester and Murray (eds.), *Studies in the History of Worship*, p. 150.

<sup>212</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 670.

<sup>213</sup> *FUFCS*, p. 29; *DSCHT*, p. 79; Report of the SCLWS (1912-13).

<sup>214</sup> James D. Black, *Address* (n.p. 1911), in Dep. of Special Collections, Glasgow University.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.* See also James D. Black, *The Dilemmas of Jesus* (London 1925), pp. 89-90. In relation to its eschatological root in particular, Black stated that 'political questions are purely temporary ... women's suffrage - we remember its turmoil-is dead-But Christ's message is timeless.'

<sup>216</sup> *FUFCS*, p. 156.

<sup>217</sup> Report of the Gourock Women's Suffrage Society in *The Common Cause*, 12 June 1914.

clergy.<sup>218</sup>

As noted already, the principles of the SCLWS were welcomed by some presbyteries as they took official action in favour of women's suffrage, and many clerical suffragists had defended the moral and religious rather than the political character of the movement.<sup>219</sup>

Such wide support by congregations and presbyteries led to the reception accorded to women's suffrage by the General Assemblies.

#### 6.4.4. 'The Recognition of the Place of Women in the Church's Life and Work': the Reception of the General Assemblies

The Churches' increasing support for women's life and work is seen in the UFC General Assembly's decision to appoint a Special Committee charged with "the Recognition of the Place of Women in the Church's Life and Work". This has been seen as largely the result of the women's suffrage movement.<sup>220</sup>

One writer does not wish to link the question of the parliamentary franchise for women to this decision of the UFC General Assembly because of the UFC presbyteries' refusal to take action in favour of women's suffrage.<sup>221</sup> There were other factors, however. First, although presbyteries decided not to take action, there was the exceptional case of Ardrossan presbytery.<sup>222</sup> Secondly, because many women were by then 'restless and dissatisfied with their position', the editorial of *The Missionary Record of the United Free Church of Scotland* discussed "The Church and the Women's Movement" and anticipated the consideration of the position of women within the Church and the

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<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> See chapter V.

<sup>220</sup> *DSCHT*, pp. 885-886.

<sup>221</sup> Leneman, 'The Scottish Churches', p.247.

<sup>222</sup> Minutes of UF Presbytery of Ardrossan, SRO, CH3/24/3, 3 February 1914; *The Irvine and Fullarton Times*, 6 February 1914.

nation by the 1914 General Assembly.<sup>223</sup> Finally, many members of the General Assembly, such as Professor Simpson, saw the Church's recognition of women being a result of the women's franchise movement.<sup>224</sup>

When the Church Life and Work Committee reported to the UFC General Assembly on 25 May 1914, Professor J. Y. Simpson of Edinburgh<sup>225</sup> referred to 'the varied and invaluable services and advantages that would accrue from a more definite recognition of their place in Church life and work.'<sup>226</sup> 'Any longer to ignore them' was for him 'to set limitations on the expression of the life and spirit of Christ throughout the Church, which is His body'.<sup>227</sup> Simpson reminded the House that

one of the glories of Christianity has been her treatment of women, raising her out of a position of servitude, and often of shame, and that it will only be in continuance of that spirit that our Church will be acting, should she resolve to move in the directions indicated at this time.<sup>228</sup>

The Rev. David Woodside, Glasgow, moved that the matter be remitted to a committee, and it was seconded by the Rev. J. Fairley Daly who was a Glasgow suffragist. It was further agreed that the number of the special committee should be fifteen. After

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<sup>223</sup> *The Missionary Record of the United Free Church of Scotland*, April 1914.

<sup>224</sup> *Reports of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1915), pp. 1-6; G. M. Reith, *Reminiscences of the United Free Church General Assembly* (Edinburgh 1933), p. 166; D. P. Thomson, *Women in the Scottish Church* (Perth 1975), p. 401; Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism', p. 239.

<sup>225</sup> G. F. Barbour, 'Memoir', James Young Simpson, *The Garment of the Living God* (London 1934), pp. 15, 22, 68-78. See J. Y. Simpson, *The Spiritual Interpretation of Nature* (London 1912), pp. ix-x.

