

**LIFE OF THE RIGHT REVEREND  
GEORGE GLEIG, BISHOP OF  
BRECHIN, AND PRIMUS OF THE  
SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
PP. 179-392**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649633654

Life of the Right Reverend George Gleig, Bishop of Brechin, and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, pp. 179-392 by William Walker

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WILLIAM WALKER**

**LIFE OF THE RIGHT REVEREND  
GEORGE GLEIG, BISHOP OF  
BRECHIN, AND PRIMUS OF THE  
SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH, PP. 179-392**



# LIFE

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND GEORGE GLEIG,

LL.D., F.S.S.A.,

BISHOP OF BRECHIN,

AND

PRIMUS OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

*Dedicated to his Son,*

THE REVEREND G. R. GLEIG, M.A.,

LATE CHAPLAIN-GENERAL OF THE FORCES.

BY

THE REV. WILLIAM WALKER, M.A.,

MONYMUSK.

"The bush burned with fire; and the bush was not consumed."  
Exodus iii. 2.



EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS,

1878,

210. o. 249.

## P R E F A C E.

As the active part of the long lives of Bishops Jolly and Gleig very nearly coincided in point of time, it is impossible, in writing separate memoirs of the two, to avoid some repetition, especially towards the close of the period, when both of them took a prominent part in Church affairs. It is hoped, however, that there will not be found in this memoir much unnecessary repetition, or, indeed, much matter of any sort which is not of value for the illustration of the Bishop's character, and the Church history of the period. The materials, however, which have been at the Writer's disposal for the preparation of this memoir have been rather abundant; and it is only too possible that some of them may not have been fully sifted and compressed. In addition to the MS. letters and papers made use of in preparing the memoir of Bishop Jolly, the Writer has had access to the following unpublished documents:—

1. The Minute Books of the diocese of Brechin—obligingly submitted to his inspection by the Rev. James Crabb, Synod Clerk of the diocese, and containing, besides information on administrative details, a series of long and very characteristic letters of Bishop Gleig, addressed to his clergy, and read at their "annual meeting."

2. A packet of Bishop Gleig's letters, relating to the affairs of one of the congregations of his diocese (Drumlithie) during a troubled and unsettled period—for the use of which packet the Writer is indebted to the kindness of the Rev. James Gammack, Drumlithie.

3. A series of interesting letters, chiefly regarding incidents in the earlier and later periods of Bishop Gleig's life, written during the preparation of this memoir by the Bishop's distinguished son, the late Chaplain-General of the Forces, in reply to applications for information made to him by the Writer. Mr Gleig invariably told promptly all that he knew; but he manifested a scrupulous anxiety to avoid the risk of communicating a bias to the work. When requested, in order to ensure greater accuracy, to revise the proof sheets of the memoir as it passed through the press, he declined, on this ground, to look at more than the slips which contained the information supplied by himself.

For the middle portion of the life, in addition to MS. authorities, there exist excellent materials in the multitude of publications—letters, articles, reviews, sermons, charges, &c., which Bishop Gleig was continually putting forth, and in which it is easy to read the whole mind and heart of such an open and out-spoken writer.

# BISHOP GLEIG.

## CHAPTER I.—1753-1786.

*Bishop Walker on Bishops Jolly and Gleig—What the Two Men had in Common—How they Differed—Early Life of Gleig—Arbuthnot School—King's College, Aberdeen—Proposal to make him a Professor—Early Jacobitism—Reads for Orders—Is Ordained and Settled at Pittenweem—Circumstances of the Charge—Becomes a Contributor to several London Periodicals—Defends Scotch Bishops in "Gentleman's Magazine"—Criticises Bishop Skinner's Consecration Sermon—Consequences.*

BISHOP WALKER, who knew both men intimately, expressed his "astonishment" that two "such men as George Gleig and Alexander Jolly, who would have reflected credit on the most splendid Church Establishment," should have "taken their lot in" such "a Society" as the Episcopal Church of Scotland, when "depressed beyond the hope of rising." The fact he thought "creditable to the Church, and creditable to them."

