

Memoirs: 3. -- First Years of Labor in Dundee --

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by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Robert Murray M'Cheyne's early ministry in Dundee was marked by deep devotion, significant challenges, and a commitment to spiritual growth and community engagement.

Scripture: Acts 20:18

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Pastoral Care"

Description

Robert Murray M'Cheyne reflects on his early years of ministry in Dundee, emphasizing the profound spiritual growth he experienced and the challenges he faced in a spiritually desolate environment. He recounts the anxiety of his ordination day, the importance of prayer and devotion in his daily life, and the impact of his preaching on the souls of his congregation. M'Cheyne's commitment to personal holiness, diligent study of Scripture, and heartfelt pastoral care for the sick and dying are highlighted as key elements of his ministry. His deep compassion for the lost and his reliance on God's grace are evident throughout his reflections, as he sought to lead his flock towards spiritual awakening and renewal.

Transcript

CHAPTER 3

First Years of Labor in Dundee

Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations. Acts 20:18, 19

The day on which he was ordained pastor of a flock, was a day of much anxiety to his soul. He had journeyed by Perth to spend the night preceding under the roof of his kind friend Mr. Grierson, in the manse of Errol. Next morning, before he left the manse, three passages of Scripture occupied his mind. 1. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 26:3). This verse was seasonable; for, as he sat meditating on the solemn duties of the day, his heart trembled. 2. "Give thyself wholly to [these things]" (1 Tim. 4:15). May that word (he prayed) sink deep into my heart. 3. "Here am I, send me" (Isa. 6:8). "To go, or to stay-to be here till death, or to visit foreign shores, whatsoever, wheresoever, whensoever Thou pleasest." He rose from his knees with the prayer, "Lord, may Thy grace come with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery."

He was ordained on November 24, 1836. The service was conducted by Mr. Roxburgh of St. John's, through whose exertions the new church had been erected, and who ever afterward cherished the most cordial friendship toward him. On the Sabbath following he was introduced to his flock by Mr. John Bonar of Larbert, with whom he had labored as a son in the gospel. He preached in the afternoon on Isaiah 61:1-3, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me," etc; of which he writes, "May it be prophetic of the object of my coming here!" And truly it was so. That very sermon-the first preached by him as a pastor-was the means of awakening souls, as he learned later; and ever onward the impressions left by his words seemed to spread and deepen among his people. To keep up the remembrance of this solemn day, he used in all the subsequent years of his ministry to preach from this same text on the anniversary of his ordination. In the evening of that day, Mr. Bonar again preached on "These Times of Refreshing." "A noble sermon, showing the marks of such times. Ah! when shall we have them here? Lord bless this word, to help their coming! Put Thy blessing upon this day! Felt given over to God, as one bought with a price."

There was a rapid growth in his soul, perceptible to all who knew him well, from this time. Even his pulpit preparations, he used to say, became easier from this date. He had earnestly sought that the day of his ordination might be a time of new grace; he expected it would be so; and there was a peculiar work to be done by his hands, for which the Holy Spirit speedily prepared him.

His diary does not contain much of his feelings during his residence in Dundee. His incessant labors left him little time, except what he scrupulously spent in the direct exercises of devotion. But what we have seen of his manner of study and self-examination at Larbert, is sufficient to show in what a constant state of cultivation his soul was kept; and his habits in these respects continued with him to the last. Jeremy Taylor recommends: "If though

meanest to enlarge thy religion, do it rather by enlarging thine ordinary devotions than thy extraordinary." This advice describes very accurately the plan of spiritual life on which Mr. McCheyne acted. He did occasionally set apart seasons for special prayer and fasting, occupying the time so set apart exclusively in devotion. But the real secret of his soul's prosperity lay in the daily enlargement of his heart in fellowship with his God. And the river deepened as it flowed on to eternity; so that he at least reached the feature of a holy pastor which Paul pointed out to Timothy (4:15): "His profiting did appear to all.:

In his own house everything was fitted to make you feel that the service of God was a cheerful service, while he sought that every arrangement of the family should bear upon eternity. His morning hours were set apart for the nourishment of his own soul; not, however, with the view of laying up a stock of grace for the rest of the day--for manna will corrupt if laid by--but rather with the view of "giving the eye the habit of looking upward all the day, and drawing down gleams from the reconciled countenance." He was sparing in the hours devoted to sleep, and resolutely secured time for devotion before breakfast, although often wearied and exhausted when he laid himself to rest. "A soldier of the cross," was his remark, "must endure hardness." Often he sang a psalm of praise, as soon as he arose, to stir up his soul. Three chapters of the Word was his usual morning portion. This he thought little enough, for he delighted exceedingly in the Scriptures: they were better to him than thousands of gold or silver. "When you write," he said to a friend, "tell me the meaning of Scriptures." To another, in expressing his value for the Word, he said, "One gem from that ocean is worth all the pebbles of earthly streams."

His chief season of relaxation seemed to be breakfast time. He would come down with a happy countenance and a full soul; and after the sweet season of family prayer, immediately begin forming plans for the day. When he was well, nothing seemed to afford him such true delight as to have his hands full of

work. Indeed, it was often remarked that in him you found--what you rarely meet with--a man of high poetic imagination and deep devotion, who nevertheless was engaged unceasingly in the busiest and most laborious activities of his office.

His friend could observe how much his soul was engrossed during his times of study of devotion. If interrupted on such occasions, though he never seemed ruffled, yet there was a kind of gravity and silence that implied--"I wish to be alone." But he further aimed at enjoying God all the day. And referring on one occasion to those blank hours which so often are a believer's burden--hours during which the soul is dry and barren--he observed, "They are proofs of how little we are filled with the presence of God, how little we are branch like (Zec4:12; John 15:5) in our faith."

This careful attention to the frame of his spirit did not hinder his preparation for his people; on the contrary, it kept alive his deep conscientiousness, and kept his warm compassion ever yearning. When asked to observe a Saturday as a day of fasting and prayer, along with some others who had a special object in view, he replied, "Saturday is an awkward day for ministers; for though I love to seek help from on high, I love also diligently to set my thoughts in order for the Sabbath. I sometimes fear that you fail in this latter duty."

During his first years in Dundee, he often rode out in an afternoon to the ruined church of Invergowrie, to enjoy an hour's perfect solitude; for he felt meditation and prayer to be the very sinews of his work. Such notices, also, as the following, show his systematic pursuit of personal holiness:

"April 9, 1837, Evening--A very pleasant quietness. Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Came to a more intelligent view of the first six chapters than ever before. Much refreshed by John Newton; instructed by Edwards. Help and freedom in prayer. Lord, what a happy season is a Sabbath evening! What will heaven be!"

