

Reverend John Tulloch

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In the Eastern Cemetery of St Andrews, nestled below the ruins of the ancient cathedral and those of the equally ancient Augustinian priory, lies the grave of the Reverend John Tulloch (1823 – 1886). The headstone is not a subtle or inconspicuous one but this is perhaps fitting as it marks the resting place of one of the foremost theologians of his day, a personal favourite of Queen Victoria, and the Principal of St Mary's College of the University of St Andrews and Senior Principal of that university. John Tulloch was born near the small village of Dron, Perthshire and was the elder of twin sons of William Weir Tulloch and Agnes Faichney. Agnes Faichney, born 1775 in Dunfermline, was the daughter of Christian McNaughton and George Faichney. Based on a study of the surviving baptismal records for the approximate time of Daniel McNaughton's birth, it is probable that Christian's father Daniel was born in the parish of Kenmore on Lochtayside – the heartland of the clan.

John Tulloch's father, William Weir Tulloch, was also a minister in the Church of Scotland but resigned his post in dramatic fashion when – fearing prosecution for forgery – he embarked on a ship for America. Sadly, the ship was never seen again and it is believed that it foundered with all hands in a terrible storm on or about the night of December 19th 1844. This early family misfortune may have ended the prospects of a less able and determined man, but by this time John Tulloch was already riding high and would continue to rise higher. He began his education at the grammar school in Perth, before continuing his studies at Madras College in St Andrews. From here he would enter the University of St Andrews as a student in the Faculty of Arts in 1838 at the age of fifteen. After graduating from his arts course, Tulloch entered St Mary's College where he would spend the next two years studying theology with an eye to entering the ministry of the church. It is known that in 1840, he took part in a student disturbance. The details

of this incident are scanty but this time was a time of great social and religious upheaval in Scotland as the church was approaching a crisis point which would – in 1843 – see the split between the established church and what would become the Free Church of Scotland.

Interestingly, John Tulloch's near contemporary at St Andrews and possible cousin, Donald McNaughton Stewart, would find himself expelled from the university in 1843 as a result of student protests over the election of the Rector of the University. Student disturbances aside, John Tulloch proved himself an extremely able student and won the Gray prize for theology in 1842 and was – for the years 1842 and 1843 – the holder of a Garvie bursary.

Ordained by the presbytery of Perth in 1844, John Tulloch was appointed minister of the parish of St Paul's in Dundee where he served until his translation to the parish of Kettins in Angus in 1849. It was here that he would spend the next five years of his parish ministry. Tulloch married Jane Ann Sophia Hindmarsh in 1845 in Jersey and they would go on to have a family of thirteen children. The first two were born in Dundee and the next four were born in Kettins. In 1854, at the age of only thirty-one, John Tulloch was appointed Principal of St Mary's College in St Andrews. He was awarded a Doctorate of Divinity soon after by the university on the recommendation of Sir David Brewster, the Principal of the United College of St Salvator and St Leonard and Senior Principal of the University. Within a few years, Tulloch would succeed Brewster as Senior Principal. It was the custom



of the time that the longest serving Principal would also serve as Senior Principal. Brewster's resignation meant that Tulloch became the longest serving Principal despite having been in post just a few years. It should be noted here that when John Tulloch was appointed to the vacant position of Principal of St Mary's College, he narrowly defeated Reverend Allan McNaughton, minister of Lesmahagow whose ancestors had long been resident in the parish of Kenmore. In fact, one branch of the family was known to have been resident in the early 1600s in the hamlet of Croftmartaig. This is exactly the place that Daniel McNaughton – the ancestor of Reverend John Tulloch – may have been born in 1694. Though there is a gap of nearly hundred years there is every chance that the family may have been there throughout the 1600s. It is an intriguing possibility that John Tulloch and Allan McNaughton may have been distant cousins. In July 1858 Tulloch was appointed to go to Paris to establish a Presbyterian church there for the use of

Scottish residents and visitors in that city. In July 1859, he was appointed one of Her Majesty's Chaplains-in-Ordinary and became a depute-clerk of the General Assembly in 1862. He was chosen to be a Scottish Commissioner under the Education Act 1872. In 1875, Tulloch was appointed principal clerk to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and was elected Moderator of that body in 1878. Later in 1878, under the auspices of Dean Stanley, John Tulloch conducted a service in Westminster Abbey. In 1882, he was appointed Dean of the Chapel Royal and Dean of the Order of the Thistle. In 1879, John Tulloch was awarded an LL.D. by the University of Glasgow and was awarded the same honour by the University of Edinburgh in 1884.



A portrait of Tulloch, presented at the General Assembly in 1880, is still to be found in St Mary's College and another was especially commissioned from Sir George Reid on the instructions of Queen Victoria of whom Tulloch was a special favourite and confidant and the Queen described Tulloch as 'a valued, wise friend'. Reid's portrait of Tulloch is still a part of the Royal Art Collection and – in fact – John Tulloch's great-great-granddaughter Margaret Boden (a renowned portrait artist) was invited by the present Queen to see the bust of the Reverend John Tulloch in Balmoral. In a twist of fate, Margaret Boden had been commissioned several times to paint portraits of the Queen's beloved corgies. Margaret's husband Leonard Boden painted numerous portraits of the Queen and other members of the royal family although it

is known that the Bodens were very much a team and so it is possible Margaret also worked on the royal portraits. The last word on John Tulloch should, perhaps, be the tribute paid to him in the *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* – "The most distinguished churchman of his time, none was more trusted in the Councils of the General Assembly. His fine presence, resonant voice, natural eloquence, kindly demeanour, frank independence, and abundant commonsense gave him a universal popularity."