<sup>226</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1914), p. 231.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

that, the committee held seven meetings, and a set of questionnaires were drawn up to bodies such as the Women's Home Mission Committee and the Women's Foreign Mission Committees. Before the final adoption of the report, the committee also held a conference.<sup>229</sup>

At the 1915 General Assembly, the committee submitted its report. The committee outlined the new conditions which made action by the Church necessary:

Large and far-reaching changes have taken place in the position of women in the community during the past half century, and these necessitate corresponding changes in the organisation and methods of the Church ... The new feature of the social life of our time is the growth and spread in all ranks and classes of society of an ideal of women as not only wife and mother ... but also as comrade and co-worker.<sup>230</sup>

In the middle of the debates, Dr. R. J. Drummond moved that the report be transmitted to presbyteries and other women's Church organisations.<sup>231</sup> He was supported by Professor D. S. Cairns, Professor of the UFC College, Aberdeen, and a supporter of women's suffrage.<sup>232</sup> Drummond's motion was supported by a majority, although Dr. Archibald Henderson, the Principal Clerk, strongly objected to the report.<sup>233</sup>

As a result of these proceedings, the report was remitted to presbyteries. The office of Church Sister was also instituted, and women were granted full voting membership of the principal committees of the Church, although in each committee, the number

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<sup>229</sup> *Reports to the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1915), No XXVIII, p. 28ff.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1915), pp. 277-279.

<sup>232</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 117; *The Common Cause*, 8 November 1912. See D. S. Cairns, *The Faith that Rebels* (London 1928), pp. 3-6.

<sup>233</sup> *Proceedings of General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1915), pp. 279, 284.

of women was limited to one-sixth of the total.<sup>234</sup>

At this point, reference should be made to the office of UFC Church Sister and CS Parish Sister since these roles were created at the same time as the movement for women's suffrage.<sup>235</sup> By the decision of the 1912 General Assembly, the UFC Church Sisters were officially employed as agents working in various parochial activities. Three years later, the Church instituted the office of Church Sister as a distinct office whether voluntary or salaried, for which adequate and standardised training was given. They would, of course, work under the supervision of the Kirk-Session in each Church, and they would not be ordained.<sup>236</sup> Like the UFC Church Sister, the CS Parish Sister was also not ordained. In 1894, the Parish Sister was established through the efforts of Donald Macleod, CS minister of the Park Church in Glasgow from 1869 to 1910.<sup>237</sup> The convener of the Home Mission Committee (1888-1900), Donald Macleod proposed in 1893 to organise a Women's Association for Home Missions and to promote religious life among those who lived in poor parishes through the presence of a true sister of mercy.<sup>238</sup> In 1894, the Women's Association was officially recognised, and office-bearers were appointed with Mrs Paton Gloag of Edinburgh as President, and its first report was presented to the General Assembly.<sup>239</sup> The report

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<sup>234</sup> *Reports of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1915), No XXVIII, p. 28ff; *Acts of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1916), pp. 165-166; *The Record of the Home and Foreign Mission Work of the United Free Church of Scotland*, August 1915; James Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland* (Glasgow 1934), p. 265.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Macdonald, 'Women and Presbyterianism', pp. 98-99.

<sup>236</sup> *Reports to the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1915), No XXVIII, p. 8.

<sup>237</sup> Sydney Smith, *Donald Macleod of Glasgow* (London 1926), pp. 94-108; A. H. Dunnett, *The Church in Changing Scotland* (Dunfermline n.d.), p. 131; *FES* III, p. 471.

<sup>238</sup> *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1893), pp. 251-254.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 266-268.

mentioned that, at the request of the parish Church of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, the Association had recognised their "Parish Sister" on condition that this congregation provided the salary from its own funds. Two more Edinburgh parishes also appointed Parish Sisters to work amongst the poor.<sup>240</sup> After the union of 1929 with the United Free Church, the office of Parish Sister became confused with that of the Church Sister.<sup>241</sup> Occasionally, Church Sisters were regarded as those working for the prosperous congregations and Parish Sisters as those working amongst the poor and needy in the poor parishes.<sup>242</sup> They were all employed by either the Association or their own parishes as full-time workers.

A resolution of the 1915 UFC General Assembly led to the consideration of the ordination of women as deacons. In 1915, three prominent scholars of the Church were invited by the Committee to make submissions on the issue of ordination. Principal James Denney of Glasgow stated in a memorandum on female ordination that: 'if the term ordination is used in the only sense in which I think it is legitimate in our Church to use it, there is no reason why women should not be ordained.'<sup>243</sup> Professor A. R. MacEwen of Edinburgh wrote on the issue in the light of ecclesiastical history.<sup>244</sup> He said that in the Apostolic Church 'that deacons, and deaconesses were so consecrated may be regarded as certain.'<sup>245</sup> Dr. James Harvey gave encouragement to female ordination, by saying that 'our own Church and other

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<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>241</sup> Thomson, *Women in the Scottish Church*, p. 314.