"April 16, Sabbath evening--Much prayer and peace. Reading the Bible only."

"June 2--Much peace and rest tonight. Much broken under a sense of my exceeding wickedness, which no eye can see but thine. Much persuasion of the sufficiency of Christ, and of the constancy of His love. Oh how sweet to work all day for God, and then to lie down at night under His smiles!"

"June 17, 1838--At Dumbarney communion. Much sin and coldness two days before. Lay low at His feet; found peace only in Jesus."

"Sept. 25--Spent last week at Blairgowrie; I hope not in vain. Much sin, weakness, and uselessness; much delight in the Word also, while opening it up at family prayer. May God make the word fire. Opened 1 Thessalonians, the whole; enriching to my own mind. How true is Psalm 1 ! yet observed in my heart a strange proneness to be entangled with the affairs of this life; not strange because I am good, but because I have been so often taught that bitterness is the end of it."

"Sept. 27--Devoted chief part of Friday to fasting. Humbled and refreshed."

"Sept. 30, Sabbath--Very happy in my work. Too little prayer in the morning. Must try to get early to bed on Saturday, that I may 'rise a great while before day.'" These early hours of prayer on Sabbath he endeavored to have all his life; not for study, but for prayer. He never labored at his sermons on a Sabbath. That day he kept for its original end, the refreshment of his soul (Exod. 31:17).

The parish of St. Peter's, to which he had come, was large and very destitute. It is situated at the west end of the town, and included some part of the adjacent country. The church was built in connection with the Church Extension Scheme. The parish was a quoad sacra parish, detached from St. John's. It contains a population of 4,000 souls, very many of whom never crossed the threshold of any sanctuary. His congregation amounted at the very outset, to about 1,100 hearers, one-third of whom came from distant parts of the town.

Here was a wide field for parochial labor. It was also a very dead region-few, even of those who were living Christians, breathing their life on others; for the surrounding mass of impenetrable heathenism had cast its sad influence even over them. His first impressions of Dundee were severe. "A city given to idolatry and hardness of heart. I fear there is much of what Isaiah speaks of: 'The prophets prophesy lies, and the people love to have it so.'"

His first months of labor were very trying. He was not strong in bodily health, and that winter a fatal influenza prevailed for two or three months, so that most of his time in his parish was spent in visiting the sick and dying. In such cases he was always ready. "Did I tell you of the boy I was asked to see on Sabbath evening, just when I got myself comfortably seated at home? I went, and was speaking to him of the freeness and fullness of Jesus, when he gasped a little and died."

In one of his first visits to the sick, the narrative of the Lord's singular dealings with one of his parishioners greatly encouraged him to carry the glad tidings to the distressed under every disadvantage. Four years before, a young woman had been seized with cholera, and was deprived of the use of speech for a whole year. The Bible was read to her, and men of God used to speak and pray with her. At the end of the year her tongue was loosed, and the first words heard from her lips were praise and thanksgiving for what the Lord had done for her soul. It was in her chamber he was now standing, hearing from her own lips what the Lord had wrought.

On another occasion during the first year of his ministry, he witnessed the deathbed conversion of a man who, till within a few days of his end, almost denied that there was a God. This solid conversion, as he believed it to be, stirred him up to speak with all hopefulness, as well as earnestness, to the dying.

But it was, above all, to the children of God that his visitations seemed blessed. His voice, and his, very eye, spoke tenderness; for personal affliction had taught him to feel sympathy with the sorrowing. Though the following be an extract from a letter, yet it will be recognized by many as exhibiting his mode of dealing with God's afflicted ones in his visitations: "There is a sweet word in Exodus (3:7), which was pointed out to me the other day by a poor bereaved child of God: 'I know their sorrows.' Study that; it fills the soul. Another word like it is in Psalm 103:14: 'He knoweth our frame.' May your own soul, and that of your dear friends, be fed by these things. A dark hour makes Jesus bright. Another sweet word: 'They knew not that it was Jesus.'"

I find some specimens of his sick visits among his papers, noted down at a time when his work had not grown upon his hands. "January 25, 1837-Visited Mt. M'Bain, a young woman of twenty-four, long ill of decline. Better or worse these ten years past. Spoke of 'The one thing needful' plainly. She sat quiet. February 14-Had heard she was better-found her near dying. Spoke plainly and tenderly to her, commending Christ. Used many texts. She put out her hand kindly on leaving. 15th-Still dying like; spoke as yesterday. She never opened her eyes. 16th-Showed her the dreadfulness of wrath;freeness of Christ; the majesty, justice, truth of God. Poor M.is fast going the way whence she shall not return. Many

neighbors also always gather in. 17th-Read Psalm 22; showed the sufferings of Christ; how sufficient an atonement; how feeling a High Priest. She breathed loud, and groaned through pain. Died this evening at seven. I hardly ever heard her speak anything; and I will hope that thou art with Christ in glory, till I go and see. 20th-Prayed at her funeral. Saw her laid in St. Peter's churchyard, the first laid there, by her own desire, in the fresh mould where never man was laid. May it be a token that she is with Him who was laid in a new tomb."

He records another case: "January 4, 1837-Sent for to Mrs. S-. Very ill; asthmatic. Spoke on 'No condemnation to them that are in Christ.' She said, 'But am I in Christ?', seemingly very anxious. Said she had often been so, and had let it go by. 5th-Still living; spoke to her of Christ, and of full salvation. (Myself confined in the house till the 16th.)-Much worse. Not anxious to hear, yet far from rest. Dark, uneasy eye. Asked me, 'What is it to believe?' Spoke to her on 'God, who made light shine out of darkness.' She seemed to take up nothing. Lord, help! 17th-Still worse; wearing away. No smile; no sign of inward peace. Spoke of 'Remember me.' Went over the whole gospel in the form of personal address. She drowsy. 18th-Quieter. 'My Lord and my God.' She spoke at intervals. More cheerful; anxious that I should not go without prayer. Has much knowledge; complete command of the Bible. 19th-Spoke on 'Convincing of sin and righteousness.' Rather more heart to hear. 20th-Psalm 51. Her look and her words were lightsome. 23d-Faintish and restless; no sign of peace. 'I am the way,' and Psalm 25. 24th-Still silent and little sign of anything. 26th-Psalm 40, 'The fearful pit.' Very plain. Could not get anything out of her. February 1-Died at twelve noon; no visible mark of light, or comfort, or hope. The day shall declare it."

