

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES  
REV. EVANDER M<sup>c</sup>NAIR, D.D.

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*Yours in the Love & Service of  
our Lord & Master.*

*Evander McVain*



MEMORIAL ADDRESSES

ON THE

**Life and Character**

OF

REV. EVANDER M<sup>C</sup>NAIR, D. D.

DELIVERED AT

SARDIS CHURCH, CUMBERLAND COUNTY, N. C.,

MAY 28, 1886.

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## M I N U T E S.

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From the Minutes of the One Hundred and Forty-fifth Session of the PRESBYTERY OF FAYETTEVILLE. Held at LUMBER BRIDGE CHURCH, ROBESON COUNTY, N. C., April 7th to 10th, 1886:

“The death of REV. EVANDER McNAIR, D. D., was solemnly announced by the stated clerk, who read a short biographical sketch of his life and labors, and on motion said paper was referred to the following committee, viz.: Rev. H. G. Hill, D. D., and Rev. Joseph Evans. This committee reported—

*1st.* That Presbytery approve of a memorial service being had in connection with DR. McNAIR's death, at Sardis Church, on Friday and Saturday before the fifth Sabbath of May, 1886.

*2nd.* That memorial services be held by the Presbytery. . . . When Dr. McKay read a valuable paper in reference to the life and labors of DR. McNAIR, and appropriate addresses were made by other brethren, where-

upon, on motion, Dr. McKay was requested to furnish the paper read by him to the *North Carolina Presbyterian and Christian Observer* for publication, as soon as practicable after the contemplated memorial services to be held at Sardis Church."

SARDIS CHURCH, Cumberland County, N. C.,

*May 28th, 1886.*

The pastor, Rev. D. D. McBryde, presiding. Services were introduced with prayer by the Rev. David Fairley.

Addresses on the life, labors and death of the REV. EVANDER McNAIR, D. D.

# A D D R E S S

OF

REV. N. MCKAY, D. D.

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IT is a matter of regret, that, in the press of professional duties and the multiplicity of cares, I have not prepared a more elaborate, comprehensive and complete sketch of the life of Dr. McNAIR, his character and work. What I now present, however, is not in the spirit of a cold ceremonial observance; it is from a heart deeply touched by the loss of a bosom companion, leading me to vie with brethren and friends present in spreading laurels upon his tomb, in expressions of honor for his memory, and appreciation of his services to the Church and to the world. If a stoical effort to suppress the natural emotions of affection and gratitude fails, or if I should seem to heighten one beautiful color of his character, to soften in the slightest degree the manly instincts of his nature, or in any way exaggerate

any one of the graces of his symmetrical Christian character, for such weakness and defects, this assemblage will find sufficient apology in the fact that, from my boyhood to the day of his death, Dr. McNair was my cherished friend; leaving me a priceless legacy in an unbroken correspondence from my college days to a few weeks before his death,—a correspondence, opening with a prayer for my success and closing with a benediction on my ministerial labors of forty-five years and more, in which, on one occasion, he says, “I write twice, thrice, and sometimes four times to your once; but you seem to take pride and pleasure in drawing your old letters and documents on me, as a set-off to your derelictions and short-comings. I am sorry you have them yet; they will not bear reading now;” again he writes: “You *admit* you are my debtor in all respects save love. I doubt, if the balance was nicely poised, whether you could congratulate yourself or feel so complaisant on that *point*. I judge the tree by its fruit, and professions by acts; applying these tests, I submit the matter for your judgment. I will not quarrel with you, however, as our friendship has run through so many years without interruption. Let there be no strife now, for we be brethren, and I



yield you the point for which you contend." Shortly before his death he writes: "I have done my share of visiting you; it has all been on one side; and while I feel a tender regard and cherish as kind feelings for you as ever I did, it is out of my power to visit you. God bless you in all your interests. May your bow long abide in strength, and when your work is done may you receive the welcome plaudit, '*Well done, faithful servant.*'" Without any disparagement of the living or the dead; on the contrary, with profound reverence for the memory of the latter, and unfeigned love for the former, we assert that the history of the Presbyterian Church in Central Carolina, in the Cape Fear region, furnishes no instance in the death of her clergy to justify an assemblage like this, and can furnish no such instance in the future. Never again will a cluster of a dozen or more churches be invited to meet, in this section, to testify their respect and affection for the memory of a preacher who has ministered to them all, and to many of them at the same time, in holy things. We can anticipate no such retrograde movement in the church as would place us and our descendants where our fathers were fifty-five years ago. Our meeting, then, is without a precedent, and cannot be such to our church and sec-

tion in coming centuries. We are here, not for a sad or funeral service, but to dwell with gratitude and pleasure upon the character and services of one whom the aged have loved and honored for more than half a century, and whose name the young revere and cherish as a household word. Nay, more, our meeting is a verification of the inspired truth, that "the memory of the just is blessed," and that the "name of the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Dr. McNAIR was born in Robeson County, N. C., the 7th of April, 1811. He was the son of Roderick and Mary McNair. His father was a native of Argyleshire, Scotland; came to this country with his father, John McNair, and a younger sister, in 1770, when only five years of age. His mother's maiden name was Mary McGill, a native of Robeson County. Their family consisted of eight children, five daughters and three sons. Evander was the seventh child, one brother older, one younger, Dr. Neill McNair, who died in 1863. All the family had "passed over the river" before him, except John McNair, Esq. His father died in April, 1839, aged seventy-six. His mother passed away in April, 1856. His ancestors were Presbyterians,

and he was reared by godly parents, his father an honored Ruling Elder in Centre Church. Dr. McNair was the nephew of the Rev. Malcolm McNair, one of the nine clerical members set off by the Synod of the Carolinas to form the Presbytery of Fayetteville, preliminary to the formation of the Synod of North Carolina. It is a privilege, nay more, a pious duty, to keep fresh the memory of these sleeping fathers; and any public demonstration on the part of the Presbytery of Fayetteville would be sadly deficient, that did not bring prominently to the front the names of Samuel Stanford, Robert Tate, William L. Turner, Malcolm McNair, Murdock McMillan, John McIntyre, William B. Maroney, Allan McDougald, and William Peacock. If time and the occasion permitted, it would be pleasant to dwell upon the character and services of the original members of Presbytery, especially of McDougald, my preacher and predecessor; of McMillan, my teacher, and of the venerable McIntyre and "Father Tate," both of whom I knew so well, and revered and loved so much.