<sup>242</sup> Dunnett, *The Church in Changing Scotland*, p. 132.

<sup>243</sup> *Reports to the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1916), p. 27; *The Record*, July 1916; Eunice G. Murray, *Women in The Ministry* (Glasgow 1923), p. 7, Dep. of Special Collections, Glasgow University. For Denney, see *DSCHT*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>244</sup> For MacEwen, see *DSCHT*, p. 512.

<sup>245</sup> *Reports to the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland*, p. 28.

Churches for the most part have by use and wont restricted ordination to men only,' but 'there is no direct prohibition in our standards of the ordination of women.'<sup>246</sup> Dr. Archibald Henderson, however, repeatedly opposed this proposal at subsequent Assemblies, on account of what he considered to be its unscriptural and unconstitutional nature.<sup>247</sup> Although the Church eventually did not give approval to the ordination of women,<sup>248</sup> it was agreed in 1919 to admit women to the office of deacon without ordination for a period of three years.<sup>249</sup>

This office was different from the order of the diaconate set up within the Established Church in 1887 through the efforts of Dr. A. H. Charteris. By then, Dr. George Wilson and Dr. P. M'Adam Muir, who was a clerical suffragist and later joined the SCLWS as a Vice-President, had drawn up the Rules and Regulations of the order of Deaconesses.<sup>250</sup> Two classes of deaconesses were recognised: those whose qualifications had been attested by their work over seven years in a local congregation; and those who would be trained in the Deaconess Institution and Training Home for two years.<sup>251</sup> Like the deacons within the United Free Church, the deaconesses of the Auld Kirk were not ordained and could hold

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<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*; Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, pp. 267-268.

<sup>247</sup> Reith, *Reminiscences of the United Free Church General Assembly*, pp. 188, 201.

<sup>248</sup> The Act (1697) was that 'legislation proposed to and approved by a General Assembly must be sent down to presbyteries for their judgement, and only with the approval of the majority of presbyteries could be enacted by a later assembly,' and that 'this was and is an invaluable check on hasty legislation, and ensures to the whole Church an opportunity for mature deliberation.' (J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, p. 266)

<sup>249</sup> Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, p. 266.

<sup>250</sup> *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1887), p. 423.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 421-425; Gordon, *The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris*, p. 356; *Life and Work*, January 1887; Thomson, *Women in the Scottish Church*, pp. 302-314.

office for a longer period.<sup>252</sup>

These developments opened up new possibilities of service for women. The minority group of the UF Church, who did not join the Church of Scotland in 1929, passed a historic resolution at their first General Assembly held in Glasgow: 'any member of the Church in full communion shall be eligible to hold any office within the Church.'<sup>253</sup> Accordingly, Elizabeth Brown Barr, the daughter of James Barr, the leader of the minority group, was ordained to the ministry of the Continuing UF Church in 1935 as the first female presbyterian minister in Scotland.<sup>254</sup> As far as the Christian suffrage movement was concerned, the efforts of the UFC and the UFC Continuing were significant, for the Church had applied the principles of the suffrage movement to their own orders.

The Church of Scotland also opened up new roles for women. In 1894, the Women's Association for Home Mission had started, and from 1904 onwards, women had been involved in the Social Work Committee.<sup>255</sup> Women members of the Church were frequently engaged in the women's suffrage movement, and when the movement was at its zenith, many women took part in fighting for the women's franchise, including Dr. Elsie Inglis and Lady Frances Balfour.<sup>256</sup> Moreover, clerical suffragists sought to apply the principles of the Christian suffrage movement to the activities of the Life and Work and Social Work committees. Within the Life and Work Committee, such representations were made by the Very Rev. Sir J. Cameron Lees, the Very Rev. P. M'Adam Muir, and Dr. David Watson, who were advocates of both Christian socialism and

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<sup>252</sup> Dunnett, *The Church in Changing Scotland*, p. 130.

<sup>253</sup> Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (Glasgow 1930); Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, p.269.

<sup>254</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 63.

<sup>255</sup> Magnusson, *Out of Silence*, pp. 49-53, 93; *DSCHT*, p. 885.