One other case: "February 5, 1839-Called suddenly in the evening. Found him near death. Careless family. Many round him. Spoke of the freeness and sufficiency of Jesus. 'Come unto me,' etc., and 'The wrath of God revealed from heaven.' Told him he was going where he would see Christ! asked him if He would be his Saviour? He seemed to answer; his father said, 'He is saying, Yes.' But it was the throes of death. One or two indescribable gasps, and he died! I sat silent, and let God preach. 7th-Spoke of the 'Widow of Nain,' and 'Behold I stand at the door.'"

Attendance at funerals was often to him a season of much exercise. Should it not be to all ministers a time for solemn inquiry? Was I faithful with this soul? Could this soul have learned salvation from me every time I saw him? And did I pray as fervently as I spoke? And if we have tender pity for souls, we will sometimes feel as Mr. McCheyne records: "September 24-Buried A. M. Felt bitterly the word, 'If any man draw back.' etc. Never had more bitter feelings at any funeral."

All who make any pretension to the office of shepherds visit their flocks; 3 yet there is a wide difference in the kind of visits that shepherds give. One does it formally, to discharge his duty and to quiet conscience; another makes it his delight. And of those who make it their delight, one goes forth on the regular plan of addressing all in somewhat of the same style; while another speaks freely, according as the wounds of his sheep come to view. On all occasions, this difficult and trying work must be gone about with a full heart, if it is to be gone about successfully at all. There is little in it to excite, for there is not the presence of numbers, and the few you see at a time are in their calmest, everyday mood. Hence there is need of being full of grace, and need of feeling as though God did visit every hearer by your means. Our object is not to get duty done, but to get souls saved. 2 Corinthians 13:7. Mr. McCheyne used to go forth in this spirit, and often after visiting from house to house for several hours, he would return to some room in the place in the evening, and preach to the gathered families. "September 26, 1838-Good visiting day. Twelve families; many of them go nowhere. It is a great thing to be well furnished by meditation and prayer before setting out; it makes you a far more full and faithful witness. Preached in A. F's house on Job, 'I know that my

Redeemer liveth.' Very sweet and precious to myself."

Partly from his state of health, and partly from the vast accumulation of other labors, and the calls made on him for evangelizing elsewhere, he was never able to overtake the visitation of the whole district assigned him. He was blessed to attract and reclaim many of the most degraded; and by Sabbath schools and a regular eldership, to take superintendence of the population to a great extent. Still he himself often said that his parish had never fully shared in the advantages that attend an aggressive system of parochial labor. Once when spending a day in the rural parish of Collace, as we went in the afternoon from door to door, and spoke to the children whom we met on the roadside, he smiled and said, "Well, how I envy a country minister; for he can get acquainted with all his people, and have some insight, into their real character." Many of us thought that he afterward erred, in the abundant frequency of his evangelistic labors at a time when he was still bound to a particular flock.

He had an evening class every week for the young people of his congregation. The Catechism and the Bible were his textbooks, while he freely introduced all manner of useful illustrations. He thought himself bound to prepare diligently for his classes, that he might give accurate and simple explanations, and unite what was interesting with the most solemn and awakening views. But it was his class for young communicants that engaged his deepest care, and wherein he saw most success. He began a class of this kind previous to his first Communion, and continued to form it again some weeks before every similar occasion. His tract, published in 1840. "This do in remembrance of Me," may be considered as exhibiting the substance of his solemn examination on these occasions.

He usually noted down his first impressions of his communicants, and compared these notes with what he afterward saw in them. Thus: "M. K., sprightly and lightsome, yet sensible; she saw plainly that the converted alone should come to the Table, but stumbled at the question, If she were converted? Yet she claimed being awakened and brought to Christ." Another: "Very staid, intelligent-like person, with a steady kind of anxiety, but, I fear, no feeling of helplessness. Thought that sorrow and prayer would obtain forgiveness. Told her plainly what I thought of her case." Another: "Knows she was once Christless; now she reads, and prays, and is anxious. I doubt not there is some anxiety, yet I fear it may be only a self-reformation to recommend herself to God and to man. Told her plainly." "A.M., I fear much for him. Gave him a token with much anxiety; warned him very much." "C.P does not seem to have any work of anxiety. He reads prayer-books, etc. Does not pray in secret. Seems not very intelligent."

He sought to encourage Sabbath schools in all the districts of his parish. The hymn, "Oil for the Lamp," was written to impress the parable on a class of Sabbath scholars in 1841. Some of his sweet, simple tracts were written for these schools. "Reasons Why Children Should Fly to Christ" was the first, written at the New Year 1839; and "The Lambs of the Flock" was another at a later period. His heart felt for the young. One evening, after visiting some of his Sabbath schools, he writes: "Had considerable joy in teaching the children. Oh for real heart-work among them!" He could accommodate himself to their capacities; and he did not consider it vain to use his talents in order to attract their attention, for he regarded the soul of a child as infinitely precious. Ever watchful for opportunities, on the blank leaf of a book which he had sent to a little boy of his congregation, he wrote these simple lines:

Peace be to thee, gentle boy! Many years of health and joy! Love your Bible more than play, Grow in wisdom every day. Like the lark on hovering wing, Early rise, and mount and sing; Like the dove that found no rest Till it flew to Noah's breast, Rest not in this world of sin, Till the Saviour take thee in.

He had a high standard in his mind as to the moral qualifications of those who should teach the young. When a female teacher was sought to conduct an evening school in his parish for the sake of the mill girls, he wrote to one interested in the cause: "The qualifications she should possess for sewing and knitting you will understand far better than I. She should be able to keep up in her scholars the fluency of reading, and the knowledge of the Bible and Catechism which they may have already acquired. She should be able to teach them to sing the praises of God with feeling and melody. But, far above all, she should be a Christian woman, not in name only but in deed and in truth-one whose heart has been touched by the Spirit of God, and who can love the souls of little children. Any teacher who wanted this last qualification, I would look upon as a curse rather than a blessing-a centre of blasting and coldness and death, instead of a centre from which life and warmth and heavenly influence might emanate."