There is another epoch, however, in the history of Presbyterianism in our section that was of much more personal interest to Malcolm McNair than any part

he may have had in the organization of the Presbytery of Fayetteville. It was the scene witnessed on the 27th of March, 1801, at old Barbecue Church, when he, with six other young men, were licensed by the mother Presbytery of Orange to preach the Gospel. Eighty-five years and more have elapsed, and we record no similar event as the licensure, at one time, of seven young men, and such men as Malcolm McNair, Murdock McMillan, Murdock Murphy, Duncan Brown, John Matthews, Hugh Shaw and Ezekiel Currie. These all had much of the spirit of Christ. Shaw, Matthews, Brown and McNair all made missionary tours in "the far West," even to the Natchez country, on the banks of the Mississippi.

Murphy, after a long, honored and successful pastorate in that grand old church, Midway, Georgia, removed to Alabama, and *rests* there. McMillan, under the shade of the native oaks, preached the first sermon that was ever listened to on the "Chickasaw Bluff," where now stands the city of Memphis, more than a quarter of a century after he removed to Tennessee, and his mortal remains mingle with the dust of the Bluff, with which, in the days of his youth, he was so much enchanted. Brown finished his course, and closed a most honorable and successful

ministry in Middle Tennessee. McNair alone, of the four born and reared with us, sleeps at Laurel Hill. The Head of the church dissolved his pastoral relation with Centre, Ashpole and Laurel Hill churches on the 4th of August, 1822, in the forty-sixth year of his age. It is pleasant to recall the honorable mention of these servants of God, with McIntyre and McDougald, styled by Dr. Hall in his missionary report to Synod, "the young Scotch preachers." "The fruits of their labors manifest that they are able and successful ministers of the New Testament." "And notwithstanding the many thousands of miles your missionary has travelled during the last ten years, he has not been in any place where religion has flourished more, or the power of it kept up with more energy, than under their ministrations."

Father McIver (the Rev. Colin McIver), McNair's biographer, says of him, "There was something in his mode of address so sweetly captivating, so irresistibly alluring, that his preaching was always listened to with deep interest." "He might truly be called an eloquent man. I can truly say, that for suavity of manners, generosity, and the kindly affections, for gentleness, meekness and patience, I

have seldom seen him equalled, and never excelled." If his mantle did not fall directly upon his nephew, sure it is that he inherited much of the spirit and professional cast of his gifted uncle. With such a model before him, and home training, it is not surprising that in early life his mind and heart was turned to the ministry, and his education directed accordingly. At the house of the Rev. John McIntyre, 7 o'clock P. M., November 6, 1829, Messrs. Evander McNair, John R. McIntosh and Hector McLean, were received under the care of the Presbytery of Fayetteville as candidates for the gospel ministry. November 6, 1832, McLean, McNair and Duncan A. Campbell were licensed to preach, and McNair, the succeeding month, was ordained and installed pastor of Bethesda, Long Street and Cypress churches. His professional life covered more than half a century, by three years and two months. Thirty-one years were spent in the service of the Church in his native State. Twenty-two years in the States of Texas, Alabama and Arkansas.

A sketch of the life and labors of Dr. McNair would be simply a narration of his ministerial work. The pulpit was his throne, and when out of it all his powers and resources were under tribute in pre-

paration for it. His study and reading were eminently sermonic. While he was always fully abreast with the work of the Church in all her aggressive movements and benevolent enterprises, he never had time for close study and general reading. No one could feel this sacrifice more keenly than himself. He thus writes: "Would that I could hide in your study, with your valuable library, commune with the sleeping fathers, and gather strength, power and wisdom from the mighty dead. But I cannot do the work Providence has set before me, and gratify this lawful desire; yet I do not complain. I love to preach, and though I have often been weary in my work, I have never been weary of it."

While it has been truly stated that "the whole field of what is now Fayetteville Presbytery knew his labors, and several of the churches of that Presbytery owe wholly, or in larger part, their organization to his zeal and energy;" yet, as he himself often said, "the flower of his days, the prime of life and his best services were given to central North Carolina." His field of labor covered a large scope of country in the counties of Cumberland, Moore and Harnett, extending from the sources of Lower and Upper Little Rivers to their confluence with the Cape

Fear, and east of the same to Black River, including Bethesda, Long Street, Cypress, China Grove, Mount Pisgah, Tirza, Sardis and Bluff churches, all of which he served statedly, either as pastor or supply. And he was looked for at the semi-annual communions of adjacent churches, especially at Buffalo, Euphronia and Union, with almost as much certainty as the regular ministers of the same. Referring to this field, he writes: "I shall never again be so happily associated in my labors, riding from point to point with the single aim and desire to do the Master's work. I remember the old State and land with tender emotions, and the reminiscence fills the brightest page of my past life."