<sup>256</sup> See chapter V.

suffragism.<sup>257</sup> In the Social Work Committee, these views were put forward by three clerical suffragists: Dr. D. Watson, a Vice-Convenor of the Committee, Dr. W. P. Paterson; and the Rev. D. A. Cameron Reid, minister of St. George's, Glasgow, and a suffragist.<sup>258</sup> These ministers hoped that women's influence would be extended in both the Church and public life across a wide range of issues.<sup>259</sup>

Meanwhile, under the control of the Glasgow Women's Suffrage Society, formerly the GWSAWS, women suffragists pressurised presbyterian Churches in Scotland and England to make women eligible for any office in the Church.<sup>260</sup> As a result, in 1921, the Presbyterian Church of England General Assembly, which had been constituted in 1876,<sup>261</sup> decided that the eldership and the diaconate be open to female members on the same terms as men.<sup>262</sup> But the suffragists were disappointed because women were still excluded from the ordained ministry. The GWSS sent a letter to the Rev. James Barr, one of the clerical members of the Society, asking him to put a motion forward at the United Free Church

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<sup>257</sup> *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1913); D. Watson, *The Scottish Christian Social Union and How It Came To Be Formed* (Glasgow 1901), p. 17; Lady Frances Balfour, *Ne Obliviscaris* (London 1930), pp. 133-136; Report of the SCLWS (1913).

<sup>258</sup> *Report on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland; The Scotsman*, 8, 22, 29 January 1914; *Glasgow Herald*, 12 November 1912.

<sup>259</sup> *DSCHT*, pp. 886-887.

<sup>260</sup> Minutes of Organising Committee of the Glasgow Women's Suffrage Society, 12 May 1921, Dep. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Mitchell Library.

<sup>261</sup> B. G. Worrall, *The Making of The Modern Church* (London 1993), p. 142.

<sup>262</sup> Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, 5 May 1921, New College Library, Edinburgh; Minutes of Organising Committee of the Glasgow Women's Suffrage Society, 12 May 1921; *The Record of the Home and Foreign Mission Work of the United Free Church of Scotland*, June 1921; Barr, *The United Free Church of Scotland*, p. 261.

General Assembly to be held that month.<sup>263</sup> In reply, Barr objected to raising the women's issue in the Assembly as it might distract the attention from the union of the Churches.<sup>264</sup> The GWSS, too, had planned to ask Professor Cooper and Dr. Wallace Williamson to raise the issue before the CS General Assembly but the chance was lost.<sup>265</sup> The GWSS, however, continued to put pressure on the Churches to allow women to hold any office on equal terms.

After the union of 1929 between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church, further moves towards equality within the Church were made. Women were firstly admitted to the ordained diaconate in 1935, then to the eldership in 1966, and finally to the ordained ministry of the Church in 1968.<sup>266</sup> Although the acceptance of such roles for women within the Church was not universal,<sup>267</sup> these developments illustrate the significant impact of Christian suffragism on the life of the Church.

#### **6.5. Conclusion: the War and the Christian Suffrage Movement**

As we have seen, the SCLWS was different from other suffrage organisations because it represented the religious dimension of women's suffrage. The activities of the League had an impact on both the Churches and the suffrage movement. Letters were sent to over 3,291 ministers and 150 presbyteries in the two major denominations to support the suffrage issue, and several positive responses were made. Also, the members of the SCLWS sought to influence their own congregations and presbyteries, and some prominent clergymen, such as Drummond and Watson, were instrumental in decisions of the General Assemblies to improve

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<sup>263</sup> Minutes of the GWSS, 12 May 1921.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 May 1921.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 May and 19 May 1921.

<sup>266</sup> *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland with Legislative Acts*, 1935, p. xxvi; 1966, p. 810; 1968, p. 758; Thomson, *Women in the Scottish Church*, pp. 402-409.

<sup>267</sup> Magnusson, *Out of Silence*, pp. 128-129.

the status of women. In addition, the SCLWS provided a network for the deveopment of the Christian suffrage movement with other bodies, including the United Religious League for Women's Suffrage, the NUWSS, and the WSPU. Thus, before the war, the SCLWS could be said to represent the Christian suffrage movement, and it played an a vital role in promoting the religious dimension of the franchise movement.