It was very soon after his ordination that he began his weekly prayer meeting in the church. He had heard how meetings of this kind had been blessed in other places, and never had he any cause to regret having set apart the Thursday evening for this holy purpose. One of its first effects was to quicken those who had already believed; they were often refreshed on these occasions even more than on the Sabbath. Some of the most solemn seasons of his ministry were at those meetings. At their commencement, he wrote to me an account of his manner of conducting them: "I give my people a Scripture to be hidden in the heart-generally a promise of the Spirit or the wonderful effects of his outpouring.(4) I give them the heads of a sermon upon it for about twenty minutes. Prayer goes before and follows. Then I read some history of Revivals, and comment in passing. I think the people are very interested in it: a number of people come from all parts of the town. But oh! I need much the living Spirit to my own soul; I want my life to be hid with Christ In God. At present there is too much hurry, and bustle, and outward working, to allow the calm working of the Spirit on the heart. I seldom get time to meditate, like Isaac, at evening-tide, except when I am tired; but the dew comes down when all nature is at rest-when every leaf is still."An example of the happy freedom and familiar illustrations that his people felt to be peculiar to these meetings, may be found in the notes taken by one of his hearers, of "Expositions of the Epistles to the Seven Churches," given during the year 1838. He had himself great delight in the Thursday evening meetings. "They will doubtless be remembered in eternity with songs of praise," he said on one occasion; and at another time, observing the tender frame of a soul that was often manifested at these seasons, he said, "There is a stillness to the last word-not as on Sabbaths, a rushing down at the end of the prayer, as if glad to get out of God's presence." So many believing and so many inquiring souls used to attend, and so few of the worldlings, that you seemed to breathe the atmosphere of heaven.

But it was his Sabbath day's services that brought multitudes together, and were soon felt throughout the town. He was ever so ready to assist his brethren so much engaged in every good work, and also so often interrupted by inquiries, that it might be thought he had no time for careful preparation, and might be excused for the absence of it. But, in truth, he never preached without careful attention bestowed on his subject. He might, indeed, have little time-often the hours of a Saturday was all the time he could manage-but his daily study of the Scriptures stored his mind, and formed a continual preparation. Much of his Sabbath services was a drawing out of what he had carried in during busy days of the week.

His voice was remarkably clear-his manner attractive by its mild dignity. His form itself drew the eye. (5) He spoke from the pulpit as one earnestly occupied with the souls before him. He made them feel sympathy with what he spoke, for his own eye and heart were on them. He was, at the same time, able to bring out illustrations at once simple and felicitous, often with poetic skill and elegance. He wished to use Saxon words, for the sake of being understood by the most illiterate in his audience. And while his style

was singularly clear, this clearness itself was so much the consequence of his being able thoroughly to analyze and explain his subject, that all his hearers alike reaped the benefit.

He went about his community work with awesome reverence. So evident was this, that I remember a countryman in my parish observed to me: "Before he opened his lips, as he came along the passage, there was something about him that sorely affected me." In the vestry there was never any idle conversation; all was preparation of heart in approaching God; and a short prayer preceded his entering the pulpit. Surely in going forth to speak for God, a man may well be overawed! Surely in putting forth his hand to sow the seed of the kingdom, a man may even tremble! And surely we should aim at nothing less than to pour forth the truth on our people through the channel of our own living and deeply affected souls.

After announcing the subject of his discourse, he generally used to show the position it occupied in the context, and then proceed to bring out the doctrines of the text, in the manner of our old divines. This done, he divided his subject; and herein he was eminently skillful. "The heads of his sermons," said a friend, "were not the milestones that tell you how near you are to your journey's end, but they were nails which fixed and fastened all he said. Divisions are often dry; but not so his divisions—they were so textual and so feeling, and they brought out the spirit of a passage so surprisingly.

It was his wish to arrive closer to the primitive mode of expounding Scripture in his sermons. Therefore, when one asked him if he was never afraid of running short of sermons some day, he replied, "No; I am just an interpreter of Scripture in my sermons; and when the Bible runs dry, then I shall." And in the same spirit he carefully avoided the too common mode of accommodating texts—fastening a doctrine on the words, not drawing it from the obvious connection of the passage. He endeavored at all times to preach the mind of the Spirit in a passage; for he feared that to do otherwise would be to grieve the Spirit who had written it. Interpretation was thus a solemn matter to him. And yet, adhering scrupulously to this sure principle, he felt himself in no way restrained from using, for every day's necessities, all parts of the Old Testament as much as the New. His manner was first to ascertain the primary sense and application, and so proceed to handle it for present use. Thus, on Isaiah 26:16-19, he began: "This passage, I believe, refers literally to the conversion of God's ancient people." He regarded the prophecies as history yet to be, and drew lessons from them accordingly as he would have done from the past. Every spiritual gift being in the hands of Jesus, if he found Moses or Paul in the possession of precious things, he immediately was led to follow them into the presence of that same Lord who gave them all their grace.

There is a wide difference between preaching doctrine and preaching Christ. Mr. McCheyne preached all the doctrines of Scripture as understood by our Confession of Faith, dwelling on ruin by the Fall, and recovery by the Mediator. "The things of the human heart, and the things of the Divine Mind," were in substance his constant theme. From personal experience of deep temptation, he could lay open the secrets of the heart, so that he once said, "He supposed the reason why some of the worst sinners in Dundee had come to hear him was, because his heart exhibited so much likeness to theirs." Still it was not doctrine alone that he preached; it was Christ, from whom all doctrine shoots forth as rays from a center. He sought to hang every vessel and battle on Him. "It is strange," he wrote after preaching on Revelation 1:15: "It is strange how sweet and precious it is to preach directly about Christ, compared with all other subjects of preaching." And he often expressed a dislike of the phrase "giving attention to religion," because it seemed to substitute doctrine, and a devout way of thinking, for Christ himself.

It is difficult to convey to those who never knew him a correct idea of the sweetness and holy unction of his preaching. Some of his sermons, printed from his own manuscripts (although almost all are first copies),

may convey a correct idea of his style and mode of preaching doctrine. But there are no notes that give any true idea of his affectionate appeals to the heart and searching applications. These he seldom wrote; they were poured forth at the moment when his heart filled with his subject; for his rule was to set before his hearers a body of truth first-and there always was a vast amount of Bible truth in his discourses-and then urge home the application. His exhortations flowed from his doctrine, and thus had both variety and power. He was systematic in this; for he observed: "Appeals to the careless, etc., come with power on the back of some massy truth. See how Paul does (Acts. 13:40), 'Beware, therefore, lest,' etc., and (Hebrews 2:1), 'Therefore we should,' etc."

He was sometimes a little unguarded in his statements, when his heart was deeply moved and his feelings stirred, and sometimes he was too long in his addresses; but this also arose from the fullness of his soul. "Another word," he thought, "may be blessed, though the last has made no impression."

Many will remember forever the blessed Communion Sabbaths that were enjoyed in St. Peter's. From the very first these Communion seasons were remarkably owned of God. The awe of His presence used to be upon His people, and the house filled with the odor of the ointment, when his name was poured forth (Song of Sol. 1:3). But on common Sabbaths also many soon began to journey long distances to attend St. Peter's-many from country parishes, who would return home with their hearts burning, as they talked of what they had heard that day.