Here, *in this broad field*, his influence still abides. The recollection of him will never fade from the memory of those who loved and honored him, as friend, counselor and guide; and his abundant labors, faithful, efficient and successful ministry, will remain among the most cherished traditions of these churches. In the correspondence alluded to, we have abundant evidence that the kindly feelings of the churches and people were duly appreciated and more than reciprocated by him whose memory we love to cherish and honor. It is matter of astonishment



to find how each church of his former charge, as well as individual members of the same, were remembered in the midst of his arduous and exacting labors in the South and Southwest. Time and propriety permitting, we might give many illustrations of the fact. Let one or two suffice. "I was glad to learn that —— was a member of the Church. I hope he is a good man; he was a most exemplary man before he made a profession of religion. In all probability —— and —— will number their days in the attitude they now occupy." At another time: "God bless you and the dear people of my former charge. O how I would like to be with you, and once more commune together where we have often met over the memorials of a Saviour's dying love. God will bless and hear us; his throne and mercy seat are near, where spirits blend, where friend holds fellowship with friend, though sundered far." In Texas, Alabama and Arkansas, Dr. McNair's labors were signally blessed. His commanding presence, physical and moral courage and gentlemanly bearing, coupled with his gifts and graces as a preacher, gave him a decided and conceded advantage in a new and frontier country. Few, even of his brethren in the ministry, have any adequate conception of his exhaustive

labors and generous sacrifices in the Master's vineyard, in and out of his special field. I have known him to spend hundreds of dollars in a single year, from his private means, *mainly* in work not connected with his immediate charge. His unselfish devotion to the Master and his cause cannot be too highly commended. In that honest and truthful period of our existence, in the shade of the past and on the verge of the invisible and eternal, he could thus write: "I can now say honestly, after a review of all my labors in the different fields I have occupied, that, however my people may have regarded me, I have never sought the emoluments of the world any further than to minister to my wants and augment my means of usefulness."

His stay in Galveston, though short, was longer than that of the two brethren who preceded him combined. The congregation was greatly increased, the membership of the church more than doubled, and the house of worship remodeled and so improved as to be the neatest looking, and the most comfortable church in the city. We mention only one of his missionary tours while in Texas, of one month, during which time he preached twenty-five sermons, organized a new church, ordained officers and re-

received members into the communion of the church.

In less than two years after taking charge of the church in Eufaula, Ala., the membership more than quadrupled. We allude only to one or two of his missionary tours in that State—one of two weeks' preaching twice every day. "The Lord," he writes, "was pleased to crown our poor labors with a rich blessing; forty-five were added to the church, some ten or fifteen more will join soon; a few will go to the Methodist and Baptist churches." Again: "I have just returned from a tour of one week, preached six times, passed through the section of country where John Brown, D. D., (called Waxhaw,) lived, labored and died; saw his grave; no stone points out his resting place to the stranger. *Ungrateful community*, to allow his memory to perish, but it is embalmed on high."

The war between the States virtually terminated Dr. McNair's labors in Eufaula. He held the first appointment, under President Davis, of the chaplaincy to the First Regiment of Alabama Volunteers, the first mustered into the Confederate service. Writing from Fort Barrancas, Florida: "I am acting as best I can in the double capacity of chaplain and

soldier, the latter not obligatory, but I do it for the encouragement of our men." Later, his Presbytery urge him to continue in the army. Then, by a public meeting of the citizens of Eufaula, he is sent to Tennessee to look after the sick, the wounded and the slain, just after the battle of Chickamauga. Thus, by the appointment of the military, the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, Dr. McNair did his full duty in our late struggle; in reference to which he writes: "All the fatigue, exposure, trouble and expense is a small matter compared with the issue at stake." In Arkansas, Dr. McNair found a field of labor suited to his tastes, and demanding his best efforts. "When I look upon the broad field before me ready for the sickle, I am almost tempted to wish myself young again, and with my favorite black horse 'Nigger,' ready to enter for the harvest." After a short trial, he writes: "I have just completed one year of hard and laborious service in Arkansas, and I can honestly and truthfully say, that I have never before in my ministry witnessed such immediate and encouraging results." These arduous labors continued unabated eleven more consecutive years. One or two extracts from his letters will give some idea of their extent and results. In reference to a trip

of sixty miles to an adjacent county, where he preached day and night for eight days, he writes: "I don't think I ever witnessed a deeper and more thorough work of the Divine Spirit. Many were converted, the whole community were moved and melted. The doors and windows were all filled with the anxious countenances of those who could not secure seats." Again, "I am just home from a rough and rugged trip to a pleasant and harmonious meeting of Presbytery, in the county of Union, as you know, the Saline, the Moro, the Ouachita and Smackover, all difficult streams to cross, were in my track, and all swollen to high-water mark. I will not trouble you with a rehearsal of difficulties and dangers. I swam and ferried alternately. One ferriage was two miles, and one swimming one mile, with occasional rest for my horse of deep-wading for fifty or a hundred yards at a stretch."

He was often urged by brethren and friends east and west of the Mississippi to rest, as a duty which he owed to the Church no less than to himself. His uniform reply was, "There is no vacation for a man in ordinary health, with such abundant work before him."

When the city of Pine Bluff was almost depopu-

lated by a terrible epidemic, and the flight of citizens from the desolation of the same, in reply to friends and brethren urging him to seek rest, as the storm had passed, and the ravages of the plague had been stayed, his reply was, "I will share the fate of the few that remain; I have no fears of sickness, and but little fear of death, as it will all come wisely ordered by a Father who does all things well, and I am persuaded will *care for me*, while he has work for me to do."

In the autumn of 1882 (October), Dr. McNair just escaped death by a fall from the platform of the depot at Hamlet, from the effects of which he never recovered. Two-and-a-half months after this sad providence, and referring to the same, he writes: "I had just finished my half century in trying to preach, and even now I feel more anxious to labor in the Master's cause than I ever did. I must, however, be satisfied; if my work is done, it has been poorly, poorly done. Yet I have done my best!" Subsequently he writes: "I will serve some little, neglected congregations adjacent, the balance of my working days. I know I have but little time; it is my purpose, as God will give me strength, to spend it in trying to do good." Finally he writes: "I am

trying to serve three weak churches, and point their path to heaven and eternal life.”