During the Great War, the work of the SCLWS continued. When the War broke out in August 1914, the Scottish Churches and clergymen expected that as 'a religious crusade', the war would bring about a moral and religious revival.<sup>268</sup> Most ministers preached in support of the war, and many applied for military chaplaincies.<sup>269</sup> Over 90 per cent of all sons of the manse volunteered for war service.<sup>270</sup>

The Churches and their members also supported the fund-raising programme of the suffrage bodies on behalf of the Scottish Women's Hospitals which had been established in October 1914 through the efforts of Elsie Inglis.<sup>271</sup> In relation to this, the Glasgow Society for Women's Suffrage sent a letter in June 1916 to all ministers of the Established, the United Free, and the Episcopal Churches.<sup>272</sup> There were a considerable number of responses from the Churches and the Society thanked them for

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<sup>268</sup> Stewart J. Brown, 'A Solemn Purification by Fire': Responses to the Great War in the Scottish Presbyterian Churches, 1914-1919', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol 45 (1994), pp. 83-84.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>270</sup> Peter C. Matheson, 'Scottish War Sermons 1914-1919', *RSCHS*, Vol XVII (1972), p. 205.

<sup>271</sup> Minutes of Scottish Women's Hospitals Committee of the GWSAWS, 15 September 1915, Minutes of the Sub-Committee of the Scottish Women's Hospitals, 15 March 1917, and the GWSAWS letter books, 12, 19 June and 6 July 1916 in Dep. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Mitchell Library; Annual Report of the GWSAWS (1915), Fawcett Library.

<sup>272</sup> The letter books of the GSWS, 12 June 1916, Dep. of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Mitchell Library.

helping in this way.<sup>273</sup>

Above all, the role of individual Christian suffragists was highlighted more than ever before. Members of the SCLWS, such as Lady Frances Balfour and Elsie Inglis, laboured hard at home and abroad.<sup>274</sup> The Rev. Percy Hepburn, a member of the SCLWS, contended that 'without the co-operation of women, the army and navy could not have waged war on the present stupendous scale with any hope of success.'<sup>275</sup> In addition, as mentioned already, the SCLWS continued to place an emphasis on prayer and held monthly devotional meetings.<sup>276</sup> Members of the SCLWS continually prayed that 'very soon this claim (women's suffrage) may be granted'.<sup>277</sup>

Although during the latter period of the war, the more optimistic views about its nature faded away,<sup>278</sup> the SCLWS did its best to promote the movement.<sup>279</sup> While Parliament was discussing the Representation of the People Bill, the SCLWS held its annual meeting in Edinburgh on 24 May 1917, and Lady Frances Balfour insisted that 'if the Government were defeated upon the clauses (women's suffrage), they would be obliged to drop the major

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<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 and 6 July 1916.

<sup>274</sup> Minutes of the Sub-Committee of the Scottish Women's Hospitals, 26 October 1916; Frances Balfour, *Elsie Inglis* (London 1918), pp. 137-161; L. Leneman, *In the Service of Life* (Edinburgh 1994), p. 5ff.

<sup>275</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1916) in *The Coming Day*, June 1916.

<sup>276</sup> Reports of the SCLWS (1915-1917) in *Free Church Suffrage Times*, May 1915; *The Coming Day*, June 1916; *Glasgow Herald*, 25 May 1916 and 1917.

<sup>277</sup> *The Coming Day*, February 1915.

<sup>278</sup> C. L. Rawlins, *The Diaries of William Paterson Paterson* (Edinburgh 1987), p. 128; Eustace Annesley, 'The Response of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland to the First World War' (Unpublished M.Th.thesis 1991), pp. 69-76; S. J. Brown, 'Reform, Reconstruction, Reaction: the Social Vision of Scottish Presbyterianism, c. 1830-c. 1930', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol 44 (1991), pp. 504-507 and 'Responses to the Great War', p. 97.

<sup>279</sup> Report of the SCLWS (1916).

portion of the Bill.<sup>280</sup> The SCLWS worked together with the following societies for the passing of the Bill: the NUWSS, the WFL, the CLWS, and the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association (CUWFA). On 22 May 1917, the SCLWS joined them at a mass meeting which was held in Edinburgh in support of the Bill.<sup>281</sup> Three of the key members of the SCLWS played a leading role on this occasion: Miss S. E. S. Mair, a Vice-President, as chairwoman; Miss Lumsden, a Vice-President, as speaker, and Mr. Rutherford Hill, a member of both the General Council and the Executive Committee, as speaker.<sup>282</sup> At the height of debates over the Bill in Parliament, suffrage organisations comprising the SCLWS, the CUWFA, and the WFL, held an open-air demonstration in Edinburgh on 20 October 1917.<sup>283</sup> Councillor Bruce Lindsay of Edinburgh, a member of the General Council of the SCLWS, presided at the gathering, and 'a large audience' listened to speeches from Miss A. B. Jack of the WFL, Mr. F. Cunninghame of the CUWFA, and Mr. Rutherford Hill of the SCLWS.<sup>284</sup> A resolution was agreed unanimously 'expressing satisfaction that the Woman Suffrage Clause is part of the Representation of the People Bill, and calling upon the Government to pass into law without delay.'<sup>285</sup>

As a result of both the contribution of women to the war effort and the suffrage bodies' consistent campaigning,<sup>286</sup> on 6 February

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<sup>280</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 25 May 1917.