Mr. McCheyne knew the snare of popularity, and naturally was one that would have been fascinated by it; but the Lord kept him.

He was sometimes extraordinarily helped in his preaching; but at other times, though not perceived by his hearers, his soul felt as if left to its own resources. The cry of Rowland Hill was constantly on his lips, "Master, help!" and often is it written at the close of his sermon. Much affliction, also, was a thorn in the flesh to him. He described himself as often "strong as a giant when in the church, but like a willow-wand when all was over." But certainly, above all, his abiding sense of the divine favor was his safeguard. He began his ministry in Dundee with this sunshine on his way. "As yet I have been kept not only in the light of his reconciled countenance, but very much under the guiding eye of our providing God. Indeed, as I remember good old Swartz used to say, 'I could not have imagined that He could have been so gracious to us.'" I believe that while he had some deeper conflicts, he had also far deeper joy after his return from Palestine than in the early part of his ministry, though from the very beginning of it he enjoyed the sense of the love of God that "keeps the heart and mind." (Phil. 4:7) This was the true secret of his holy walk, and of his calm humility. But for this, his ambition would have become the only principle of many an action; but now the sweeter love of God constrained him, and the natural ambition of his spirit could be discerned only as suggesting to him the idea of making attempts that others would have declined.

What monotony there is in the ministry of many! Duty presses on the heels of duty in an endless circle. But it is not so when the Spirit is quickening both the pastor and his flock. Then there is all the variety of life. It was so here. The Lord began to work by his means almost from the first day he came. There was always one or another stricken, and going apart to weep alone.

The flocking of souls to his ministry, and the deep interest excited, drew the attention of many, and raised the wish in some quarters to have him as their pastor. He had not been engaged many months in his laborious work when he was invited to move to the parish of Skirling, near Biggar. It was an offer that presented great advantages above his own field of labor as to worldly gain, and in respect of the prospect

it held out of comparative ease and comfort; for the parish was small and the salary great. But as it is required of a bishop, that he be "not greedy of filthy lucre," nay, that he be "one who has no love of money" (1 Tim. 3:3) at all, so was it true that in him these qualifications eminently shone. His remarks in a letter to his father contain the honest expression of his feelings: "I am set down among nearly 4000 people; 1100 people have taken seats in my church. I bring my message, such as it is, within the reach of that great company every Sabbath-day. I dare not leave 3000 or 4000, for 300 people. Had this been offered me before, I would have seen it a direct intimation from God, and would heartily have embraced it. How I should have delighted to feed so precious a little flock-to watch over every family-to know every heart-'to allure to brighter worlds and lead the way!' But God has not so ordered it. He has set me down among the noisy mechanics and political weavers of this godless town. He will make the money sufficient. He that paid His taxes from a fish's mouth, will supply all my need." He had already expressed the hope, "Perhaps the Lord will make His wilderness of chimney-tops to be green and beautiful as the garden of the Lord, a field which the Lord hath blessed!"

His health was delicate; and the harassing care and endless fatigue incident to his position, in a town like Dundee, seemed unsuitable to his spirit. This belief led to another attempt to remove him to a country area. In the summer of this same year (1837) he was strongly urged to preach as a candidate for the vacant parish of St. Martin's, near Perth, and was assured of the appointment if he would only come forward. But he declined again: "My Master has placed me here with His own hand; and I never will, directly or indirectly, seek to be removed."

There were circumstances in this latter case that made the call on him appear urgent in several points of view. In coming to a resolution, he mentions one interesting element in the decision, in a letter to me, dated August 8. "I was much troubled about being asked to go to a neighboring parish at present vacant, and made it a matter of prayer; and I mention it now because of the wonderful answer to prayer which I think I received from God. I prayed that in order to settle my own mind completely about staying, He would awaken some of my people. I agreed that that should be a sign He would wish me to stay. The next morning I think, or at least the second morning, there came to me two young persons I had never seen before, in great distress. What brought this to my mind was, that they came to me yesterday, and their distress is greatly increased. Indeed I never saw any people in such anguish about their soul. I cannot but regard this as a real answer to prayer. I have also several other persons in deep distress, and I feel that I am quite helpless in comforting them. I would fain be like Noah, who put out his hand and took in the weary dove; but God makes me stand by and feel that I am a child. Will God never cast the scenes of our labor near each other? We are in His hand; let Him do as seemeth Him good. Pray for me, for my people, for my own soul, that I be not a cast away."

Few godly pastors can be willing to change the scene of their labors, unless it is plain that the cloudy pillar is pointing them away. It is perilous for men to choose for themselves; and too often has it happened that the minister who, on slight grounds, moved away from his former watchtower, has had reason to mourn over the disappointment of his hopes in his larger and wider parish. But while this is admitted, probably it may appear unwarrantable in Mr. McCheyne to have prayed for a sign of the Lord's will. It is to be observed, however, that he decided the point of duty on other grounds; and it was only with the view of obtaining an additional confirmation by the occurrences of providence, that he prayed in this manner, in submission to the will of the Lord. He never held it right to decide the path of duty by any such signs or tokens; he believed that the written Word supplied sufficient data for guiding the believing soul; and such providential occurrences as happened in this case he regarded as important only as far as they might be

answers to prayer. Indeed, he himself has left us a glance of his views on this point in a fragment, which (for it is not dated) may have been written about this time. He had been thinking on Gideon's Fleece.

When God called Gideon forth to fight "Go, save thou Israel in thy might," The faithful warrior sought a sign
That God would on his labors shine.

The man who, at thy dread command,

Lifted the shield and deadly brand.

- do thy strange and fearful work

Thy work of blood and vengeance, Lord!

Might need assurance doubly tried,

- prove Thou wouldst his steps betide.

But when the message which we bring

Is one to make the dumb man sing;

- bid the blind man wash and see,

The lame to leap with ecstasy;

- raise the soul that's bowed down,

- wipe away the tears and frown

- sprinkle all the heart within From the accusing voice of sin
Then, such a sign my call to prove, To preach
my Saviour's dying love, I cannot, dare not, hope to find.

At the close of the same year 1837, he agreed to become Secretary to the Association for Church Extension in the country of Forfar. The Church Extension Scheme, though much misrepresented and much misunderstood, had in view as its genuine, sincere endeavor, to bring to overgrown parishes the advantage of a faithful minister, placed over such a number of souls as he could really visit. Mr. McCheyne cheerfully and diligently forwarded these objects to the utmost of his power. "It is the cause of God." he said, "and therefore I am willing to spend and be spent for it." It compelled him to ride much from place to place; but riding was an exercise of which he was fond, and which was favorable to his health. As an example-"Dec. 4, 1838. Travelled to Montrose. Spoke along with Mr. Guthrie at a Church Extension meeting; eight or nine hundred present. Tried to do something in the Saviour's cause, both directly and indirectly. Next day at Forfar. Spoke in the same cause."