Dr. McNair was one of the manliest of men, generous, sincere, true and noble in all his intercourse in all the relations of life. A pure patriot as well, and an unchanging friend. More, he was a genuine Christian man, *not demonstrative*. His religion had its root in his own consciousness and in his heart, and it was regulated by the sure word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Dr. McNair was not an author; he leaves no profound treatise on theology, or ethics, or philosophy, or Church history; in this respect his work was supplemental—deriving power and strength from existing authorities, converting truth which had been more finely and elaborately wrought to general use, and presenting it with warmth and life to the understandings, hearts and consciences of his hearers. He did not know, or care to know, much about any other theology than that which he found in the Bible, and its great fundamental truths no man honored more in his heart, in his life, and in his ministry than Dr. McNair. As a preacher, he felt the dignity of his profession, recognized his responsibility as a messenger of God, and wrought with

all his might to make his ministry worthy of the truth he inculcated, and worthy of the Master whom he served. His preaching was direct, earnest and awakening, flowing from a sense of responsibility and a conviction of duty too deep to be much concerned about the forms of speech. Those who have heard him only at our ecclesiastical convocations; *e. g.*, at Presbytery, Synod and the General Assembly, have no adequate conception of the power and effect of his preaching at home, especially in times of religious interest and spiritual awakening, or of trial, sorrow, sickness and death. His tender sympathy and fervent intercession can never be forgotten by those in whose behalf he plead for mercy, relief, deliverance and salvation.

We cannot overestimate the loss of such a man; and the results of such a ministry, a ministry of three and fifty years and more, with no vacation, no respite from labor, a ministry *absolutely* unincumbered by any secular interest or pursuit, and in no way connected with any other profession. We cannot regret that he leaves no monument to his memory in the fields of science, philosophy, history, or even theology; in this he was like his Master, who wrote nothing, save it may be on one occasion, a little in the



sand. He believed that, under God, preaching was to convert the world, and the results of his preaching, like the words of him who spake as man never spake, will out-last the heavens and the earth.

As intimated, this is no funeral occasion, and we would not recall the scenes and open afresh the fountains of grief witnessed on that cold and inauspicious January day, when all that was mortal of our friend and brother was committed to mother earth. And yet, our work would be incomplete without a statement of facts from most authentic sources.

John McNair, Esq., the last member of a once large and influential family, thus writes: "The circumstances attending my brother's death, I presume you have learned before this. He left home on Thursday eve, to fill his appointment in Moore, was taken sick on leaving the cars Friday morning; was very unwell that day; was some better on Saturday; on Sabbath rode five miles to Bethesda, preached and returned to Keyser in the evening. I met him at Alma Tuesday morning; the ride home did not seem to affect him. He was cheerful; sat and conversed with us all that day. On Wednesday morning I found him quite ill, could not lie down, and was very feeble. He continued about the same until Monday

night, when he seemed and expressed himself much better. That night, after what seemed a pleasant sleep, he awoke, spoke a few words, and then, without a struggle or groan, calmly and peacefully breathed his last, about 10 o'clock," the 11th of January, 1886.

The Rev. Joseph Evans, whose melancholy privilege it was to witness and take part in the last sad offices of gentlest respect and tenderest regard for all that is mortal of our sleeping brother, sends the sad tidings of the same to the church and to the world through the *North Carolina Presbyterian*: "That venerable servant of God, so extensively known throughout the Church, Rev. Evander McNair, D. D., has gone for ever from earth. Though evidently failing for some time, yet with that stern and unflinching determination that characterized him, he still continued to press on in the discharge of his ordinary duties;" then, reciting substantially the facts given as to his last sickness, he adds: "He bore his sufferings with calm resignation, and looked unshrinkingly forward to the solemn change that he knew was fast approaching. His mortal remains were interred in the cemetery of Lebanon Church, which he had served so lovingly and faithfully. Notwithstanding the extreme severity of the weather, a

large congregation assembled to render to him the last sad tribute of affection and respect. A career such as his needs no words from us to remind all who knew him how much the Church has lost by his being summoned to his rest and reward."

What a kind Providence to grant such a conclusion to such a life and to such a ministry: that our brother should have been privileged to meet the last General Assembly of the Church he loved and served so long; to meet the last Synod of his native State, to which he was ardently attached; to meet his last Presbytery, for every member of which he cherished the sincerest regard; to meet his last appointment and preach his last sermon where he preached his first; then return to the bosom of his home and those most loved on earth, gather around himself the drapery of death, and, calmly and peacefully, without a struggle or a groan, fall asleep in Jesus.

# A D D R E S S

OF

R E V. D. D. M<sup>c</sup> B R Y D E.

---

THERE is an instinct in human nature, implanted by the Author of our being, which leads us to cherish the memory of those who, in life, have been entitled to our love and admiration.

“Civilization has in all times rendered conspicuous obedience” to this law of our nature. The great cities of the world, in ancient times, were eminently monumental cities. “The highest achievements of genius, in poetry and song”—of art, in sculpture and painting, have been exhibited in perpetuating the memory of those who have been prominent actors in the great drama of the world.

The human mind is so constituted that it is not only interested in, “but is aroused by ideals of excellence.” The military genius of Cæsar, it is supposed, was quickened and aroused by beholding a statue of Alexander the Great. “Athens was a vast

museum of architecture, sculpture and painting," dedicated to the national glory by commemorating the deeds of her heroes, orators and statesmen. These characters, "preserved in imperishable marble," gave inspiration to the Athenian youth.

"Christian civilization has not been wanting in this sentiment of veneration for the illustrious dead." It still lives to console and elevate humanity.

"In conformity to this usage, sanctioned by the wisdom of ages of civilization, we have assembled to pay the tribute of respect to the memory" of a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Rev. Evander McNair, D. D., who died on the 11th day of January last.

It is not my purpose to attempt a full sketch of the life, character and labors of this eminent servant of Christ; that is assigned to other hands. But following him, as I have done, in his fields of labor, and soon after his leaving them, it is proper that I should furnish on this occasion such reminiscences as from time to time have been gathered from those among whom Dr. McNair spent the prime and vigor of his eventful life. He preached in the various churches in this region, from the time of his licensure, in 1832, until 1853, when he removed to

Texas. The writer of this sketch succeeded Dr. McNair in the charge of Long Street and Sardis churches in 1854, and of the Bluff church in 1855. Besides preaching occasionally in all the churches of this section, he has had ample opportunities of gaining a knowledge of the character and manner of life of our departed brother.

