

## ECCLESIASTICAL GLASGOW IN PRE-REFORMATION TIMES.

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GLASGOW, as a city, has its roots in the Christian Church. The stream known as the "Mellindonor" (now Molindinar, and entirely covered over) and the sloping green banks on its sides were inducing factors leading St. Ninian, ere the Romans had left Britain to consecrate with missionary zeal a Christian cemetery here. This cemetery, with its little chapel among the heather, was the nucleus from which Glasgow sprang. In the sixth century the patron saint—St. Kentigern, known by his endearing appellation St. Mungo—is found re-establishing Christianity on the earlier foundation. St. Mungo was a contemporary of St. Columba, and the two are said to have met at the Molindinar, and the great city "owes its existence to the earthen rath and wattled church which St. Kentigern erected by the Mellindonor stream, beside the old cemetery of St. Ninian."

For five hundred years thereafter records are wanting, and we are brought down to the twelfth century, the reign of David I. The West of Scotland became for several hundred years, between the death of St. Kentigern and the accession of King Malcolm Ceanmore, a prey to invading Picts, Danes,

Scots, and Saxons. But the old population remained, and whenever settled Government was assured the Christian Church again raised its head. Indeed, its influence was instrumental in establishing a more peaceful state.

King David caused inquiry to be made into the earlier possessions of the See, and a Cathedral was raised and dedicated to St. Kentigern. Its consecration took place upon 7th July, 1136. Of this building nothing remains above ground. But about sixty years after a second Cathedral was erected upon the site of the former, during the episcopate of Bishop Ioscelin, and was dedicated in 1197. Of it some relics are still visible.

The Church as a living, active force in early Glasgow is thus clearly indicated. It brought cathedral builders here and collected funds for the pious work. These were expended as they came in, and, as Scotland was a poor country with a comparatively small population, the building went on by fits and starts for upwards of three hundred years.

One of the early bishops, Herbert, who was consecrated in 1147, is notable for having caused to be written a "Life of St. Kentigern," of which unfortunately, only a fragment survives. He also made researches into the past history of the See, and devoted attention to the constitution of the Cathedral chapter, which he based on that of Sarum.

The bishops of Glasgow are, with few exceptions, men who played an important part in the history of the country. As prelates and as lords of barony and regality they occupied a high position locally,

and through the favour of the successive Kings of Scotland, and in virtue of their education and abilities, they were trusted advisers holding in many cases high administrative offices in the realm. The ecclesiastical history of Glasgow in pre-Reformation times centres in the Cathedral and its bishops. There were no monasteries, properly so-called, here. The Dominicans or Black-friars had a friary in High Street, on the east side, and west of that street were situated the house and garden of the Franciscans or Grey-friars. These latter arrived towards the end of the fifteenth century, and although they belonged to the Observantine or Reformed branch of the Order, yet they were not successful in preventing the breaking out of the storm which in a few years swept them and the Dominicans away.

But some words must be said regarding the pre-Reformation Church in Glasgow as a patriotic and enlightening asset. In the War of Independence the clergy sided with Bruce, and in a special manner Robert Wischart, Bishop of Glasgow (1271-1316), known as the warrior bishop, championed the popular cause, and he was not without local followers in this contest. It is safe to say that ecclesiastical support in the West of Scotland contributed largely to the successful issue of the struggle. In difficult circumstances, created in great part by the murder of John Comyn, the clergy followed the lead of Bishop Wischart, and thus religious sanction, which counted for much, was given to the fight for freedom.

Bishop Walter Wardlaw, who ruled the diocese for twenty years, at the end of the fourteenth

century, was Secretary to King David II., and had been a Lecturer on Philosophy in the University of Paris. As Scotland adhered to the Anti-Pope during the great Schism, he was created a cardinal by Clement VII. in 1383. He and Cardinal David Beaton are the only Scottish cardinals known to history in pre-Reformation times.

Another prominent prelate who did much to increase the prestige of the little city was Bishop William Turnbull (1447-1454). He obtained from King James II., who was an honorary canon of the Cathedral, a grant of the city and barony of Glasgow, and lands of Bishop's Forest in pure regality, thus becoming as a secular noble still more powerful within his diocese. This additional power and influence he used to good purpose for the advancement of the city, both in learning and commerce. Turnbull, as is well known, procured the Bull of Nicholas V. (7th January, 1451) founding the University.

From these examples, taken at random, the conclusion may be drawn that the protection and fostering care of a succession of powerful ecclesiastics, many of them statesmen in high office, were of great value to the community. It should be noted as an indication of the increasing dignity and importance of the See that during the episcopate of Robert Blacader (1483-1508) Glasgow was raised to the dignity of a Metropolitan church, and he became archbishop, with the Bishops of Dunkeld, Dunblane, Galloway, and Lismore (Argyll) as suffragans. At this period the See was, in wealth and dignity, at its highest. The chapter numbered

thirty-three members, being the largest in Scotland. Each prebendary had a separate prebend besides his share, as a canon, of the Cathedral in the common estate. Some fifty years afterwards the fact that there were now two archiepiscopal Sees in Scotland led to disgraceful scenes in the Cathedral of Glasgow.

The sixteenth century ushers in the coming of the Reformation. But the ecclesiastical activity in Glasgow at that time gave little indication of the impending collapse of the old Church. In the fifteenth century there was throughout Scotland a revival in church building, but it did not extend to Glasgow. At the beginning of the following century, however, two religious foundations were instituted. The first was a hospital and chaplainry, founded by Roland Blacader, Sub-Dean of Glasgow, and a nephew of Archbishop Blacader. Minute details of the provisions of the foundation are preserved, and are set forth in Renwick's and Lindsay's "History of Glasgow." The hospital, situated outside the North Port of the city, is described as "a house of the poor and indigent casually coming thereto." The second was the collegiate foundation on the south side of St. Tenew's-gate (now Tron-gate), dedicated to the Virgin Mary and to her mother, St. Anne. Its founder was James Houstoun, Sub-Dean of Glasgow from 1527 till 1551. This was a very important gift to the Church, and the building must have been spacious, as its full equipment by 1548 consisted of a provost, eleven canons or prebendaries, and three choristers.

But this religious zeal came too late, and little

more than ten years after the completion of this foundation the Protestant Reformation overturned the Roman Church in Scotland. One of the immediate effects was a diminution of the importance and outward prosperity of Glasgow. A large source of its wealth had been connected with the Church and its ceremonial observances, and after the Reformation there remained at first nothing to take its place. The numerous and well-appointed manses of the beneficed clergy and the houses of the Dominicans and Franciscans were in the neighbourhood of the Cathedral. With the change of religion the great majority of the clergy and friars took their departure or were expelled. Their habitations were left deserted, and thus one of the most flourishing and pleasant quarters of the town soon became ruinous.

But our citizens did not sit still under this temporary depression. Action was taken, measures were devised to restore the trade of the town. A commission was appointed by Act of the Scottish Parliament, and this resulted in bringing back in some measure the commercial importance of the north part of the city, and by and by other sources were developed, so that in the advancing progress of the country Glasgow had its full share.