How heartily he entered into this program may be seen from the following extract. In a letter of late date to Mr. Roxburgh, he says: "Every day I live, I feel more and more persuaded that it is the cause of God and his kingdom in Scotland in our day. Many a time, when I thought myself a dying man, the souls of the perishing thousands in my own parish, who never enter any house of God, have lain heavy on my heart. Many a time have I prayed that the eyes of our enemies might be opened, and that God would open the hearts of our rulers, to feel that their highest duty and greatest glory is to support the ministers of Christ, and to send these to every perishing soul in Scotland." He felt that their misery was all the greater, and

their need the deeper, that such neglected souls had no wish for help, and would never ask for it themselves. Nor was it that he imagined that, if churches were built and ministers endowed, this would of itself be sufficient to reclaim the multitudes of perishing men. But he sought and expected that the Lord would send faithful men into His vineyard. These new churches were to be like cisterns-ready to catch the shower when it should fall, just as his own did in the day of the Lord's power.

His views on this subject were summed up in the following lines, written one day as he sat in company with some of his zealous brethren who were deeply engaged in the program: Give me a man of God the truth to preach, A house of prayer within convenient reach, Seat-rents the poorest of the poor can pay, A spot so small one pastor can survey:

Give these-and give the Spirit's genial shower, Scotland shall be a garden all in flower!

Another public duty to which, during all the years of his ministry, he gave constant attention, was attendance at the meetings of presbytery. His candor, and uprightness, and Christian generosity, were felt by all his brethren; and his opinion, though the opinion of so young a man, was regarded with more than common respect. In regard to the great public questions that were then shaking the Church of Scotland, his views were decided and unhesitating. No policy, in his view, could be more ruinous to true Christianity, or more fitted to blight vital godliness, than that of Moderatism. He wrote once to a friend in Ireland: "You don't know what Moderatism is. It is a plant that our heavenly Father never planted, and I trust it is now to be rooted up." The great question of the church's independence of the civil power in all matters spiritual, and the right of the Christian people to judge if the pastor appointed over them had the Shepherd's voice, he invariably held to be part of Scripture truth, which, therefore, must be preached and carried into practice, at all hazards. In like manner he rejoiced exceedingly in the settlements of faithful ministers. The appointments of Mr. Baxter to Hilltown, Mr. Lewis to St. David's, and Mr. Miller to Wallacetown at a later period, are all noticed by him with expressions of thankfulness and joy; and it occasioned the same feelings if he heard of the destitution of any parish in any part of the country supplied. He writes, Sept. 20, 1838: "Present at A. B.'s ordination at Collace with great joy. Blessed be God for the gift of this pastor. Give testimony to the word of Thy grace."

Busy at home, he nevertheless always had a keenly evangelistic spirit. He might have written much and have gained a name by his writings; but he laid everything aside when compared to preaching the everlasting gospel. He scarcely ever refused an invitation to preach on a weekday; and traveling from place to place did not interrupt his fellowship with God. His occasional visits during these years were much blessed. At Blairgowrie and Collace his visits were longed for as times of special refreshment; nor was it less so at Kirriemuir, when he visited Mr. Cormick, or at Abernyte in the days when Mr. Hamilton (now of Regent Square, London), and afterward Mr. Manson, were laboring in that vineyard. It would be difficult even to enumerate the places where he watered at Communion seasons; and in some of these it was stated of him that not the words he spoke, but the holy manner in which he spoke, was the chief means of arresting souls.

Occasionally two or three of us, whose lot was cast within convenient distance, and whose souls panted for the same water brooks, used to meet together to spend a whole day in confession of ministerial and personal sins, with prayer for grace, guiding ourselves by the reading of the Word. At such times we used to meet in the evening with the flock of the pastor in whose house the meeting had been held through the day, and there unitedly pray for the Holy Spirit being poured down upon the people. The first time we held such a meeting, there were tokens of blessing observed by several of us; and the week after he wrote:

"Has there been any fruit of the happy day we spent with you? I thought I saw some the Sabbath after, here. In due season we shall reap if we faint not; only be thou strong, and of a good courage." The incident that encouraged him is recorded in his diary. An elderly person came to tell him how the river of joy and peace in believing had that Sabbath most singularly flowed through her soul, so that she blessed God that she ever came to St. Peter's. He adds "N.B.-This seems a fruit of our prayer-meeting, begun last Wednesday at Collace-one drop of the shower."

It should have been mentioned before now, that during all his ministry he was careful to use not only the direct means appointed for the conversion of souls, but those also that appear more indirect, such as the key of discipline. In regard to the Lord's Supper, his little tract explains his views. He believed that to keep back those whose profession was a credible profession, even while the pastor might have strong doubts as to their fitness in his own mind, was not the rule laid down for us in the New Testament. At the same time, he as steadily maintained that no unconverted person ought to come to the Lord's Table; and on this point "they should judge themselves if they would not be judged."

When communicants came to be admitted for the first time, or when parents who had been communicants before came for baptism for their children, it was his custom to ask them solemnly if their souls were saved. His dealing with them was blessed to the conversion of a number of young persons who were coming carelessly forward to the Communion; and he records the blessing that attended his faithful dealing with a parent coming to speak with him about the baptism of his child. The man said that he had been thinking and believed himself in the right way-that he felt his disposition better, for he could forgive others. Mr. McCheyne showed him that nevertheless he was ignorant of God's righteousness. The man laid it to heart; and when Mr. McCheyne said that he thought it would be better to defer the baptism, the man at once offered to come again and speak on the matter. On a subsequent visit, he seemed really to have seen his error, and to have cast away his own righteousness. When his child was baptized, it was joy to the pastor's heart to have the good hope that the man had received salvation.

In connection with the superstitious feeling of the most depraved as to baptism, he related an affecting occurrence. A careless parent one evening entered his house, and asked him to come with him to baptize a dying child. He knew that neither this man nor his wife ever entered the door of a church; but he rose and went with him to the miserable dwelling. There an infant lay, apparently dying; and many of the female neighbors, equally depraved with the parents, stood around. He came forward to where the child was, and spoke to the parents of their ungodly state and fearful guilt before God, and concluded by showing them that, in such circumstances, he would consider it sinful in him to administer baptism to their infant. They said, "He might at least do it for the sake of the poor child." He told them that it was not baptism that saved a soul, and that out of true concern for themselves he must not do as they wished. The friends around the bed then joined the parents in upbraiding him as having no pity on the poor infant's soul! He stood among them still, and showed them that it was they who had been cruel to their child; and then lifted up his voice in solemn warning, and left the house amid their ignorant reproaches.