It would be a trite tribute to his memory to say that "his praise was in all the churches." He was both highly, and, may we not say, universally esteemed and beloved by the large Presbyterian population of Cumberland, then including what is now Harnett County. As a man and a Christian gentleman, he commanded the esteem and admiration of all who loved "the true and the good." Of a commanding personage, dignified, but natural in all his bearing, his appearance arrested the attention of the spectator, and impressed him with the conviction that he was no ordinary man. There was nothing little in his nature, nor was there in his life or conduct. He felt that he was a man; he demeaned himself at all times and in all places as a man; and though unconscious of it, seemed everywhere to challenge the high regard which a man who walked uprightly before men was entitled to.

As a preacher, he was "*facile princeps*." His preaching was with unction and great power. His whole appearance in the pulpit was striking and singularly impressive. Grave and intensely solemn in all his bearing, he furnished a most admirable model of an ambassador for Christ. The burden of a solemn commission was manifestly upon him, as he besought men to be reconciled to God. His popularity as a pulpit orator drew crowds wherever he preached; and even men of the world and men of no religious pretensions were drawn and captivated by the mystic spell of his potent eloquence. It is not invidious to say that no man ever preached in this region who could draw such crowds as Dr. McNair.

There was nothing of the theatrical, or merely sensational in his pulpit exercises. But his intense earnestness, his striking and impressive manner, his forceful presentation of the momentous subjects of life and death, were often overwhelming and awful. He was admired by all classes of men. The poor felt that in him they had a sympathising friend, and they flocked to hear the Gospel from his lips. The colored people, too, were great admirers of

“Parson McNair,” and multitudes attended on his ministry.

In the social circle, among the refined and cultured, he was always a welcomed guest. At the fireside of the lowly and the humble he was equally welcomed. And in the homes of sorrow and affliction, he was as an angel of mercy, soothing the distressed and strengthening the faint. On such occasions his approaches to a throne of grace were most touching and precious. He plead and interceded as one having communion with God. The burdened soul that knelt with him at the mercy seat often arose realizing “it is good to draw near to God.”

The memory of his name still lives in all this region, and is still as the “odor of sweet ointment poured forth.”

The writer did not enjoy the pleasure of Dr. McNair’s acquaintance until he had passed the meridian of life; but our intercourse for several years has been most pleasant and intimate. As age mellowed his Christian character, the true beauty of it became more conspicuous and bright. His sun has set, but set to rise, we trust, in unfading glory. He sleeps in the lone church yard of his native place, but his



memory, enshrined in the hearts of ransomed multitudes all over this broad land, is a monument more precious than the granite columns or the splendid and costly mausoleum erected to the memory of the great of this world.

# A D D R E S S

BY

REV. WILLIAM S. LACY.

---

AS the representative of a church in whose traditions and history the name and preaching of the Rev. Dr. McNair are a precious memory, I am glad of an opportunity of paying a tribute to his worth, and of saying these words of reverent and affectionate remembrance:

When I came to Buffalo Church, nearly thirteen years ago, and began to inquire into its life and study its past records, it was by many of the older members of the church affirmed that Dr. McNair had been at some time their minister. He had been, indeed, at one time called to be their pastor, but having declined, the relation was never constituted. But during the pastorates of the Rev. Angus McCallum, his class-mate and associate in the Seminary, and of the Rev. Neill McKay, D. D., his warm and life-

long friend, Dr. McNair assisted at the semi-annual communion seasons, and was expected as regularly as the minister in charge. He was then in the first vigor of an earnest manhood, and must have been a splendid specimen of manly beauty. His person, his manner, his voice, his gesture, his eye, as well as his discourses themselves, are remembered with a respectful admiration. He was the model—the standard—and no praise was so sincere, or, in their judgment, so high as to pronounce that the sermon of any one reminded them of Dr. McNair.

At the time of which I speak, he was in the far West, and when I learned that he was to retrace his steps to his native State, I was glad for this reason, among many others, that I might meet with the man who had so impressed himself on Buffalo congregation and had written his name so indelibly in their memories and affections.

And, if I may be pardoned the further personal references, for another reason I was anxious to know Dr. McNair. He was a true and life-long friend of my father, and my earliest recollections are of his name. They were members at the same time of the Board of Directors of Union Theological Seminary, before the days of rapid transit. Dr. McNair would

come from his churches in Cumberland and Robeson, either on horseback or in a sulky, and spending a night in Raleigh, my father and he would take the journey thenceforward together. His genial companionship, fertile mind and independent spirit impressed themselves upon my father, and through him upon me.

The first time I ever met the Rev. Dr. McNair was at the General Assembly, in New Orleans, in 1877, when he visited the body, being then resident in Arkansas, chiefly, as he said, to meet with his beloved North Carolina brethren. Excepting the representative from this Presbytery, Mr. J. A. Hodges, there was no one of his former acquaintances from the Synod. But how quickly he placed himself in sympathy with the representatives from North Carolina, I remember as one of the pleasant reminiscences of that Assembly. How cordial, how dignified, how courteous, I distinctly recall. But it was a time of such close engagement, our intercourse was very brief and occasional. His heart was warm towards his native State, his inquiries were kind and affectionate of old friends there, and his recollections were fresh and fragrant.

The next time I met him was at Union Church, shortly after his return to North Carolina, about

1879. It was at a communion season—"the day of the preparation"—and I went to see him, to invite him to visit his warm friends at Buffalo, and preach again to those, and to the children of those, who were so devoted to him. After divine service in the grove I met him. Tall, comely, of commanding presence, straight as an arrow, venerable, I felt like baring my head in due and profound respect. His greeting was cordial and dignified. I could not forbear commenting on his stature and erectness, and the advantage it gave in addressing a large audience, such as he had preached to that day. His reply I cannot forget: "Such as I am God made me; I am not what I once was; I am not what I hope to be when this body is laid away. As long as I am here, I trust God has some work for me. I am in his hands. Such as I am, he made me." The mingled dignity, humility, and aspiration of his words and manner deeply impressed me.