<sup>281</sup> *The Vote*, 1 June 1917.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.* For Mair, Lumsden, and Hill, see Report of the SCLWS (1912-13).

<sup>283</sup> *The Vote*, 26 October 1917.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.* For Lindsay, see Report of the SCLWS (1912-1913).

<sup>285</sup> *The Vote*, 26 October 1917.

<sup>286</sup> *The Parliamentary Debates*, Fifth Series, House of Commons, (London 1917), pp. 1238, 1250, 1255, 1258 and House of Lords, Fifth Series, (London 1917), pp. 826-827; *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the United Free Church* (Edinburgh 1917), p. 311; George M. Reith, *Reminiscences of the United Free* (continued ...)

1918, the Bill became law on receiving Royal Assent, and women over the age of 30 years were enfranchised.<sup>287</sup> Women's suffrage organisations in Scotland celebrated their victory. The Glasgow celebration of the united suffragists was held at Kelvingrove Park on 20 April 1918, with Miss Frances H. Melville, a member of the General Council of the SCLWS, as the speaker, and Miss Lumsden planted the commemoration tree in the park.<sup>288</sup> In the afternoon of the same day, 'a largely attended' gathering met in the Queen's Room, Glasgow, and Miss Chrystal MacMillan, a member of the General Council of the SCLWS, took the chair.<sup>289</sup> The activities of the SCLWS and its members and of Christian suffragists in general, had played a significant role in the success of the women's suffrage movement.

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(continued ...)

*Church General Assembly* (Edinburgh 1933), pp. 200-201; June Purvis, *Women's History: Britain 1850-1945* (London 1995), pp. 307-319.

<sup>287</sup> 'The Representation of the People Bill', *Acts of Parliament* (London 1918).

<sup>288</sup> Minutes of GWSAWS, 22 April 1918, Mitchell Library; *Glasgow Herald*, 22 April 1918.

<sup>289</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 22 April 1918.

## CHAPTER VII CONCLUSION: THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF WOMEN'S VICTORY

This study has sought to illuminate the religious dimension of the women's suffrage movement, focusing particularly upon the positive responses to the campaign by many ministers and members of the Scottish Presbyterian Churches and others.

We have examined the relationship between women's franchise in the Churches and the female political suffrage movement. Prior to the raising of the issue of votes for women in general, Scottish Presbyterian Churches had recognised women's right to vote in the selection of ministers and elders. The Secession Churches initiated this development, the Free Church followed, and after the abolition of patronage within the Established Church in 1874, the practice of female voting in Scottish Presbyterian Churches was general. The connection between the voting rights of women in the Churches and in society was made at the time. At the 24th Annual Meeting of the Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage held in Edinburgh in March 1892, the Rev. Graham of Newhaven expressed it in the following manner:

Christianity was the religion of the race in Britain, and as it enfranchised all, women as well as men, through the truth within the churches, it equally in the coming future would help to enfranchise all within the State.<sup>1</sup>

It has been shown that various developments within the Churches promoted the rights of women: the rivalry between the denominations led to the setting up of various organisations for women; changes in Scottish theology led to an emphasis on the humanity of Christ and to a concern for the whole of society; as part of their social concern, the Churches turned their attention to women's issues, including the issue of voting.

As has been investigated in this study, from the first stage of the women's suffrage movement in 1867, the Churches and their

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the ENSWS (1892), Fawcett Library.

members played a crucial role in the promotion of the cause. Under the leadership of prominent Churchmen such as Calderwood and Lindsay, a number of ministers of religion throughout the country joined the campaign for women's suffrage and worked to add to the numbers of signatures for a petition to be sent to parliament. They also acted as chairmen, speakers, and members of the petitioning committees. At this time, most support for this movement came from the non-Established Churches, mainly the United Presbyterian Church, the Free Church, and the Congregational Churches, including those of the Evangelical Union. After the abolition of patronage in 1874, the Established Church began to move towards support for the cause. Notwithstanding, before 1900, the campaign to enfranchise women had not been successful, but this only stimulated women to find new and more effective methods.