Nor did he make light of the church session's power to rebuke and deal with an offender. Once from the pulpit, at an ordination of elders, he gave the following testimony: "When I first entered upon the work of the ministry among you, I was exceedingly ignorant of the vast importance of church discipline. I thought that my great and almost only work was to pray and preach. I saw your souls to be so precious, and the time so short, that I devoted all my time, and care, and strength, to labor in word and doctrine. When cases of discipline were brought before me and the elders, I regarded them with something like abhorrence. It was a duty I shrank from; and I may truly say it nearly drove me from the work of the

ministry among you altogether. But it pleased God, who teaches His servants in another way than man teaches, to bless some of the cases of discipline to the manifest and undeniable conversion of the souls of those under our care; and from that hour a new light broke in upon my mind, and I saw that if preaching be an ordinance of Christ, so is church discipline. I now feel very deeply persuaded that both are of God that two keys are committed to us by Christ: the one the key of doctrine, by means of which we unlock the treasures of the Bible; the other the key of discipline, by which we open or shut the way to the sealing ordinances of the faith. Both are Christ's gift, and neither is to be resigned without sin."

There was still another means of enforcing what he preached, in the use of which he has excelled all his brethren, namely, the holy consistency of his daily walk. Aware that one idle word, one needless contention, one covetous act, may destroy in our people the effect of many a solemn exhortation and earnest warning, he was uniquely circumspect in his everyday walk. He wished to be always in the presence of God. If he traveled, he labored to enjoy God along the way, as well as to do good to others by dropping a word in season. In riding or walking, he seized opportunities to give a useful tract; and, on principle, he preferred giving it to the person directly, rather than casting it on the road. The former way, he said, was more open—there was no stealth in it; and we ought to be as clear as crystal in speaking or acting for Jesus. In writing a note, however short, he sought to season it with salt. If he passed a night in a strange place, he tried to bear the place especially on his soul at the mercy seat; and if compelled to take some rest from his too exhausting toils, his relaxation was little else than a change of occupation, from one mode of glorifying God to another. (Baxter's words are not less than the truth: "Recreation to a minister must be as whetting is with the mower, that is, only to be used so far as is necessary for his work. May a physician in the plague-time take any more relaxation or recreation than is necessary for his life, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life and death?" "Will you stand by and see sinners grasping under the pangs of death, and say, God doth not require me to make myself a drudge to save them? Is this the voice of ministerial

or Christian compassion, or rather of sensual laziness and diabolical cruelty?"—Ref. Past. 6:6) His beautiful hymn, "I Am a Debtor," was written in May 1837, at a leisure hour.

Whatever is said in the pulpit, men will not regard much though they may feel it at the time, if the minister does not say the same in private, with equal earnestness, in speaking with his people face to face; and it must be in our moments of closest intercourse with them, that we are thus to put the seal to all we say in public. Close moments are the times when the things that are most closely twined around the heart are brought out to view; and shall we, by tacit consent, introduce the Lord that bought us into such happy hours? We must not only speak faithfully to our people in our sermons, but live faithfully for them too. Perhaps it may be found that the reason why many who preach the gospel fully and in all earnestness are not used of God in the conversion of souls, is to be found in their defective exhibition of grace in these easy moments of life. "Them that honour me, I will honour" (1 Sam. 2:30). It was noticed long ago that men will allow you to preach against their sins as much as you will, if you will be easy with them when you have finished, and talk as they do, and live as they live. How much different it was with Mr. M'Cheyne, as all who knew him can testify.

His visits to friends were times when he sought to do good to their souls; and never was he satisfied unless he could guide the conversation to dwell on the things of eternity. When he could not do so, he generally remained silent. And yet his demeanor was easy and pleasant to all, exhibiting at once meekness of faith and delicacy of feeling. There was in his character a high refinement that came out in poetry and true politeness; and there was something in his graces that reminded one of his own remark,

when explaining the spices of Song of Solomon 4:16, when he said that "some believers were a garden that had fruit-trees, and so were useful; but we ought also to to have spices, and so be attractive." Wishing to convey his grateful feelings to a fellow laborer in Dundee, he sent him a Hebrew Bible, with these few lines prefixed:

Anoint mine eyes,

O holy dove! That I may prize

This book of love.

Unstop mine ear,

Made deaf by sin, That I may hear

Thy voice within.

Break my hard heart,

Jesus, my Lord; In the inmost part

Hide Thy sweet word.

It was on a similar occasion, in 1838, that he wrote the lines, "Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet." At another time, sitting under a shady tree, and casting his eye on the hospitable dwelling in which he found a pleasant retreat, his grateful feelings flowed out to his kind friend in the lines that follow:

PEACE TO THIS HOUSE

Long may peace within this dwelling

Have its resting-place;

Angel shields all harm repelling

God, their God of grace.

May the dove-like Spirit guide them

To the upright land!

May the Saviour-shepherd feed them

From His gentle hand!

Never was there one more beloved as a friend, and seldom any whose death could cause so many to feel as if no other friend could ever occupy his room. Some, too, can say that so much did they learn from his holy walk, "that it is probable a day never passes wherein they have not some advantage from his friendship."

I find written on the leaf of one of his notebooks, a short memorandum: "Rules worth remembering. -When visiting in a family, whether ministerially or otherwise, speak particularly to the strangers about eternal

things. Perhaps God has brought you together just to save that soul." And then he refers to some instances that happened to him, in which God seemed to honor a word spoken in this incidental way,

In this spirit he was enabled for nearly three years to give his strength to his Master's service. Sickness sometimes laid him aside, and taught him what he had to suffer; but he rose from it to go forth again to his joyful labors. Often, after a toilsome day there were inquirers waiting for him, so that he had to begin work afresh in a new form. But this was his delight; it was a kind of interruption that he allowed even on a Saturday, in the midst of his studies. He was led to resolve not to postpone any inquirers until a future time, by finding that having done so on one occasion at a pressing moment, the individuals never returned; and so alive was he to the responsibilities of his office, that he ever after feared to lose such an opportunity of speaking with souls at a time when they were aroused to concern. Busy one evening with some extra-parochial work, he was asked if any person should be admitted to see him that night. "Surely-what do we live for?" was his immediate reply. It was his manner, too, on a Saturday afternoon, to visit one or two of his sick who seemed near the point of death, with the view of being thus stirred up to a more direct application of the truth to his flock on the morrow, as dying men on the edge of eternity.

