

“Father McCulloch” (Special publication for the month of October)

Rev. & Dr. Thomas McCulloch, Scots Presbyterian minister, educator and political reformer is unfortunately among the least recognized educator and reformer in the list of great nineteenth century of Canadians. Yet our little town of Pictou, Nova Scotia holds his memory and legacy dear to our hearts. If it were not for a desperate call for ministers in Prince Edward Island that one summer of 1803, we would Pictou and Canada would have received the education and mind of the man who aided in the becoming of Pictou.

Rev. Thomas McCulloch was not only the beloved teacher and minister of Pictou, but also a beloved and respected father. His son, William McCulloch had fortunately written a biography of his father titled “The Life of Thomas McCulloch, D.D.” in 1920, which continues to be the most appreciated source of information and genealogy of the McCulloch family.

Within it, William McCulloch’s words are soft and emotional when describing his beloved father’s last moments, saying...

At the fourth day (of the month) on Saturday morning, I was at his bedside; he told me that he was quite easy, and free from pain, and in a few minutes then he relapsed into the same quiet sleep from which he had just been aroused, and slept calmly for some hours that I flattered myself with the idea that he must be recovering, and felt almost sorry that my mother had been sent for that moment. About nine o’clock ... he requested me to call my sister and aunt to prayers. When they entered the room he raised himself, upon his elbow, and acknowledged God’s goodness, to himself particularly in sparing him to another day, but when he came to supplicate for the absent members of the family, his voice failed in a choke and he sank down overwhelmed upon the pillow. – During the few bewildering minutes which followed I had my left hand upon my father’s neck, and his right hand which was drawn up near his face, was clasped in mine. As the sound of the evening gun fell upon the ear of Mr. Cameron (who had been present in prayer) stopped praying and I felt my father’s last breath pass gently over my hand ...

You know what we have lost, and can readily conceive the nature of our feelings at this moment. – The countenance of my father after death exhibited an expression of perfect satisfaction of which words cannot convey any idea. It seemed as if the spirit in passing away had left upon the features the impress of its own feelings, strongly reminding the spectator of the declaration, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.”



Excerpt taken from: McCulloch, William. *The Life of Thomas McCulloch D.D.* Halifax: Dalhousie, 1920. (Citation: Chapter XVI, pg. 193.)

McCulloch House Museum and Genealogy Centre pays our respects to Rev. Thomas McCulloch on the month of his death that was recorded to be in the family's Halifax home near Dalhousie in 1843.