As we have seen, in spite of the tactics of militant suffragettes, many Church leaders remained supportive, for they recognised that many militants were committed Christians. While some Church members saw the suffragettes as un-Christian because of their violent methods, the militants characterised the Church as an anti-Christian institution on account of its refusal to exercise a fundamental principle of the Kingdom of God. The Churches in Scotland also responded to militant action in different ways. This response was made at various levels, the individual, the parochial, the presbyterial, the synodical, and that of the General Assembly. While some criticised the militancy of the women, others expressed sympathy in view of the violence of the police and the force-feeding of prisoners. Several clergymen protested against the brutal treatment of suffragettes by the police, and prayed for those who suffered in prison because of their faith in human equality and righteousness. The enthusiastic support of Churchmen for the franchise issue was appreciated, and in particular, an anonymous contributor to the *Glasgow Herald* said:

It is time that the Church awoke and took its stand with those who fight for justice, liberty, purity, and

truth. ... I offer them (ministers) my thanks, and assure them in days to come, when we are one great brotherhood, free as brothers and sisters to work hand in hand for the common good of young and old, rich and poor, we will not forget that there were some men in the Church who stood by us and cheered us by their comradeship.<sup>2</sup>

In dealing with the theological issue of violence, both those for and those against the measure of women's suffrage in Scotland claimed support from John Knox. The violent suffragettes regarded the reformer as a destroyer of Church buildings, while the non-violent suffragettes saw him as an inciter of violence and thus refused to take the reformer as a role model. Knox was characterised by constitutional suffragists as a soldier who fought for the Kingdom of God and by the anti-suffragists as a statesman. Recent studies, however, have concluded that the Knoxian Reformation was fundamentally based on religious motives, and the support for particular political attitudes cannot be easily extracted from Knox's writings.

The constitutional suffrage organisations also approached 150 presbyteries of the Established and the United Free Churches. In response, most presbyteries took a neutral stance because of the political nature of the issue and the divided state of opinion among Church members. Their position was not due to a conviction about the inferiority of women, or their domestic role, or a belief in the existence of separate spheres appropriate to men and women. But, although a large number of presbyterial courts remained neutral, several individuals and presbyteries were sympathetic to the campaign for women's suffrage, and were conscious of the contribution of women within the Church and within society in general. Edinburgh and Greenock CS presbyteries laid a stepping-stone for action as they resolved to accept deputations from the local suffrage bodies. Controversy on the suffrage cause culminated in the debates of the UFC presbytery of Ardrossan, and the CS presbyteries of Ayr, Glasgow, Irvine, and Peebles. However, Glasgow CS presbytery only registered its

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<sup>2</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 20 March 1913.

approbation without taking further action, and the three courts of Ardrossan, Ayr, and Peebles simply declared themselves in favour of women's suffrage. Irvine presbytery passed two historic resolutions, expressing both sympathy and framing an overture to be transmitted to the General Assembly, but the court eventually resolved not to send its intended overture, following the Whitekirk incident. Even so, the presbyterial courts often regarded the cause of women's suffrage as a moral and religious issue, and not just a matter of politics. Many supporters in the presbyteries hoped that the right of women which had been gained in the Churches, and in the municipal councils, would be extended to the national political arena.

From our study of the foundation and development of the SCLWS, we have seen that it represented a flowering of the religious dimension to the women's suffrage movement. The SCLWS exhibited five significant features: it was an ecumenical organisation with members belonging to various denominations; there was no gender distinction in the appointment of office-bearers; there was no division over methodology, either militant or constitutional; and it formed close links with the Scottish Christian Social Union and the Woman's Guilds. In its public activities, the SCLWS employed two major methods, religious and educational. Its Christian suffrage principles were welcomed by diverse groups. As agents spreading the Christian cause, the members of the SCLWS, clergymen and lay persons, laboured hard to plant their spirit both in other suffrage organisations, especially the NUWSS and the WSPU, and in ecclesiastical bodies. The NUWSS started a campaign to emphasise "the religious aspect of the movement", while the WSPU adopted religious methods such as "an appeal to God". The most striking feature was that due to the development of the Christian suffrage movement, the Churches in due course opened up certain positions to female members. The First World War proved to be a great opportunity for women to show their abilities in various roles in society. As a result, the contribution of women to the war effort, along with the continuing campaign by the various suffrage organisations, were recognised and rewarded by the nation with the franchise being

given to women over the age of 30 years in 1918.