We have already observed that in his doctrine there was nothing that differed from the views of truth laid down in the standards of our church. He saw no inconsistency in preaching an electing God, who "calletth whom he will," and a salvation free to "whosoever will"; nor in declaring the absolute sovereignty of God, and yet the unimpaired responsibility of man. He preached Christ as a gift laid down by the Father for every sinner freely to take. In the beginning of his ministry, as he preached the fullness of the glad tidings, and urged on his people that there was enough in the glad tidings to bring direct and immediate assurance to every one who really believed them, some of his flock were startled. For he always preached that, while it is true that there are believers, like Heman or Asaph, who do not enjoy full assurance of the love of God, yet certainly no true believer should remain satisfied in the absence of this blessed peace. Not a few had up to now been accustomed to take for granted that they might be Christians, though they knew of no change, and had never thought of enjoying the knowledge of the love of God as their present portion. They heard that others, who were considered believers, had doubts; so they had come to consider fears and doubts as the very marks of a believing soul. The consequence had been that in past days many concluded themselves to be Christians because they seemed to be in the very state of mind of which those who were reputed to be believers spoke, viz. doubt and alarm. Alas! in their case there could be nothing else, for they had only a name to live.

Someone wrote to him, asking him several questions concerning conversion, assurance, and faith, which had been stirred up by his ministry. The import of the questions may be gathered from his reply, which was as follows:

"1. I doubt if there are many saints who live and die without a comfortable sense of forgiveness and acceptance with God. The saints of whom the Bible speaks seem to have enjoyed it richly both in life and death. See the murderers of our Lord, Acts 2:41; the Ethiopian, Acts 8:39; the jailor, Acts 16:35. David also felt it, sinful man though he was, Romans 4:6. Paul also prayed that the Romans might have it, Romans 15:13. I fear this objection is generally made by those who are living in sin, and do not wish to know the dangerous road they are on.

"2. A sense of forgiveness does not proceed from marks seen in yourself, but from a discovery of the beauty, worth, and freeness of Christ, Psalm 34:5. We look out for peace, not in. At the same time, there is also an assurance rising from what we see in ourselves; the seal of the Spirit, love to the brethren, etc.,

are the chief marks.

3. "Feeling a body of sin is a mark that we are like Paul, and that we are Christ's, Romans 7; Galatians 5:17. Paul was cheerful with a body of sin; and so ought we to be. So was David, and all the saints.

4. "I do not think there is any difference between those converted within these few years and those who were Christians before. Many of those converted since I came are, I fear, very unholy. I fear this more than anything. I fear there is too much talk and too little reality. Still there are many good figs-many of whom I am persuaded better things, and things that accompany salvation. The answer to your question I fear is this, that many used to be taken for Christians before, who had only a name to live, and were dead. I think there is more discrimination now. But take care and be not proud, for that goes before a fall. Take care of censorious judging of others, as if all must be converted in the same way."God moves in a mysterious way. He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy. To Him alone be glory."

He thus stated his views on another occasion. Referring to Song of Solomon 6:3, "My beloved is mine," following "My beloved is gone down into his garden," he said, "This is the faith of assurance-a complete, unhesitating embracing of Christ as my righteousness and my strength and my all. A common mistake is, that this clear conviction that Christ is mine is an attainment far on in the divine life, and that it springs from evidences seen in my heart. When I see myself a new creature, Christ on the throne in my heart, love to the brethren, etc., it is often thought that I may begin then to say, 'My Beloved is mine.' How different this passage! The moment Jesus comes down into the garden to the beds of spices-the moment He reveals himself, the soul cries out, 'My Beloved is mine!' So saith Thomas, John 20:27, 28. The moment Jesus came in and revealed his wounds, Thomas cried out, 'My Lord and my God.' He did not look to see if he was believing, or if the graces of love and humility were reigning; but all he saw and thought of was Jesus and Him crucified and risen." At a subsequent period, when preaching on Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me," he said, "I suppose it is almost impossible to explain what it is to come to Jesus, it is so simple. If you ask a sick person who had been healed, what it was to come and be healed, he could hardly tell you. As far as the Lord has given me light in this matter, and looking at what my own heart does in like circumstances, I do not feel that there is anything more in coming to Jesus, than just believing what God says about His Son to be true. I believe that many people keep themselves in darkness by expecting something more than this. Some of you will ask, 'Is there no appropriating of Christ? no putting out the hand of faith? no touching the hem of His garment?' I quite grant, beloved, there is such a thing, but I do think it is inseparable from believing the record. If the Lord persuades you of the glory and power of Emmanuel, I feel persuaded that you cannot but choose Him. It is like opening the shutters of a dark room; the sun that moment shines in. So, the eye that is opened to the testimony of God, receives Christ that moment."

In the case of a faithful ministry, success is the rule; want of it the exception. For it is written: "In doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee, (1 Tim. 4:16). Mr. McCheyne expected it, and the Lord exceeded all his hopes.

It was not yet common for persons in anxiety to go to their pastor for advice; but soon it became an almost weekly occurrence. While it was yet rare, two of his young people wrote a joint note, asking permission to come and speak with him, "for we are anxious about our souls." Among those who came, there were those who had striven against the truth; persons who used to run out of hearing when the Bible was read throw down a tract if the name of God was in it-go quickly to sleep after a Sabbath's pleasure in order to drown the fear of dropping into hell. There were many whose whole previous life had been but a

threadbare profession. There were some open sinners, too. In short, the Lord glorified Himself by the variety of those whom His grace subdued, and the variety of means by which His grace reached its object:

One could tell him that the reading of the chapter in the church, with a few remarks, had been the time of her awakening. Another had been struck to the heart by some expression he used in his first prayer before the sermon one Sabbath morning. But most were moved by the preaching of the word. An interesting case was that of one who was aroused to concern during his sermon on "Unto whom coming as unto a living stone." As he spoke of the Father taking the gem out of His bosom, and laying it down for a foundation stone, she felt in her soul, "I know nothing of this precious stone; I am surely not converted." This led her to come and speak with him. She was not under deep conviction; but before going away, he said, "You are a poor, vile worm; it is a wonder the earth does not open and swallow you up." These words were blessed to produce a very awesome sense of sin. She came a second time with the arrows of the Almighty drinking up her spirit. For three months she remained in this state, till having once more come to him for counsel, the living voice of Jesus gave life to her soul while he was speaking of Christ's words, "If thou knewest the gift of God," etc., and she went away rejoicing. Some awakened souls told him that since they were brought under conviction, very many sermons, which they had heard from him before, and completely forgotten, had been brought back to mind. He used to remark that this might show what the resurrection day would awake

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