It was not long after, in the spring of 1880, that he visited us at Buffalo Church, and preached the dedication sermon. A large assembly greeted his presence, and he was much moved. I was not disappointed as I heard him, nor was I surprised at the rapt admiration of my people. The fervor of early years

was doubtless chastened; there were instead the ripeness and mellowness of a long Christian experience, and the shadow of advancing years softened the impetuous oratory that had carried captive the people of thirty years before; still, there was a majesty of utterance, a breadth of spiritual thought and a beauty of diction, and at times an elevation and fervor that revealed true power; the whole so permeated by a devoutness and simplicity that made it a delight to sit at his feet and hear the gracious words he spake.

From the first meeting our friendship was real and growing. Inheriting the right to regard him as a friend, it was most pleasing to be so regarded by him. This is one trait of his character I would mention: His unselfishness and his consideration of others, especially his younger brethren. Of a quick and sensitive nature himself, he appreciated the feelings and wishes of others. Always lofty in his bearing, there was a courtesy that was beautiful. He reminded me somehow of a nobleman, some stately earl, or venerable lord of the manor. In the truest sense he was a nobleman. There was no condescension in his manner, but a frank recognition of right, a

deference to the views of others, and a kindly feeling of brotherhood.

A second element in his character, I remember, is his independence of spirit. I have sometimes thought this led him too far, and have almost been hurt that he would not allow those attentions and little services that I, or any friends, would so readily have rendered. At Synod, at Presbytery, at any church he visited, he would decline assistance, preferring to bear his own burdens, than in any way to exact or even expect service of others. But the principle is a noble one. And he would maintain his dignity in such a way as not to trespass in any measure upon the feelings of others. It was as manifest in his words, and I have often noticed, that though he spoke seldom in our ecclesiastical assemblies, he had the courage of his convictions, and his words had weight.

Another noteworthy characteristic of Dr. McNair was his lowliness, his real humility of spirit. There was nothing further from him, more despicable to him, than personal vanity. The Almighty had certainly highly favored him. His person and carriage were eminently attractive and imposing. His gifts were special and exalted. The homage and praise of the noblest and best people were given him with-

out stint. He was indeed, as has been well said, not the bishop only, but the idol of many churches. Yet he esteemed himself as the least of God's servants. In lowliness of mind he preferred others to himself.

I mention one other trait, and that is, his devotion to his work. "I love to preach," he said to me over and over. Truly he did love to preach. His soul was in his sermon. It was the coinage, not of his brain merely, but of his heart. I never knew him in his earlier ministry, and I presume that his later efforts lacked the ardor and overwhelming earnestness that like a torrent bore everything before it. But there was a tenderness, a richness, a spiritual fervor, that was most effective. His last discourse at Buffalo Church was on the fourth Sabbath in October, when Synod was in session at Reidsville. On my return home, many spoke to me of its beauty and power. It dealt with the blessedness of heaven and the reward of God's saints; and as he himself expressed to those people who admired him so, they likewise felt that it was his last message to them. When I asked him to preach for me on that occasion, he answered, "Yes, I would like to preach once more to those good people before I die." And un-



der the shadow of death, under which he spent the last years of his life, he spoke the message of heaven, of salvation, of peace and eternal life, and thus

“Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.”

It is meet that such a service as this be held, not for the honor of man, but for the glory of God. He gives to his Church pastors, bishops, evangelists. These are the precious ascension gifts of our Lord. In devout gratitude to him who has given us so conspicuous an example of ministerial consecration, usefulness and blessing, we record our recognition of his valued services and exemplary life, the name and memory we recall and embalm this day.

# A D D R E S S

BY

N. W. R A Y, E S Q.

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MR. CHAIRMAN :

I HAVE no special authority to speak for Long Street Church on this occasion; but I would most heartily give my own individual mite of tribute to the memory of Dr. McNair; and I feel, too, that in the absence of any regular delegation from that church and congregation, it would be proper for me to say a few words as for them, for I feel strongly identified with that church and congregation. I spent all my earlier years there; near that church is my birth-place; in it I received baptism, at the hands of him for whom these memorial services are held; and in the Long Street Academy, the establishment of which was in a great measure due to the exertions of Dr. McNair, I received the greater part of my very limited education. And in my memories the name of Dr. McNair is so associated with Long Street, that

to me these memorial services would be incomplete without a response from Long Street. And so I ask this convention of Dr. McNair's old churches to consider Long Street Church as heartily approving the object of this meeting; for I know that if it had been practicable for them so to do, that congregation would gladly have been here to show their great respect for the memory of Dr. McNair—"Parson McNair," as he was generally called.

It is true that the congregation, since he bade farewell to them, now some thirty years ago, is much changed. Some have moved away; war's sad havoc has hidden many a face; and time's natural decay has brought many to the grave; so that, if the old parson could stand in the old pulpit to-day, he would see only a few of the faces that greeted him in former years. But his memory is precious to them, and precious to all the congregation; for the fathers and mothers have told to the children many a tale that was prompted by sweet and pleasant recollections of the times when their preacher was Parson McNair.

He ministered to that church for about twenty years, but I cannot give the date or statistics that would be necessary in making up a history of his life's work; and I shall not attempt to recount the

many virtues that adorned his life and character. But suffice it to say, that the church grew in importance, the school flourished, and the piety of the church members made itself felt in the community, and influences for good were started there which, we love to believe, will go on for ever.

Among my earliest recollections is Parson McNair, as with stately gait and reverend manner, he came into the church and ascended the pulpit. I remember his majestic appearance, as with full, rich voice, he poured forth his eloquent appeals, his earnest entreaties, his solemn admonitions, and his tender words of comfort and consolation.