On account of the enthusiastic support for the movement during the period 1867-1918 by many Church leaders and members, women in the UF Church asked their Church for guidance on how to exercise the vote. On 22 February 1918, the Women's General Council of St. George UF Church, Edinburgh, resolved to draw up a petition regarding the desirability of instructing women electors in the meaning and responsibilities of their enfranchisement. The Kirk Session of the Church petitioned the Edinburgh UFC Presbytery which agreed to transmit it to the General Assembly.<sup>3</sup> In May 1918, the General Assembly of the United Free Church took up the petition and discussed it at length.<sup>4</sup> In its support, Dr. John Kelman, UFC minister of St. George's,<sup>5</sup> showed his full appreciation of the women who had been deeply involved in social and religious work:

No one realised more keenly than those new voters the tremendous responsibility which the coming of six million women voters must involve at such a time. The whole field of politics and public questions was new to many of them. They might, indeed, later on become indifferent to the value of the vote, but most certainly they would be enthusiastic in their use of it at first. There was, therefore, the greatest possible need for guidance, not in the sense of party politics, but in the sense of explanation of the issues involved, and the significance for the nation and the world of measures passed at such a time as this. To whom, then, were these women to turn for guidance? Many organisations, such as the Women's International League, were offering guidance from their own point of view, but the women of St. George's had turned instinctively to the Church of their fathers. Surely there was here the chance, by

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<sup>3</sup> Minutes of UFC Kirk Session of St. George's, SRO, CH3/965/61, 7 and 25 March 1918; Minutes of UFC Presbytery of Edinburgh, SRO, CH3/111/46, 12 March 1918.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1918), p. 182; *The Record of the Home and Foreign Mission Work of the United Free Church of Scotland*, July 1918; *Glasgow Herald*, 27 May 1918; Reith, *Reminiscences of the United Free Church General Assembly*, p. 201.

<sup>5</sup> *DSCHT*, p. 453.

responding to their appeal, of binding them to the Church with a new loyalty and devotion. What they wanted was the providing of information as to general principles and procedure, and the issuing of appeals calling the attention of the new electors to their new responsibilities and opportunities.<sup>6</sup>

Although Dr. Archibald Henderson, the Principal Clerk, strongly objected to this because he disapproved of ecclesiastical interference in either home or foreign policy, Mr. Robert Forgan proposed a motion that this matter should be referred to the Home Mission Committee for consideration in conference with the Women's Home Mission Committee. He also proposed that, if possible, they should authorise the employment of one or more temporary women agents for the purpose of female voter education. This motion was carried by a majority, although four members of the House, including Henderson, dissented.<sup>7</sup> Shortly afterwards, the Home Mission Committee and the Women's Home Mission Committee met together and resolved that the existing suffrage societies would be adequate for the education of new electors, on the grounds that the members of the Church within these bodies could act effectively. It was also decided that a leaflet in relation to the use of the political franchise should be prepared and circulated.<sup>8</sup> In consequence, the significance of the resolution was the way in which the Church officially and positively recognised the religious character of women's suffrage and the positive contribution of the movement in general.

In conclusion, it can be seen that while the Scottish Presbyterian Churches at an official level remained neutral, both ministers and members supported the cause in a variety of important ways and contributed significantly to the success of the campaign.

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<sup>6</sup> *Proceedings*, p. 182.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183-185.

<sup>8</sup> Report of the Home Mission and Church Extension Committee, p. 7 and Report of Women's Home Mission Committee, p. 7, *Reports to the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1919).

I finish this study with a suffrage hymn written by Miss K. M. Loudon, Hon. Secretary of the ENSWS, which expresses the religious dimension of the movement:<sup>9</sup>

To the God of our salvation, hearts and voices let us  
raise,  
At his feet with deep thanksgiving, lay the tribute of  
our praise,  
Now at last is freedom won, praise the Lord for all  
his goodness,  
For the great things he has done.

Fifty years of toil and conflict, fifty years of  
strain and stress,  
Now the crown of good success, but in this our day of  
triumph,  
Be the guerdon that we ask, strength for wider, fuller  
service,  
Wisdom for our greater task.

Christ, of men the Lord and Lover, Son of Mary, Son of  
God,  
Be Thou still our guide and leader, in the path  
thyself hast trod,  
Thou who loved Jerusalem, to our country make us true,  
fit us, body, soul, and spirit,  
For the work we have to do. Amen.

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<sup>9</sup> Miscellaneous Suffrage Material, Acc 4546, National Library of Scotland. For Loudon, see Annual Report of the ENSWS (1913), Fawcett Library.

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