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*Alex. W. Seod*

*Engraved by J. M. Wilson, Philadelphia*

ALEXANDER McLEOD, D.D., was the first pastor of the church—a church whose pulpit has never been vacant for nearly sixty-one years. Dr. McLeod was born in the Island of Mull, Scotland, June 12, 1774. The family to which he belonged had embraced the principles of the Reformation from the earliest times. His father, and maternal grandfather, were ministers of the church of Scotland; and the parish of his father, Rev. Niel McLeod, embraced the famous Island of Ioua, where Columba taught the pure gospel of God more than twelve centuries before. A few months before the birth of Alexander, the famous Dr. Johnson visited the house of his father, during his tour to the Hebrides, and pronounced him the “clearest-headed man in the Highlands.” The earliest recollection which Dr. McLeod had of his father was his witnessing the dispensation of the Lord’s Supper by him to a large assembly in the open air; and the dining together after the exercises of Mouday of several clergymen and others in the house. At dinner, the “Cameronians,” a name given to Reformed Presbyterians at that day and since, were made the subject of conversation. “Who are the Cameronians? are they Presbyterians?” inquired Alexander from his father. “Yes, my son,” was the father’s answer; “the best kind of Presbyterians.” Who can tell what influence this answer had upon all the subsequent life of the boy and man. From his earliest years he gave evidence of a change of heart, and was conscious of an earnest desire to preach the Gospel. Having been deprived by death of both his pious parents, in very early life he was thrown very much on his own resources. He had received the elements of an excellent classical education at home, and resolved to push his fortune in the new world.

In the year 1792 he emigrated by way of Liverpool to the United States, landing at New York, and passed immediately to Schenectady. He was then but eighteen years of age. Some time after this he commenced instruction in the classics, and on the opening of Union College, he entered an advanced class, and was graduated with honor in 1798. Prior to this he had joined the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and on the 24th of June, 1799, was licensed by Presbytery to preach the everlasting gospel, at Coldenham, New York. In 1801 he was ordained and installed in the church in New York.

In the year 1802, Mr. McLeod commenced as an author by publishing his “Negro Slavery Unjustifiable.” A tenth edition of this discourse has recently been printed by order of his grandson, Alexander McLeod, Esq., of the New York Legislature, as a “Tract for the times.” This was followed in 1803 by his “Messiah Governor of the Nations,” and in 1816, by the “Ecclesiastical Catechism,” “The Gospel Ministry,” the “Lectures on the Prophecies,” “Sermons on the War,” and “Discourses on the Life and Power of True Godliness.” These are all elaborate productions. They are still reprinted as a part of the staple religious literature of the day, and by them, their author, “though dead, yet speaks to men.” This was the most active period of Dr. McLeod’s most active life, and while he was employing his pen for the public benefit, all his pulpit and parochial duties were energetically and faithfully discharged. Though attached to his own church, and never acting inconsistently with her profession, he co-operated with good men of every name. He was acknowledged as standing in the front rank with the polemics, the literary men, and the pulpit orators of his day.

On the 16th September, 1805, Dr. McLeod was united in marriage to Miss Marry Anne Agnew, daughter of John Agnew, Esq., of New York. She was a help-met to her husband, survived him for several years, and died a mother in Israel prepared for glory. But three of their numerous offspring are now surviving.

In 1808, the degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred upon him by the “University of Vermont,” in Middlebury. An honorary diploma of M.D. was also offered him by the “College of Physicians and Surgeons” in New York. This, however, he declined, lest, as he said, “he might be led away from his proper work.” Various efforts were also made to induce him to change his ecclesiastical relations.

In 1812, he received a formal call to the Reformed Dutch Church in Garden street, New York, and in 1813 to the First Presbyterian church, Wall street, New York. In 1816 a call from the Presbyterian church in Rutgers

street, was proposed. He, however, declined allowing it to be prosecuted, but agreed to furnish a supply for some Sabbaths. Here he preached the "Sermons on True Godliness," and dedicated them to his friend, Col. Henry Rutgers, of that church. In 1812 he was elected Vice President of the College of New Jersey; and at a subsequent period, along with his particular friends, Rev. Dr. S. B. Wylie, of Philadelphia, and Dr. J. B. Romeyn, of New York, he was invited to take charge of Dickinson College, Pa. All these, and others less directly tendered, he felt it his duty to decline. He would not leave his own church, nor do anything that would call him away from pulpit duty.

In 1816, Dr. McLeod went to Washington to aid in preparing the way for the organization of the American Colonization Society. The constitution of that society he wrote, and in its organization he was the prime mover. In the ultimate success of the plan he never had a doubt. In 1830 he visited Europe, where he received a cordial welcome. While absent, he was appointed Editor of a periodical, established by General Synod, and also Professor of Theology in the Seminary of the Church. But partially improved in health by the voyage, he returned to New York. His beloved and faithful people offer him a colleague. His son is chosen and installed. His own work is now done, and in peace and hope he renders up his mortal life. He died of disease of the heart, on the 17th of February, 1833, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, and the thirty-fourth of his ministry. His remains repose in Greenwood Cemetery, where his congregation have erected a becoming monument.

The Rev. JOHN N. McLEOD, D.D., Professor of Didactic and Practical Theology, in the Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church is the present pastor.