Although I was but a small boy, I remember the text from which he preached my father's funeral—*“Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”*

I remember him on communion occasions, when the whole surrounding country would attend, and ministers from the neighboring congregations would assist. Those were memorable occasions, rich feasts for the souls of believers, without being frolicsome festivals for the unconcerned. All were taught and requested to remain in the church during the communion service, and there was always a kindly word

to the non-communicant, not a rebuke or denunciation for rejecting gospel privileges, but such cheering, comforting words to *Israel* as might make unbelieving *Hobabs* feel that it would be good to be with them. His teaching was often forcibly illustrated; and in this connection I remember one occasion, when in concluding his address to the communicants, after a three day's meeting, he referred them to the story of the Eastern king, who in his parting admonitions to his son, who was about to travel in foreign lands, urged him to always remember that he was a king's son. That was long before I read the story, but the aptness of the illustration impressed me so that now I never read it without thinking of Dr. McNair, and the tender manner in which he applied it to the children of the *King of kings*, as they were about to go down from their Lord's house into an evil world. And I remember seeing the Long Street congregation *in tears*, when Parson McNair, after his twenty year's ministry, just before going to his newly chosen field of labor, west of the Mississippi, preached his farewell sermon to them, taking for his text Paul's parting with the Ephesians—“*And they wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,*

*sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more."*

But the people to whom he ministered in early life were permitted to see his face again; for after the war he came back to spend his declining years in his native State and county, and he preached in Long Street church again. What memories and what recollections were stirred up in the hearts of preacher and people as he arose in that old pulpit again after the war! But I suppose it was the same at each and all of his old churches when he visited them.

Mr. Chairman, there may have been, and doubtless were, imperfections in the character and life of Dr. McNair; for, until the final victory in death, there can be found in all men "*some traces of sin's sad story;*" but I knew him, when, as a child, I did not know that I *could* find fault with "*the preacher.*" And I am glad that it was so, and that now, in remembering him, I recollect no faults.

The last time that I saw Dr. McNair was some months before his death; we were on the same train; and, after travelling some miles with him, he got off to go to his home. A passenger who seemed to know who he was, though unacquainted with him, looking at him, said, admiringly, "*Holy man of God.*" And

his appearance was well calculated to call forth such a remark. For, as I have already said, he was stately in appearance, reverend in manner, and his Christian spirit so shone in the features of his countenance, so venerable, so placid, that any one might well say, "There is a man who has that peace of God which passeth all understanding."

All loved him because he was good; his goodness showed itself not only in its ministrations as a preacher, but as neighbor, friend and citizen, he was loyal, true and dutiful; his life was a sermon.

And this, Mr. Chairman, is a beautiful custom, which now so generally obtains, that when any great man has passed from the arena of life, tribute is paid to his memory, by thus publicly expressing our sorrow for the loss, and our gratitude for the life and works of the dead. And it should be both pleasant and profitable to thus contemplate good deeds and ennobling virtues. It is pleasant, because man, even in all his depravity, instinctively loves, venerates and respects that which tends to elevate and purify. And that instinct springs from, and is an evidence of, a germ of immortality that exists in every human being. For no matter what men may say, in order to drown the sentiment, there is an almost universal

belief, that every one has an innate germ of immortality, which bursts forth into new being at death. This very meeting gives evidence that man is immortal. We are not here to remember that which is dead. True, we speak of our friend as dead; and to those of our senses which are mortal he is dead. But there is within us a sense, or feeling, which is gratified in the contemplation of his "*labors and works which do follow him;*" labors and works, which we love to believe have started unending, undying influences for good. And so, our undying natures are fed upon undying thoughts. And it is profitable, too, to take part in these memorial meetings; for in the contemplation of great and good deeds and noble characters, there is a reflex influence, by which we are led to inquire how *greatness* and *goodness* may be obtained. And if, with this inquiry, we study the life and character of Dr. McNair, we will find that true, enduring, greatness and happiness, are to be attained, not so much by efforts to make foot-prints on the sands of time, as by a steady course across the sands of time towards the Rock of Ages, with constant efforts to attract others in that direction. Such was his life, and who can describe his immortality! Living in the hearts



and memories of his people; living in the souls of those who believed under his ministrations; living in all the good works and influences which he started; living in the churches that he served; living in the records of the church-courts here, and in the records of the Church on high. Oh! can we doubt, that his mortal, now sleeping in his native soil, will, when time ends, put on immortality, that will be glorious.

# A D D R E S S

OF

D. H. M<sup>c</sup> L E A N, E S Q.

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MR. CHAIRMAN:

O F that great multitude who loved DR. McNAIR in life, and mourn him in death, there are none who loved him with a deeper affection, or mourn him with a deeper sadness, than the congregation of Tirzah Church, to whom he ministered for so long a time. In all the relations of life he was their pastor, counsellor, friend. He was with them around their firesides, and at their family altars; he was with them in the hours of their joy and gladness; he stood with them beneath the marriage bells, when the future presented itself to their youthful gaze like a beauteous landscape of rosy tints and gorgeous colors; he was with them by their beds of affliction; he stood with them by the open graves of those they held most dear, to comfort and encourage—when the dark shadows of

gloom surrounded them, through which no single star of hope seemed to penetrate. For these, Mr. Chairman, they loved him; and they feel that they are better for having loved him, and that the world is better for his having lived in it. They have commissioned me, Mr. Chairman, to bear their offering of love and honor to his memory. And whilst I can but regret that that duty had not devolved upon abler, fitter hands, I can but feel grateful that I am permitted to join my voice in that general refrain of praise which ascends from every heart and every lip in this vast assemblage.

We have not come to indulge in fulsome praise, or extravagant panegyric over the grave of Dr. McNair; for no meed of eulogistic praise can add to that noble life now ended,—it is finished,—the record closed and sealed with the clasp of death; but we have come to garland his tomb with wreaths woven of the flowers of real affection and honor.

