

20th July 2021

Childlike

**“Some will hate you, some will love you,
Some will flatter, some will slight;
Heed them not, and look above you:
Trust in God and do the right.”**

Norman MacLeod, Trust in God

Rev Dr Norman MacLeod, grandfather of George MacLeod, founder of the Iona Community, was a Church of Scotland minister in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1860, while in The Barony church in Glasgow, he became editor of a new monthly publication, *Good Works*. He was fully engaged with the social issues of his day, on the one hand, preaching against the immorality of the new opera, *La Traviata*, and, on the other, being outspoken about the restrictions of not running the Glasgow trams on a Sunday. In 1869, he became Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

In 1874, two years after his death, his brother, Donald, published *A Memoir of Norman MacLeod*. In the introduction, he wrote:

Dr Macleod was a man ... almost impossible to portray. His power was inseparable from his presence. The sympathy, the humour, the tenderness depended so much for their full expression on look, voice, and manner, that all who knew him will recognise the necessary inadequacy of verbal description. Now that [my book] is completed ... it will be to me a source of inexpressible gratitude, if, in spite of its many deficiencies, it should convey to those who did not know Norman Macleod, some sense, however inadequate, of the depth of his goodness, of his rich humanity, his childlike faith, catholicity, and devotion.

“Almost impossible to portray”, we’re told. But it’s “his childlike faith” that struck me more. Here was a man who, as a minister, editor, writer and social reformer, had great standing in both Church and society. And yet it was, among other things, his “childlike faith” that stood out for his brother.

We may complicate our faith with erudition and dogma. Or we might be inclined to give expression to doubts and uncertainties. How good it would be, therefore, if we learned the value of our own childlike faith. There is no shame in being childlike in trusting God. Indeed, in the simplicity of faith, and the childlike nature of trust, we might come to be as close to the Living God as was the remarkable Rev Dr Norman Macleod.

A prayer for today

With the faith of a child, help me to “trust in God and do the right”. Amen