It is natural to link together the names and lives of these two eminent men, for the reasons which Bishop Walker assigns\* (not altogether with strict accuracy), and for others. Both were born in the Stonehaven district, and nearly at the same time. Both became Aberdeen

\* See postea p. 3, note †



students and graduates. Both took orders in a Church which was, at the time, all but extinguished by persecution; both became, and for many years continued, influential rulers in it; both lived to a great age, and died about the same time. Lives that had, ecclesiastically, so much in common, if truly told, and read consecutively, cannot fail to throw much light on the Church history of the period, especially as the men, though agreeing substantially in principle, yet differed greatly in their characters, and in the nature of the influence which they wielded; and often looked at events from a different stand-point.

The diversity in the men ought to be borne in mind by the reader, and it may be well to note here the leading characteristics of both. Readers of Bishop Jolly's memoir can have no doubt as to "what manner of man" that consistent Christian was from first to last! From his earliest days he was ever the same, through school, college, tutorship, priesthood, and episcopate, till that last (St Peter's) morning, when, with hands crossed on his breast, and "alone" in his two-storey house, "with God and good Angels," he breathed out his saintly soul in prayer—ever the same humble, gentle, retiring, primitively pious, and devout man of God, "venerable and venerated even in his youth," and thus even in retirement like "the silent finger" of the cathedral spire, "pointing to Heaven"—exerting incalculable influence for good; yet, if anything, *too* silent, and *too* retiring; too much of a mere student, and recluse; "passing his days" too much "among the dead"; too much devoted to mere receptive reading; deficient in energy, initiative, knowledge of the world, and adaptability; living in the past, rather than in the present; a primitive father "born out of due time."

The elder of the two, George Gleig, will be found to be also a very good and consistent, but yet a decidedly different man; less conspicuous (as which of his contemporaries was not!) for the higher graces of character, especially "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit;" less perfect as a pattern of primitive piety and devotion, and a centre of moral influence; but, in other respects, undoubtedly the superior of his saintly brother; a man of more commanding talent, and versatile powers; of wider mental sympathies, and more varied culture; possessed also of more energy and decision of character; of greater knowledge of the world, and readier discernment of the signs and needs of the time; in short, not only a divine, but a philosopher and a critic; a man of great general literary power and culture; master of a clear and forcible English style; "a robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries."

The writer is happy to be able to present the early life of Bishop Gleig, to a great extent, in the words\* of his distinguished son, the late Chaplain-General to the Forces—the heir of his literary power and fame.

"George Gleig was born at Boghall," in the parish of Arbuthnot, about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Stonehaven, "on the 12th of May 1753. He received his early education at the School of Arbuthnot,† and was much noticed by the eccentric old Viscount, whose sons were his class-fellows and companions. He was always head of his class; and went at a very early age—I do not know exactly, but believe at about 13—to King's College, Aberdeen. It was the custom in those days for a Professor who taught

\* In a private communication to the writer.

† If, as Bishop Walker says, he was at Stonehaven School with Alexander Jolly, it must have been only for a short time preparatory to entering the University.

a class, while in the Junior Department of Latin or Humanity, to carry it on through Greek, Logic, Mathematics, and Metaphysics. My father early established such a reputation for himself, that the Professor, when occasionally obliged to absent himself, entrusted the care of the class to young Gleig." This may sound strange in the ears of Aberdeen students of the present day ; but the latter fact, Gleig's being occasionally entrusted with the care of the class, sufficiently attests his high academical standing. But of this we have abundant other proofs. " His career was one of the most brilliant on record. His scholarship was of a high order ; and in Mathematics, and the Moral and Physical Sciences, he carried off the first prizes."\* Nor was the University slow to recognise the merits of her gifted son. " There is good reason to believe that Mr Gleig, after taking his degree, might have aspired (in good hope) to the office of Assistant Professor, with the certainty of succeeding to the first chair which should fall vacant. In that case, however, it would have been necessary for him to subscribe to the Confession of Faith of the Established Church of Scotland, and to take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration."†

In the notice of Mr Gleig's life in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, it is said that he " was selected, while yet an undergraduate, to assist Professor Skene in the instruction of his class." No doubt it was in Professor Skene's class that his curriculum was passed ; and it was probably as assistant and successor to Professor Skene that it was proposed to continue him at the University. The proposal could not be entertained ; but, naturally, it was one that greatly flattered and pleased the youthful graduate.

\* See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article George Gleig.

† *Ibid.*