Mr. Chairman, the observance of ceremonies like these is not a recent custom; such methods of expressing respect for the memory of the dead have been observed in all ages, and by all manner of people, from the rude symbolic ceremonies of the mound burials of the savage, to the elegant and elo-

quent eulogies of the most enlightened people, by which they embalm the memory of their dead in their literature and song. The history of all these efforts of mankind teaches that there is no earthly immortality for the dead, save in the imperishable keeping of written language. The pyramids of Egypt, standing for centuries upon the banks of the Nile, are but the silent monuments of the glory and power of some forgotten king, whose name they cannot call. All the memorials of stone and brass, built to perpetuate the mighty men of the past, have perished—the tombs of Abraham, of Moses, Romulus and Æneas, are, like the graves of the humblest and poorest, forgotten. The highest and most enduring tribute we can pay to our deceased friend is the earnest, fervent words of praise with which we commit the record of his character and virtues to the unyielding embrace of history. And, Mr. Chairman, what fitter place for the observance of these ceremonies than here—here in this holy temple whose walls have so often resounded with the eloquence of the clarion voice now hushed in the silence of the grave.

“We *call* it death; there is no death—for to live in hearts we leave behind us is not to die.” Mr.

Chairman, is not influence immortal?—a noble act, aye, a glorious life-work, their influence lives through all time. It was a beautiful thought of a renowned scientist, that every sound that ever stirred the air would go on vibrating to eternity. If that be true, what a mighty concord of sweet sounds, which fell from his lips during the course of his long and useful life, is now mingling with the music of the spheres! He is dead! He is gone!

“But his memory, like some holy light  
Kept alive in our hearts, will improve them ;  
For worth shall look fairer, and truth more bright,  
When we think how *he* lived but to love them.  
And as fresher flowers the sod perfume,  
Where buried saints are lying ;  
So *our* hearts shall borrow a sweet’ning bloom  
From the image he left there in dying.”

Mr Chairman, I may not speak of Dr. McNair’s career in his chosen profession—the holy ministry. I will leave all that to worthier lips than mine. But I do remember him—when I, a mere boy, and *he* in the very zenith of his physical and intellectual strength! I can *almost* see him now—his tall commanding figure all erect, his face all ablaze with enthusiasm, his eyes lighted up by the fires of genius,

his long, sinewy arms upstretched, as if he were trying to grasp a thunderbolt to hurl at the enemies of religion, his *voice* like a trumpet blast as he proclaimed the terms of eternal life or death. Ah! Mr. Chairman, he was a very giant then—a very Agamemnon, a king of men. Years rolled by and I saw him again. Those years had brought many a sad change to him, and to us all. Broken by age and bodily infirmities, he was but a shadow of his former self; but the light of his mighty intellect was burning on with undiminished glory. He looked then as if he knew that that messenger whose coming no man can stay was at his door. But he was undismayed; for his tongue could utter that loftiest pean of human triumph that was ever chanted upon the shores of time:

“O death, where is thy sting?  
O grave, where is thy victory?”

Mr. Chairman, Dr. McNair was not only a great preacher, but he was a great patriot. With all the fervor of his great heart did he love his native State. He descended from an ancestry unused to the yoke of tyranny. In his veins coursed the blood of men who deemed liberty next to religion, and men who would have yielded life rather than

either. Dr. McNair's mission was one of peace and good-will towards men; yet when the issue was made of war or dishonor, his voice was heard resounding through the land, bidding his countrymen to arms. Peter the hermit never preached the Crusades with more eloquence or effect than did Dr. McNair preach resistance to Northern aggression. Nor during those four long years of war and death and tears that followed, no stouter heart than his was found in the armies of his beloved South, as they stood like a wall of devouring flame around the "ark of the covenant" of Southern rights. He turned his back upon all the comforts and associations of home life, and exchanged them for the perils of camp and field. He did not exchange the clerical robes for the tinsel and lace of the soldier; but by his precepts, by example, his presence and his prayers, he kept his countrymen to their duty.

Mr. Chairman, there were scenes enacted in that time that form a part of the unwritten history of the war—scenes which, if known, would make many a man immortal whose name now sleeps beneath the waves of oblivion.

What sublimer scene can the mind conceive than to see that holy man of God, his head whitened

with the frost of age, the thunder of battle hushed, the armies sleeping from the exhaustion of the carnival of death; to see that aged apostle of peace groping his uncertain way among the dead and dying of his countrymen; to see him bending over the prostrate form of a soldier boy, upon whose youthful brow were gathering the fearful pallor of death, that he might receive from his lips the last message to the loved ones at home, and to whisper in return the blessed promises of the Saviour. To see him visiting the crowded hospitals, reeking with the stench of contagion and death, forgetful of self, that he might smooth some dying pillow, or point some dying hero to that light which even the shadows of death cannot eclipse. Such a patriot, such a hero, was Dr. McNair.

Mr. Chairman, tell me not of the hero who, amidst the fire and storm of battle, with his sword dripping with human gore, can carve his name upon the roll of immortality; 'tis the *Christian* hero, such as Dr. McNair was, that we should emulate. No herald went from the field to tell the world of his deeds; "they did not count in the news of the battle"; he did not seek the applause of the world; there were none to witness his heroism save the



silent, twinkling stars, and the angels who, from the battlements of heaven, smiled their approval upon him.

When the flag of his country's lost cause was furled, when the star of the young confederacy went down to rise no more forever, he came back from the battle-field, not to brood over the misfortunes of his country, not to sit in the ashes of a broken empire, but to build up her waste places, to teach his countrymen how to manfully yield to the verdict of defeat. If he loved his country and his people in their strength, he loved them more in their weakness and woe.

How poor and insufficient are any words that I can employ to fitly portray his character! Not all the tongues or languages of men can tell the story of the deeds of Christian charity, Christian self-denial, devotion to God and country, that characterized his life. Mr. Chairman, as the lengthening shadows warned him of the close of his pilgrimage, he came back to the people of his boyhood, came back to the State of his nativity, that his own people might be by his side at the "supreme moment"—that his ashes might mingle with the dust of the State he loved so well. He was buried in his own native

county of Robeson, where the winds of each recurring spring call into life and fragrance the flowers of his own south-land to garland his tomb—fit emblems of the purity and beauty of his life.

Mr. Chairman, his death was a fitting close to such a life. When the messenger came, he received him “as one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”







